MEDUSA & THE BLIND MAN

BY

GARSEA
PART I

It was a dark night in Athens, the only source of light was atop the mountain where the temple of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, stood. In this tenemos (temple) there were fires fueled by the gods that lined every pillar of the structure, these fires burned from dusk till dawn. Any person who wanted to worship her was welcomed. Athena, who had many admirers, was off overseeing a war, after all she was the world’s best war strategist. With her wisdom came patience which was very vital in times of battle. She was adored by many, especially women, one of which is very well known today, Medusa, whose name means, to protect, to guard.

Many think that Medusa was this hideous monster who purposefully turned men to stone but as all of history goes, this was told by those who conquered and colonized victims and stories like her’s. There’s much more to her story that isn’t as set in stone as many have come to believe which brings me back to that particular night in Athens.

Medusa was in the temple seeking Athena’s wisdom. She searched and searched for the goddess but she was nowhere to be found, she soon realized that she was the only one to be found in this seemingly perfect architectural tenemos. Frustrated, she took a deep breath and then looked up at how the stars mirroring the Gods’ peaked at her amongst the clouds swelling overhead.

Like the sky, her mind was clouded. All she could think about were the questions that she’d ask Athena, they had echoed the corridors of her mind since the beginning of her parlous journey; How can I continue to lead my sisters if they’re immortal and I’m not? Will I ever find someone who gives me peace in this war of love? And how can I calm the storm that rages within me?

Her thoughts begin to overwhelm her so she decided to kneel by the beautiful statue of Athena and begin to pray, reciting her questions in hope that the goddess would hear her.

Just then, the wind picked up with a breeze that sent chills and goosebumps down the spine; a light rain started to fall yet the fires of the Gods’ still burned strong, the sound of crackling embers echoed through the night. Medusa didn’t seem to mind, she actually loved the rain.

At that moment she decided to stay by Athena’s shrine until she returned. She interpreted the weather changing as a test from the goddess.

(A Quick Note) [ Something to remember about the Gods’ is that they maintained their immortality from the praise of people. In a way, some Gods’ became addicted to the power and even resorted to tactics of instilling fear into their admirers. ]

Just then the rain picked up. Medusa, someone who loved the rain became overjoyed. She smiled and started dancing in the rain. It must have been a sign of the Gods’. She thanked all of them loudly!

From the shadows of the temple’s pillars a figure quietly lurked. It was Poseidon, the god of the sea, who watched as this beautiful mortal woman prayed to him. There was something about her that
made him desire her. His mouth watered with worldly desire. He decided to make the rain stronger until it put out all of the fires in the temple. Medusa stopped dancing like the fires did and felt that there was something terribly wrong. The rained pour until the water was above her ankles. She no longer felt welcomed and decided to take that as a sign as well. She’d just come back in the morning and try again. Her sisters, Stheno and Euryale, were waiting for her in the town at the bottom of the mountain. They didn’t know when she would return so they decided to rest because of their tiresome journey that they needed to make back home.

Suddenly, Medusa started to hear steps in the water coming towards hers, her heartbeat picked up, she turned towards the exit of the temple to leave and all of a sudden all of the fires roared and revealed a tall, strong, beautiful man. The rain then ceased completely. Had Athena answered one of her prayers?

You’re beautiful, the man said with a smile as white as pearls. Thank you, Medusa replied. Who are you? I’m who you asked for, am I not? Poseidon said with a smirk upon his face.

Medusa sensed that something was wrong. I should be getting back to my sisters’. They’re waiting for me outside the temple.

No they’re not, Poseidon said with a cold tone.

She then tried to pass by this man to leave but he violently grabbed her arm. He was strong. Don’t walk away from a God like that! You need to show me some respect woman!

I’m sorry, Medusa says, I don’t know who you are. Let go of my arm! She struggled to get away. She then cried out for her sisters’ but Poseidon was right, there was no one outside of the temple or even on that mountain for that matter. Medusa tried to fight back but she knew it was a losing battle, she was caught off guard; her armor, weapons, and shield were with her sisters. A mortal woman left alone with an egotistical God, she was scared for her life.

I’m Poseidon, the man says as he licked his lips with his lusty words. I want you to pray now, he devilishly chuckled. The rain returned as if it were on pause, but now it rained even harder with a ravenous storm brewing overhead, the sound of thunder echoed the heavens. He ripped her clothes off and raped her until she was no longer conscious.
PART II

Medusa woke up to coughing blood, water, and vomit. Her entire body ached, she began to cry a praise for Athena asking for her help. The cries echoed the temple and then she appeared. A beautiful woman walked over to this woman by her shrine, she stood as her statue, with a discerning look alongside a presence of power. She looked at this mortal and was up-mostly disgusted at what she seen. She felt nothing but disrespect that someone(Medusa) would defile her shrine in such a way. Of course, she didn’t know the full story but her Godly arrogance brought her to certainty.

Woman! Athena says with a thunderous tone. You dishonor my temple and for that you must pay. From this day forth any man that looks at you shall turn to stone and die. I can turn you to a hideous monster but then who would want to come for you? No, you are already beautiful so I will make you even more beautiful so that men cannot help but to look at you, men will mistake you for Aphrodite, goddess of beauty, they will speak of your beauty and it will spread across the lands, men will come far and wide to see you or to slay you, and you will cause them nothing but pain and death. When someone looks at you your silk fluorescent dark long hair will turn to snakes and your eyes will become as bright as the sun. No one will ever love you because of this. You disgust me vile woman. Be gone or I shall be less merciful.

Medusa, who’s petrifying fear held her tongue got up and ran from the temple. She ran and ran to the town to find her sisters. She screamed their names. They were on the other side of town but still happened to hear her, they ran towards her voice immediately.

As Medusa was descending the steps from the mountain a man seen her, he was filled with worried because of her torn bloody clothes. He ran over to see if he could help. She sees a man running towards her and tries to run away but to only trip and fall. He goes to her and helps her up. Hey, are you okay? He says. No, she says. saying all of this talk of turning men into stone, that she’s cursed and so forth, I’m a monster; she says.

What!? You’re the furthest thing from that, you’re the most beautiful woman that I’ve ever seen! He turns her head to look at him. Medusa, having your eyes closed is paralyzed by fear. Why won’t you open your eyes? He says.

She tells the man that the Gods’ have cursed her to turn any man into stone if she looks at them.

Lucky for you I don’t believe in the Gods’, the man tells her. Listen, sometimes people think they hear things from the Gods’ when they go through something terrible. You have blood on your clothes and it looks like someone really hurt you. It’s okay, I’m here to help you. Open your eyes and see for yourself. It’s going to be okay! Just trust me.

Medusa afraid but desperate for help decides to open her eyes. And when she does she is surprised because she sees a beautiful man standing before her. He smiles and she smiles back at him. You see! He says. Suddenly, she hears hissing from her head. She’s staring at the man and watches his face go pale. Her vision flashes and then a man of stone is all that is in front of her. She is broken. She falls down from heartbreak.
Medusa’s sisters finally came to where her cries came from and instead of finding her, all they found was a statue of a terrified man. . . They never seen their sister again.

F I V E   Y E A R S   P A S S E D

We find Medusa in the mountains of Argos, Greece.

Years prior she found that many of the caves in the mountains were connected, she learned every entrance and exit because just as Athena had said, men had traveled far and wide just for her. Many had died and only few had lived to speak of the monstrous beauty that turns men into stone. Every night she cried, she was alone and forever without the one thing she ever wanted, love. She tried to take her life many times but Poseidon being God of the Lands and Seas didn’t allow her to, he took amusement with her pain. She even tried to look at her own reflection but it turns out that only men turn to stone at her gaze, women were somehow prone to it. She thought about finding her sisters’ but she couldn’t, she was too ashamed of who she came to be, a servant of death. She grew resentment for men and for herself, *how could I put myself in such a vulnerable position? I was such a fool.* She had nothing but hate in her heart, there was no hope for her. She would live out her days as a monster of men.

But then, an un-expecting evening like that one dreadful night happened. It was dark and began to rain with a stormy vengeance. Medusa, who now hated the rain did not dance nor smile, anymore for that matter, she allowed her bitterness to become part of who she now was. I mean what reasons did she have to act otherwise?

She was at the mouth of a cave sitting by her fire when she heard a sound. It sounded like a man in pain or a man getting ready to fight, she grabbed her bow and arrow and waited. She could one shot, one kill any man. Though she wanted death, she would not allow a man to ever harm her again. The sound grew closer, and closer, then out from the depth of the cave stumbled a man. It was clear that he couldn’t see where he was going from how he walked. *Go away!* She yelled. *Please! I am without food or warmth. I was abandoned and left for dead by the men of the mountains. Allow me to stay the night and I will be on my way first thing in the morning.* Medusa felt no threat in his voice and could make out that he had no weapon or armor of any kind.

It was too dark and the man was too far for eye contact so she wasn’t worried. Medusa feeling no threat but the emptiness inside her decided to allow him passage to her company, after all this had been the first nonviolent conversation that she had had in years. She was lonely and desperate for any type of human contact. As the man approached she could now see something in his hands, she stood up quickly and aimed her bow. *Drop what you have in your hands or I will shoot!*

*I need this to help guide me. I’m blind,* the man said as he raised his hands up.

Surprised, Medusa asked, **how did a blind man end up in the mountains of Argos by himself?**
The men that abandoned me—I was their prisoner. The man walked closer to the fire and found a flat stone to sit on. He warmed his hands. I was sentenced to be blinded and banished because of what I’ve seen. I used to work in the finest brothel in the city, if there is such a thing, and one night I seen that the queen was there, in the company of a man that wasn’t the king though. I didn’t really care but she noticed that I seen them and instantly asked that I was to be brought to her. She was a kind woman who couldn’t have me killed but she needed to keep this a secret so she ordered my eyes to be blinded by the sun and for me to be banished in the mountains of Argos. Mercy, she called it. A life of no beauty is all I’ve came to know. She said, if I was to live it’d be only by the will of the Gods’, the man chuckled.

The will of the Gods’, Medusa laughed and shook her head. I can assure you that there are no Gods’ here, just me, Medusa, the monster of men.

Medusa? You don’t sound like a monster. I’ve heard tales of your name but you don’t seem to fit them, at least from what I can see, he chuckled. Tell me, do you have snakes upon your head, eyes like fire, and a serpent tale instead of legs? Should I be afraid? The man leaned towards her direction with open icy blue eyes vacant of vision.

She was silent in her curiosity then said, you should be afraid. in an observant tone.

He just smiled and said, I’ll see about that.