

Weeping Women

The sound of weeping women woke her. Women clad in black. Black scarves covering snow white hair. Black clothes covering pasty, white skin. Lana got out of bed and walked towards the sound of weeping women. The house was pitch black so she had to feel her way along the walls until she got to the living room. She knelt down beside the sliding doors and peeped through the crack where the two sliding doors met. Flames lit up wrinkled, old faces. The fowl stench of smoke entwined within the smell of cognac and Greek style coffee was strangely comforting. It meant that there was still some life left in the house. Weeping women talking yet not making a sound. Lana walking yet not moving. Eyes wide open yet seeing nothing.

Lana was only four but her mum said that she was very mature for her age. This pleased Lana. It made her feel grown up. It meant that she was included in adult conversations. Great Grandma Zoey had been sick for a while and Lana's mum told her that she might die. But that was okay because grandma would go to heaven with God where she would be happy. Lana wasn't afraid of death, nor was she scared that her grandma was dying. Lana was just angry with God for taking her grandma away. Once grandma went to heaven, God would have her all to himself. When grandma Zoey was gone, who would tell her about the adventures of Alexander the Great, and who would call her a mermaid because of her long hair that reached past her knees? No one but grandma Zoey could do these things. Lana only wished that God could share.

Weeping women all sitting together, hunched over. Some drinking coffee, some reading coffee cups. Others rocking back and forth like crazy women, faces buried in hands. Lana couldn't understand why adults tried to hide their faces when they were crying. She thought it was stupid. She wanted to tell them that it was okay to cry. Crying wasn't a bad thing. That being sad wasn't bad.

Lana carefully pulled open the sliding doors and stepped inside the living room. The weeping women jumped up. All of them. They began to yell. "Get the child out of here, she should not be here. She will have nightmares." "No" Lana protested as she was carried out of the living room by her grandma Sofia. "I want to sit with Grandma Zoey too! Why won't you let me sit with her too?" The living room is no longer silent. Now it is buzzing with voices. Voices talking about Lana.

"This is a terrible thing to happen to a child"

"And she was so close to her"

"Do you think Zoey's spirit will stay with Lana?"

"Don't be stupid Anna."

They went on and on. Lana just wanted them all to shut-up. Zoey was her grandma, not theirs and they wouldn't even let her sit with grandma Zoey before they put her in the ground. It just wasn't fair.

The weeping women clad in black, stayed in the living room all night. They pretended to be strong. But the only strong thing in the living room that night was the coffee. They comforted each other with knowing looks and sympathetic smiles. Lana sat in the

hallway clutching her rabbit, Freddie with both hands. There was no way they were taking him away from her too. The weeping women would pass through the hallway like shadows. Dark and silent. Occasionally they would comfortingly pat Lana on the head. But this did not comfort her. It made her angry. She was not a puppy that needed patting. She was a little girl who was confused and searching for answers. Why wouldn't anyone talk to her?

The weeping women with blood-shot red eyes hurried around the house dusting this, washing that, preparing this. This was not a party, Lana thought. They should be spending time with grandma Zoey before she leaves, not making cakes and biscuits. Suddenly one of the shadows picked her up and took her to her room. It was her aunt, but she looked much older than Lana remembered. "Stay here until I come to get you" she said softly. "Why?" asked Lana, with big brown eyes staring up at her aunt. "Just do as you are told, It's for your own good" said the shadow more sternly, as she floated out of the room. Lana crept to the door and opened it just enough so that she could see down the hallway. Weeping women walked behind tall strong men who were carrying her grandma. Carrying her grandma away. Away to God. Tears began to stream down Lana's chubby cheeks.

"Bye, bye grandma, see you soon".