

CRY FREEDOM

How long she had been there for no one knew, but that she had been amongst the crowd of women ascending the escalator was beyond question. She stood there at the top one slender hand upon the guard rail next to the moving staircase, that had borne her to the second level. No one had paid her the slightest heed as she rode the escalator, just another of the black veiled women who filled the shopping mall. And yet, in a frozen moment of eternity she had stepped forward the better to view her fellow prisoners below. Their heads were all bowed low as was the custom, eyes averted from the bare headed men lest they draw the ire of the custodians of morality.

But every eye was upon her now. Men stood agape with astonishment and the guards stood betwixt rage and fear. The veil ripped from her face and tossed carelessly to the floor at her feet. Revealing the cascading golden locks that danced down her neck and tumbled onto her shoulders. The morning sunlight streaming in through the towering plate glass windows proudly showing off the highlights in her hair. She turned from side to side with a bemused expression tugging at her lips. And although bereft of makeup there was a definite pout in the fullness of her mouth. One would have expected that lipstick would only have cheapened her with the traditional gaudiness reserved for ladies of the night.

Her complexion was that of someone who'd spent countless hours bathing in the sun's golden glow, drawing the life in as she soaked up the sunlight far from the prying eyes of the thought police. Her skin had taken on the hue of a luscious deep brown, very different from the wasted sallow features of her fellow prisoners. Who gazed fearfully and longingly through the narrow slits in their veils at her cheekbones standing high and proud. Giving silent witness to the Creator's mystical touch. A hint of exquisite singular beauty in the slightly upturned jawline, still with that same whimsical smile drifting over her face.

But it was her eyes that stood out, drawing the attention of all in the crowd. Clear and bright, with a hint of blue, there was freedom and fire in the steady unblinking gaze, defiantly standing out from the crowd. Refusing to bow to the dictates of those who had brought the darkness of their moral creed down around her. The dull grey blanket that had constrained both her and those around, she stood haughtily and proud in spite of their impotent rage.

And yet, there was compassion deeper and more encompassing than a thousand oceans as she stared at those who shrank back shaking with fear. And the few who stretched out their hands, as if they wished to embrace the vision of hope and freedom she had suddenly come to represent. She read the pain of all, the years in chains and the anguish of their oppressors, the guilt of those who'd stood by condemning thousands with the tyranny of their silence. Searching out the secret longings whispered deep into the night, dreams of freedom, liberty, and flight from the chains of slavery.

She averted her eyes from us all as a guard called out in horror and fear. "Cover your head! Have you no shame?"

Fire and ice blazed as one from her eyes, a smoldering look that screamed of rebellion. A cleansing inferno white hot in its intensity and so hatefully loathsome was the look that the guard cast wildly about him, seeking solace from the security of the pack. A cry went up from the crowd as she tore at the black shapeless gown and tossing it disdainfully over the side, she turned and ran. Brown athletic legs flashing in the sun as the gown drifted down to the astonished crowd below. And by the time it hit the fountain, where it hung suspended for a moment before being sucked down into the eddy-she was gone.

The woman in the sparkling halter top and denim shorts had disappeared as if she had been merely a shining mirage in a desert of dark despair. Yet there was not a one among the assembled crowd whether male or female, slave or free who did not feel the cry swelling within their breasts; Cry freedom and let freedom live!!!