Perpetual War

The waves felt serene to Ara as she sat on the soft sand of the beach. She often spent time watching the waves crash on the shoreline. Other children fought as much as they played, but the mothers never seemed to pay much attention to what they were up to. Ara preferred to stay alone. She spent her time daydreaming as her mothers worked the fields inland. She gazed at the horizon. It looked just as it always looked. She’d never seen anything more than a seagull fly toward the island, but at the moment she thought she saw something. She ignored it though, assuming she was just seeing things.

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“LAND HO!” shouted Warren, a handsome, strong man. He captained the *S.S. Inquisitor*, a ship sent to map the Lake of Steam: the one place on Earth still barely explored. His crewmen began preparations for the ship to ground immediately. Warren stood at the edge of the ship with a spyglass, eyeing the coast. Every island he came across in the Lake was desolate, but this one was flourishing with nature. He could barely contain his excitement as he imagined the riches he might find on the island, but he kept a straight face to keep control of his crew. When the ship reached land, Warren took the first step. To his surprise, there was a girl, no more than ten years old, sitting alone on the sand.

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Ara stared at the man, dumbfounded. *What happened to this woman?* she thought. Ara had never seen a man before. In fact, nobody on the island had ever seen a man. The Tobenese split off from mainland civilization 200 years ago. With the discovery of same-sex reproduction, a group of wives, unhappy with the way their husbands treated them, disguised themselves as men, stole a small boat, and traveled to the island. *He’s got hair coming out of his face!* Ara cautiously stood up.

“Where is your father?” Warren asked the child. She didn’t understand the language, but even if she did, the word “father” would carry no meaning. Meanwhile, the other men had already walked inland, already destroying the beautiful landscape with their thick rubber soles. Ara didn’t know who these people were or why they came, but she knew they had no respect for her home.

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Warren watched as the girl ran, trying to think of the best way to approach these people. He ran to his crew, hoping to find a man to speak to, maybe the girl’s father. As the strode through the grain fields, he saw women working. They picked the grain by hand, with no machines to assist them. He always knew there were some areas of the world that weren’t very developed, but this was different. Their houses were rudimentary and not a trace of modern technology was to be found. As the women noticed him, they began to shout to each other. They drew weapons and before the men could even fight back, the women had swiftly knocked them unconscious.  
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The entire city gathered in the city hall. It was the largest building, but still small by our modern standards. Ara stood on the upper level, peering through the rails. It was loud from everyone speaking to each other. The men, still unconscious, laid on the floor at the front. Suddenly the room became quiet. An old woman had entered the building. Molo was nearly a hundred years old and she was the island’s spiritual advisor, much like our priests and pastors. She made her way to the front and spoke.

“When we were children, our parents told us the story of our land. The story of how God gave us freedom from the servants of the devil. However none of us have ever seen such a being. Today, our God has revoked our freedoms, for those servants have returned. Long ago, our people were at the mercy of *men*. We were hid away from society, our aspirations destroyed and our purpose in life was to serve the very people that limited us.”

“Then we must protect ourselves!” chimed another voice. It was Bea, the chief hunter on the island. “We must kill our enemies as if they were animals. Only then will we be allowed to live.”

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Warren was the first to wake. *What the hell happened?* he thought. In front of him stood nearly a thousand women. His first reaction was shame. He didn’t even have the strength to conquer a woman. An loud, aggressive voice was speaking. Warren tried to stand but failed.

“Who are you?” he asked? Suddenly a group of women with spears began to approach him.

“We are no longer your slaves. We live happily here, yet your kind continues to follow us and threaten our liberty. We will succumb no longer.” They raised their weapons.

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Ara watched as the hunters approached the men.

“NO!” she shouted, before she could stop herself. Her people had always been compassionate. They had always been forgiving. She believed that the men could change and respect their society. Maybe she was right, but it was never happening in her lifetime. She shielded her eyes as the crowd roared.