

## Chiseling the Eclipse

by Dominic Loise

The moon faced down with a caring smile at the young man on the street. As the galactic clock tick-ticked around back to its universal center reset, the moon could still hear the echoing eruption of Big Bang's debris gearing for the Earth. Humanity would not go the way of the dinosaurs on the night watch. The moon had shouldered meteorites meant for the Earth through millennia but kept on showing up every night banged up covered in a bright glow. It hit its mark each evening, rotated into nightly costume changes, and was a stellar supporting player. There are no small roles in the universe.

In a small paper cup, a mock full moon rested waiting to be swallowed. Victoria took her medication from the inpatient pharmacy counter and stepped out of line. She contemplated using the designated free time at the rehabilitation center to move into the line at the phone wall. Instead, Victoria went back to the common room and continued work on her drawing from today's art therapy session.

Emotions poured again into another rectangle. Victoria put today's mail on the table. Paper mountain peaks were now smoothed out of a crumbled letter with a caring hand. Victoria looked through the common room window at the crescent moon in the cloudy night sky. Knowing the same moonlight looked down on her son somewhere comforted her tonight. Victoria channeled a mother's love towards the sky hoping it landed on her son wherever he was under this sky.

The mail she received today was slowly read again before continuing on her drawing. The ink on the lined paper had reached out past the familiar penmanship at points where teardrops hit on the paper. Revisiting the window, Victoria wondered why people wasted their bedtime wishes on stars. Starlight led to deaf ears burnt out eons ago. The moon remained here, close and tangible.

When the letter was written, Grandma Anna thought back to one of the old fables from her own great grandmother. Seeing the world through ancient wisdom, Grandma Anna knew Victoria always found comfort as a child in these tales. An escape from the cruelty brought upon their home. Grandma Anna wished to once again write Victoria a healing story to carry a harsh truth. Grandma Anna longed to bring her granddaughter a sense of openness instead of a feeling of deeper seclusion. The tale went as follows.

The King on The Mountain built a tower so tall for his only daughter that when she walked out on the turret she was out amongst the planets. Hidden away in the sky, The Princess saw that The Moon had an identical twin sister, with whom he shared the night sky. The Eclipse shone dark where The Moon shone bright every night. The Eclipse could not be seen as she was outshone by her brother, though they represented both sides of the light and the dark.

Down in the kingdom, The Sea kept beating against the village shores every night. He would drench their fields and have The Wind blow down their homes. The villagers in the kingdom would rebuild from scratch each morning and sang prayers to The Moon for help each night. The Princess listened to the kingdom's tears ignored by The King on The Mountain and The Moon safe in the high seats. So, The Princess would carve away at The Eclipse and quietly keep carving away the dark layers to send the villagers in the kingdom a beacon of hope. And every night, she chipped away parts of The Eclipse sparked off becoming the stars in the night till a great stone warrior stood behind The Moon ready to face The Sea.

The villagers sang each night as they saw more and more stars appear in The Moon's domain. The Sea heard the praises sung to The Moon as they rode out to him on The Wind. The Sea blew a tempest with full jealousy that the villagers did not praise him instead as he showed his ferocity each night.

That evening, The Sea tore in on a tidal wave towards the village. The Wind stormed in announcing The Sea's approach. "The Sea is Coming," howled and blew The Wind over and over, "The Seas is Coming! The Sea is Coming! The Sea is Coming to wash you all away!"

The villagers wailed up to The Moon over The Wind harder and louder than ever before but saw The Moon was silent as more stars flashed brightly appearing in the night sky. The villagers turned the wailing them to The King in the Mountain, for what good were little lights in the night against a storm here on land.

The Wind hung directly over the villagers. With grey clouds now covering any view of hope from The Moon. Hard whispered words sowing dread in the ear of the villagers as to what The Sea would do to them once the invading waters arrived. Rain drops mixed with the tears of villagers who thought they were now abandoned and alone. Till, The Wind's grey clouds were thunderously ripped apart revealing an answer.

A mountainous moon stone warrior princess climbed down the tower, over the mountains and onto the shore ready to face The Sea. Chiseled and given definition out of the darkness, The Eclipse wrested The Wind away from the villagers starting the stars rotating in orbit around the sky above then stood her ground on the shore. The Sea swooped up the ocean and battered against The Eclipse all night but the moon stone warrior princess would not move from the shoreline. Finally, The Sea exhausted, after battling all night, gave up and sank back into the ocean. The Eclipse turned to look up at the princess in the tower and saw The Moon still hanging in the blue morning. Her twin stayed lighting his sister throughout the night.

The King on the Mountain was ashamed he could not save his own people and ordered The Eclipse not to stand on the shore in honor. He could not face the true hero of his kingdom and demanded her to be torn down by the villagers. The villagers cried and cried for The Eclipse drenching the shore as they chipped away at the moon stone warrior princess until the entire shore

was covered in a fine dust. The Princess would never return the villagers' pleas for help again leaving the tower on a passing star orbiting out to the unknown. Seeing how the villagers treated his sibling, The Moon slowly turned dark in anger of his sister's memory. But even granulated down, The Eclipse still fought The Sea every night sending him off in the morning. Ever so often, The Moon stayed up in the morning blue to congratulate his twin once again on a nightly battle won bringing back the light that night in honor of his sister.

This is how we came to have the daily tides, sparkling sand on the shore, why sea water tastes salty like tears of sorrow, and why the moon has cycles showing there is light and dark in all of us.

Victoria read this story to herself again as she looked out the window of the rehabilitation center. She had just enough time before the last evening group session came into the common room. As she folded up the letter, The Serenity Prayer went through her lips on auto pilot. She basphamised her acceptance of that which she could not control. Then, she finished up her drawing of the tower collapsed on the mountain. As a child, she could never place her finger on it but the story had ended with the princess still left the tower standing. She had the power of the moon at her fingertips and still she only ran away from her father.

\*\*\*\*\*

Anthony didn't like the idea of stealing. He liked his other option of surviving on the street less. The poison in his system hadn't yet taken his looks. The dealers and other junkies always offered to hook him up. He was something else to trade on the street. Anthony stuck to stealing and begging for now.

The only place he didn't mind stealing from was the convent store by his ex-high school. The eldest son of the owner was always selling smokes and vape to the underaged students. Anthony justified taking from there balanced the scales in some way.

Anthony quickly exited the corner store. It was hard to tell if he was kicked out or at his own pace. He muttered from under his hoodie something distressing and permanent. The water on Anthony's cheeks was not from the rain outside. Anthony looked up after the rain stopped. Anthony stood on the street corner contemplating his next turn. He looked up to see the moon smiling that night and cried back in reply.

\*\*\*\*\*

Victoria put her art therapy project back as the group session started. She opened up without being prodded by the counselor that evening. She talked about one night on the beach. The waves of the ocean tagged and taunted Victoria as she finished her last beer from the case she bought for herself wondering if she would go further. The tide pulled away for the evening beckoning Victoria to complete her evening long thought process. The sand on the beach seemed to have covered her feet into place molding a counter argument throughout the night. As she sat all night in her head, Victoria occasionally took time out of her internal struggle to look up at the stars and the moon pondering where this fatal decision would take him next.

\*\*\*\*\*

Grandma Anna closed the bedroom window shade before turning in for the evening as the house phone rang past the hours of casual conversation.