

Poetry's Protagonist

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- **Note:**

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The Epilogue:

After a bit of trial and error through New York stop lights, we finally arrived on Broadway . My theater had finally been completed, and I breathed a sigh of relief that I'd get the chance to set my eyes upon it before I bit the dust .

"Faaather," I hear the voice of my daughter Elle'lorin call to me . My aging eyes had turned a stark shade of grey with copper flecks, so I strained to see her . "...here! . . . here, Father," She says, as she places my hand on her cold cheek . It was the middle of December, and we both were freezing our asses off .

"...Well beautiful, how about we go where there's warmth?" I say, as I feebly attempt to find the entrance to my theater, *El Helaina*.

"Okay, but we must turn right, not left Papa ." My daughter says, the remnants of her Italian roots caressing her lips and teeth . We click our heels past winter coats and human eyes peeking out of scarfs and hoods . I hear the jingle of keys before my daughter clicks and turns a bolted door, then slides the steeled blockade away from *El Helaina* . I scan the outside of the place with awe placed on my lips . I smile, as the chill of December makes my teeth sting, as if touched by ice cubes .

"Elegant ...this is Mama's place Papa...Elegance." – My daughter states this with tears grasping her throat as she walks."

"You should dance Elle...for Helaina ." I say, as I catch up to her . My legs had healed enough for me to walk without the

cane for a long period of time; still, they ached all the way down to the ankle . So, I walked behind my daughter, instead of in front of her .

“Ooh, Father...I couldn't . I -I'm too old for that Papa .”

She says with a sort of sadness that reminded me of her mother when she lay so still at the Hospital and asked me how the sunrise looked earlier that morning . She loved sunrises .

“...You can,” I boom, jolting her from her thoughts, “...you will Elle .” I say, while gingerly touching her shoulder to comfort her .

“humph ...Why not?” she says with a shrug and smile, before kissing my cheek and rushing the humongous stage .

“hahaha...Yes, Papa I will! I will!” She sings as she twirls, in perfect ballet form, about the El Helaina stage . I smile with glee. Even when I remember Giuseppe, his bondage and his wicker-man friend’s, “sordid hallelujah, ” I smile at my daughter’s liberation . Her truth, her passion .

Carthage

I protect her . I protect all the way . I release her into idle hands with the hope that she will forgive me, always . I sometimes feel that she does . What is creation in the hands of ignorance? The day of the opening of El Helaina is finally here, and my daughter and I are on pins and needles . My palms sweat . I do not eat . I do not sleep . I only wait for the hour to come . I feel it is something like my anticipation of death . The cancer eats away at my breaths, like a cat to a baby in its cradle .

“Beep-Beep! Beep-Beep! Beep-Beep!” My wrist watch chants, warning me of habitual habits. It is time for me to take my pills. I yawn as I make my way to the medicine cabinet of my hotel room. My daughter made sure that it was a room for people like me, who couldn't stand for hours on end. I thanked her sorely, not because I felt insulted, but sad at the state of my body. I had not meant to catch cancer. I only attempted to be happy.

I take my allotted pills two at a time with water, as I think of vodka. I had not drank since the last trial and I was content with this, until I found out I had brain cancer last year . I had become so depressed, and “affixed”, on writing another novel before my brain fell apart, that my eyes began to lose their sight . The doctor said that I had been spending too much time in front of a computer typing, and not enough resting my eyes. I had gathered a cataract behind the iris in my right eye . “Surgery will suffice” I told him matter factly . I knew that death would catch me without notice, and I was not going to quit living until I finished my last novel . So, after the surgery, I requested my laptop be sent to me at the hospital, and I kept right on writing. I knew every key...every mistake...every correction; by heart .

After about 2 months and a half I was donning glasses and

a Seeing Eye dog (my son's idea).

"Father, you can't possibly expect to finish the novel like this!" My middle child had said to me, as I plucked away another chapter on my hospital bed.

"... Of course, Jonah...why in the hell not?" I had said, before indignantly beginning to type again . My son shook his head and tsst his way through his lunch of ham on rye .

As the days passed, and the novel was getting closer and closer to its plateau, I became hysterical with tears . I couldn't bring myself to end it all .

"More time...you *should've* given me *more time* with her!" I had grimaced, through tears and trembling lips, to the sky as I sat on the balcony. I had become so wrapped in angst, that I had not realized I was on my knees, as if in prayer . In that moment I did not know whether I was crying for Gail or Helaina . I know now that those tears were for us all.

The day before the opening, my daughter Elle'Lorin had taken me to some new specialist, who was particularly genius at treating brain diseases.

"Oh, come on Papa, the guy is genius. You know I'd never take you somewhere detrimental at best . Just go in there and *listen* to him speak...then, decide from there what you want to do...the next step ." She had said to me two days before the opening . Reluctantly, I listened to my daughter, before listening to this Dr . Defough.

"...I feel that you can beat this Mr . Bruishaud . It is classified as the type of brain cancer that is terminal, by definition, ...but whose to speak of the *power* of sheer will, and Love itself. Nature vs . Nurture is a debate that is long standing for a reason, sir ." He had surmised, as I listened to him with the

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precise intent to do just that-listen...and then leave .

I think of his words with a ginger intuitive mulling quality, before I speak . “...and what of will, sir? Why should I want this life in pain? Why should I not leave my children in health? *Why do you expect me to fight? . . .*” I say, with an ounce of incredulity, then anger, before my daughter clips my words.

“*Papa!*” My daughter says, with hurt and astonishment polarizing her voice, and my heart .

“Well...every song must end and begin again under a new sunrise...with a new soul . I do not wish to die an indigent. I do not wish to fill my children’s hearts with worry . I cannot be laid to rest with half of my mind *diseased* and *useless* to me! If...if this is selfish, then- let it be!! I deserve *some quelling!* ...My mother controlled me almost all of my life . My life *consumed* passion *all* of my life! ...all of my life, all of my life...” I say this in heaving strokes before Elle’Lorrin cuts me off once again, this time with a hand on my shoulder and tears before she speaks .

“O o h, P a p a...” –

“No...no sweetheart...I shall finish this... I shall live as long as my memory will allow me, and then...then I shall pay my debt to Mother Nature. Sure it is a debt I had no choice in encumbering; but, it is my debt.” I say this with finality, before I sit back down onto the mauve guest chair in Dr. Defough’s plush New York office.

“Papa...what, what you say sounds like you’re giving up . You speak as if you will beat the cancer by killing yourself before it gets too hard to live .” Elle’Lorrin states, with an aching anger and sadness . I shift in the plush, gather my energies, think of beginnings .

“I know how I might sound to you child ... I know . But, you are blinded, you are blinded to the reality, the rightness in

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my decision, ... all because you love me . And, because I love you, and the rest of the lot, I do as I say . And I will never suppose a latter on that, Elle .” I say to her with compassion in my tone, but also with finality and firmness .

“You sound so harsh, so resolute and bitter . You’re not thinking of my will, of *my wishes* Father . I wish you to live, and – and ... you *have to try* Father, please .” She pleads, clasping my hands to hers with a gentle fire; an ignorant ambition . I suppose, that my finite existence in this universe, was the whole world to her . Still, I could not wither right in front of her, while she blossomed . It would not be fair, or righteous . I would not be her father then . Then, I would be her life, and I had no right to be all of that . Thus, like a mother bird, I’d presuppose, I’d make her fly, while she danced . I’d close her eyes to it, the harshness of a particular kind of death . But, somewhere, in my heart I guess, I wished myself to live . I also knew, had come to terms with, time . Time would not oblige me, and I could not run from its absolution .

“I speak with *conviction* child .” I say simply, squeezing her hand, before the sun leaves the concrete jungle, with golden specks glittering in ricochets of dim light upon skyscrapers .

Goodbyes

[...] An hour later, we made it to our half way point . We rested and ate before boarding another plane . My knees crackled and ached so badly, I began to become agitated before all out anger eroded my speech . I apologized to the nurse before she placidly accepted my apology for throwing my pills in her face . I smiled and told her of Vienna, and how I wished she would come to visit one day . Then, she became silent and less bristle, as my thoughts circumference Helaina and our life together . I even told her of the elicit love affair, before I divorced and married my love, Helaina . She engaged the conversation with understanding and gentle eyes in the middle and end . I was thankful that she could listen past her moment of being upset .

"You think that Italy couldn't get no more beautiful than it already is..." I had said, as we drove towards the grave of my mother . I was gathering my thoughts and emotions as I looked at the ocean . "...come Elissa ...come to Vienna and visit-hell, live there . It is beautiful as well . My wife shall be there . We are to be buried together when I die, but for now, she is waiting in Vienna, at my home . She has been excavated . I have created a beautiful Poetry of words to put on her Tombstone . She...she and I are laced together ." I had said to my nurse, Elissa, quite dreamily, as we sat in the back of a "rental + driver-you c a n't Lose" vehicle.

"I suppose I could visit...see how you are ...*my*, look at that Mr . Bruishad ." she said, before pointing me in the direction of her words . She had spotted a flurry of clouds and birds with colors that glowed in the sunlight . As we passed them, I craned my neck to get one last look at them . They were so beautiful . Elissa smiled heartily, before squeezing my hand . We had made it to the gravesite in a flash after that siting, and my veins became hot with realization .

"Shall we, sir?" Elissa had asked, as she extended her hand to me . I smiled a bit gallantly, as I heaved my bones out of the car .

"...To see her then...to breathe ." I had said to myself more than to Elissa . I gather my cane to me and missed my Seeing Eye dog, that had grew on me so much so, that I had given it a new name; Joan . Then, I don't know what came over me, but the closer we got to my mother's grave, the harder it was to not become angry . My tears ached to be free from within me . I gathered anger and curses for days before I got here and now all that would spill out were tears . *T e a r s!*

"*M-Mother . . .mother*" Is all I could say, before I collapsed into the dirt and tufts of grass that lingered atop the mound that encased her golden casket.

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