

Summon up the Elements

Collection of Flash stories by Joana Teixeira

“Please [don’t] touch the shell.”

And even being able to touch it, I couldn’t. Life’s like that, you know? Outsiders see the shell as something morbid, jagged and cracked. They don’t try to open it, don’t try to see inside. They don’t care, they don’t have to, why should they? Only when it’s tired of fighting against the stream and winds up at the beach, half broken and lost, the outsiders notice **her**. They see the true colours that once were a shell. They notice the metallic beauty inside her. All shades of blue, green, and “Is that purple?” Yes, *it is ma’am*. “It’s beautiful.” *NO, ma’am, she WAS beautiful*. Now it’s just a part of something that had a voice, something complete. Now she is only a piece. A piece of something lost in the sea. Just leave her alone.

People find beauty in broken things. Maybe because they’re broken as well. They broke things to find beauty, to feel beauty. *I’m not alone, the seashell is broken as well. Just like me*. No, ma’am, the seashell is not like you. The beautiful colours can’t save it. Not even you. Beautiful colours can’t save you. Nor dates, nor shopping, nor Vodka. You’re not broken. The seashell lost half of its physique. You lost a piece of soul but learned a lesson. A soul is not a physique; a soul is not a house; a soul is life. And the seashell lost its soul. There’s no way back, **she** feels nothing now. She is nothing.

Witch

The clock was jembing¹ and my thoughts started dancing around it. *Please, shut up!* I moved towards the fire pit. “Witch, witch, witch,” I heard. The fire was growing. The rhythm increasing. I could feel the light burning my face and my lungs. The eyes of

1- Jembe [also known as Djembe] – A West-African Instrument

those who couldn't dance judging me from far and in seconds, I saw my reflection on the flames. "Witch, witch, witch." My mouth silently whispered, *help me*. An immeasurable hole, where my heart once was, bleeding throughout my legs and feeding the fire. They continued, "Witch, witch, witch." A furious crowd dancing around me. I was my reflection now. It was burning like a thousand fears. Why weren't they in peace? Why were they angry? Why me? "Witch."

Why not?

The music broke. They stopped dancing. A beat was lost in the air. Someone coughed. They kept looking. Still standing, quietly.

I was far now. I could hear them gasping at the fire. The same way we do after Tango. A headache I didn't know I had, eased. Was I dead? Was I in peace? I was missing the sound now, "Please, keep going." But no more drums, no more enchantments. *Please...* Why did they stop? Why wasn't I in peace? Why was I angry? They were hurting me, making me feel miserable. Why was I mad? "KEEP GOING," no one heard me. *Please...* "I DEMAND IT, LOOK AT ME," no one looked. "WITCH," I screamed. "WITCH," I started dancing. "WITCH," I cried "WITCH."

Daltonic Monsters

A cold and lifeless air surrounds me. I think a storm is coming. It's the only light in this murky dawn. I feel the tension, like a friend that I wish it was here but it's not – and I hate it for that. The rain's smell approaches me like Sunday's breakfasts from my childhood. I can hear my heart still beating. The red still floating across my

bloodstream. The storm is closer now and my hair is trying to run away, in vain... I know it won't change a thing. I will get caught here or in two countries away. The storm knows my sins. The light comes, even for seconds and I'm still alone. My hair has no place to escape now, the storm is here.

In the world I live, the wind is time. And even though it's cold and wild tonight, the time stands still and my heart breaks a little as you are not here. You were the bright rage inside me but while the storm is smashing my free-will, I'm alone – for eternity.

The storm passed and my eyes are still open. All these lamps are dark but I can only see white. My lungs feel dead but I'm still breathing the emotionless air that stayed. I am still alive...

"Be careful," I remember someone once saying to me, "There are daltonic monsters hiding in the night."

"Nothing to fear, I survived the storm," I now reply while looking at the orange clouds that remained.

Fall

The fall is swift and easy even with the acid burning my throat. I keep dreaming about all shades of green, brown and yellow – a deep valley embraces me. Nothing is real anymore and those who vote against me **are wrong** and shall be punished. The sun is not strong enough to hold my pain and the tears keep running down my face – watering my feet and fusing my roots with this empty bed. I am not leaving. When everyone left, I preserved. I won't leave and those who challenge me otherwise shall be punished. It's not easy being this delicate. All I ever wanted was to be wrong about

this matter, but I'm not. The pain feels real; the chemicals feel real; the ground feels real and it is where I find myself. And it feels good.

The fall is swift and easy and those who rage against me shall be punished. I don't know if I'm losing the love for life or gaining hate for death. The fauna is in between my loss and my achievement. It keeps me here. The green whines, *stay*. The brown trembles, *please don't go*. Nymphs hold me sluggishly like I am one of them, *we need you...* I belong here. There is no other place I'll rather be. I don't need to live. I don't need to die. I just need to lie here and exist. Like nature. And those who **fight me** are wrong and shall be punished.

Rest in peace.