

Lorelei; or the Lore of Lies
A Play of Music
By Lana Sage

The Before

3

Mother, young and lively, runs through a grassy field. She is not yet a mother; unburdened by the obligation that lies in the name.

The sun shines, yellow and sparkling.

Mother rolls and plays and laughs like the growing child she is.

She finds her way Downtown. All the way to a cliff-edge, overlooking a river.

A place with no shadows.

The water is far below. A world away.

It's quiet. Serene.

Mother's toes tip over the edge.

Shadow is there.

Before Mother can fall, Shadow holds her close.

Sprinkles of rain trickle down her arms and face.

Thunder rumbles.

Shadow encompasses Mother.

Rain pours.

Rain flies.

Rain shrouds.

Mother struggles. Shadow tightens.

Mother fights. Shadow stays.

Mother stills. Shadow leans in.

Mother sees Shadow.

Mother stays. Afraid. Shadow holds. Steady.

Rain pours.

Rain flies.

Rain shrouds.

Thunder rumbles. Mother escapes. She runs away from the river. From Shadow.

But the rain always follows, growing louder and harsher and louder and harsher and louder the farther she goes.

Shadow isn't there.

A Shadow-Of-A-Home falls in—what has become a living room with rain-stained walls and ceilings and a dining chair with no table.

Mother slams the front door behind her.

2

*A place of shadows. A Shadow-Of-A-Home.
 Lorelei, a girl not yet grown, sits on the floor.
 She is singing. It's clear as rain.
 As she sings, the shadows start to fall away.
 Mother, older yet frightened, sits on a dining chair with no table.
 She combs Lorelei's hair in whatever way.
 Rain pours outside the home. But they are safe and dry.
 A musical cacophony.*

Lorelei (singing)

Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten,
 Dass ich so traurig bin;
 Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten,
 Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.

Die Luft ist kühl, und es dunkelt,
 Und ruhig fließt der Rhein;
 Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt
 Im Abendsonnenschein.

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
 Dort oben wunderbar,
 Ihr goldenes Geschmeide blitzet, Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.

Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme
 Und singt ein Lied dabei;
 Das hat eine wundersame,
 Gewaltige Melodei.

Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe
 Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;
 Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
 Er schat nur hinauf in die Höh.

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
 Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn;
 Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
 Die Lorelei getan...

Mother
Beautiful Lorelei.

...

Again please.

Lorelei
What is that song about?

Mother
Again, please

Lorelei
What is that song about

Mother
Lorelei–

Lorelei
You said again please so I said it again.
Please.

Mother
Listen to the lyrics

Lorelei
It's hard to listen when I'm the one singing it. Maybe if you / sang for me then I could–

Mother
Is something wrong?

Lorelei
Nothing is wrong. At least I don't think–

Mother
There is something / on your mind

Lorelei
I'd like to go into The Outside.

Mother

You must never sing in The Outside. You know better / than to ask such a thing.

Lorelei

No no you misunderstand—

Mother

I do not misunderstand—

Lorelei

But you do.

I am growing lonely, Mother. Every day I stay here I grow lonelier / and lonelier—

Mother

How could you grow lonely when I am here? Right next to you.

Lorelei

But you are not always here and I need something new—somewhere new. I cannot be alone with you forever.

Mother

Lorelei—

Lorelei

I merely meant that, once I am done with my singing for the day, I would like to go into The Outside.

Mother

Not today, my Lay. Let us end the conversation there.

Lorelei

So maybe?

Mother

There are monsters out, my Lay

Lorelei

What kind of / monsters are they

Mother

The kind that takes girls like you away from their mothers. They take them with the rain, so they say. As their voices carry with the rain, the monsters come to stalk their prey.

A breath

Lorelei
Who's they

Mother
Mothers warning their daughters, of course

Lorelei
Like you?

Mother
Yes. Me.

Lorelei
Why would the monsters want to take girls like me

Mother
Those kinds of people think they own you—that they hold power over you.

Lorelei
The monsters are people? Like you and me?

Mother
They can be

Lorelei
People I do not know cannot control me so

Mother
They do not. You will not let them. Right?

Lorelei
Who are they? These... monsters

Mother
People

Lorelei
People that are monsters

Mother
Monstrous people...
But that's a story for another day. All you need to know is that you must not go into The Outside.
Not today

A breath

Mother (continued)
We can spend the day here. In our home.

Lorelei
We have a home here. You and I.

Mother
Yes Lorelei. We have a home.

Lorelei
Yes. This home. We are in it. You and me. And yet I am lonely.

Mother
As you've so bluntly said

Lorelei
I think I know why—
Aren't there usually more to homes?

Mother
More...?

Lorelei
Well I don't / know. More...

Mother
It could be many things. More rooms, more space, more light, more air, more—

Lorelei

People?

Mother

Not monsters

Lorelei

We are people and we are not monsters

Mother

We can be.

Lorelei

We aren't. And there are people who aren't. People who can be part of our home

Mother

A home can be two people

Lorelei

You never talk of my father

Mother

What a jump in conversation

Lorelei

I think it makes perfect sense

Mother

There is no reason to speak of such things.

Lorelei

I don't have a father.

Mother

Not in name. I am enough—two parents in one—am I not?

Lorelei

You are more than enough, Mother—

Mother

I know.

So what is it, Lorelei. What is on your mind?

Lorelei
I was wondering...

Mother
I gathered as much

Lorelei
Perhaps my father is one of those people. Those monsters...

A breath

Mother falls into her shadows.

Mother
You are too smart for your own good...

Lorelei
What's wrong?

Mother
Lorelei...

A breath

Mother
You are very special. A very special girl—So special, that you have no need for a father. A father wouldn't know what to do with you. Why...
Look at you.

...

What would he do.

...

You only have need of me. You are mine and mine alone. I am both mother and father and I like to think I do so well

...

Is that alright with you?

Lorelei
I do not have a father...

Mother
Never have, never will.

Lorelei
And you are enough?

Mother
I am more than enough.

Lorelei
And the monsters outside... My-

Mother
Will be gone tomorrow. As long as you do not go out today.

Lorelei
Tomorrow?

Mother
Perhaps
...
And you remember what you must never do while in The Outside...?

Lorelei
I mustn't sing / while in The Outside.

Mother
Not a peep nor a squeak. That's right.
Never.

Lorelei
Why?

Mother
Another question for another day, my Lay.
Now.
Again.
...
Please.

A breath

Lorelei (singing)

I know not if there is a reason
 Why I am so sad at heart.
 A legend of bygone ages
 Haunts me and will not depart...

*The shadows fall away.
 Mother falls into her shadows.
 Lorelei stays.
 She opens the front door.
 Rain pours in.
 Thunder rumbles.
 She looks back once and only once.
 She closes the door behind her.
 Lorelei runs.*

1

*Rain pours, but lighter than earlier. It's letting up.
 Lorelei sits on the edge of a cliff-side, overlooking the river.
 The water is far still, down the way.
 A place with no shadows.
 But one.
 Shadow is there.
 He stands behind her.
 She pays him no mind.*

Shadow
 Lore Lay.

A breath

A release

Shadow
 Hello, child.

Lorelei sees Shadow.

A breath

A release

A breath

A release

A breath

Lorelei shoves her hand out.

A breath

A release

A breath

Shadow shakes Lorelei's hand.

Shadow (continued)

Nice to meet you, too.

Lorelei tries to take her hand back.

Shadow remains still.

Shadow (continued)

Dip into the water. It's warm.

A breath

A release

Shadow (continued)

Hold my hand.

I'll guide you in.

A breath

*Lorelei steps off the cliff, into the river.
 Shadow watches her fall.
 The rain halts. Completely still. As if waiting. Watching.
 Lorelei steps out of the water, completely dry.*

Shadow (continued)

Good. As I thought.

Night is falling. Your mother's waiting for you at home.

Come.

...

Come.

*Shadow holds out his hand. Lorelei takes it.
 Shadow leads Lorelei to the Shadow-Of-A-Home.
 The rain starts. First a sprinkle, then a trickle, then a stream, then a downpour,
 drenching Lorelei.
 The rain grows louder and harsher and louder and harsher and louder the farther
 they go from the river.
 They arrive at a place of shadows. A Shadow-Of-A-Home.
 Lorelei opens the front door.
 Rain pours in.
 Lorelei steps into the home, out of the rain.
 Mother sits in the shadows, on a dining chair with no table. Waiting.
 Shadow stays in The Outside.
 The rain touches Shadow but not the inhabitants of the Shadow-Of-A-Home.*

A breath

A release

A breath

A release

A breath

Lorelei

You can come in if you like. I do not bite

Mother
Lorelei?

Lorelei
What's your—?

Shadow isn't there.

The door closes on its own accord.

Lorelei opens the door.

Shadow isn't there.

The rain pours. Loud. Overbearing. Comforting.

Lorelei steps into The Outside.

Shadow isn't there.

The front door falls closed behind her, leaving her in The Outside.