

The Adulterous Woman

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The chilling wind ripped at my clothes. From the ground, I looked up at the cross before me. There hung my Lord, my Master, my Treasure, my Love. Tears streamed freely down my cheeks as I remembered the first time my eyes had seen him.

I stumbled along the dusty path trying to drown out the jeering voices that filled my ears. I glared at the bright morning sunlight that seemed to join them against me. I had been caught. And now I would die. All I wanted was to be loved. Was that a crime? Didn't everyone want that? I just wanted someone to need me, worry about me, want me. And now I would die and who was there to defend me? I should have known that it wasn't possible, that what I was looking for couldn't really exist, at least, not for someone like me. Here I was, left to face my stones alone. And no one cared. Before I could stop it, a desperate sob escaped my lips.

My shaking hands clutched my clothing protectively around me. Through the blur of my tears, I made out the looming gates of the temple. Here? Why are they bringing me here? They will have their sport in throwing their stones; must they first shame me in front of everyone here? As my hostile escort came to a halt inside the temple walls, I tried to let my legs collapse under me, but was ruthlessly pulled back to my feet, made to stand, exposed and vulnerable to the snickering of all. I felt shame surging over me. They were treating me as an animal, and no wonder, for that's all I was to them. I heard the harsh voices ring out but no words entered my ears. If only it would be over already. If only the ground would swallow me up. If only...

My eyes were clamped shut. But why were they dragging this sentence out? What were they waiting for? I was condemned! There was no question of my guilt. I knew the sentence—everyone knew the sentence! Why couldn't they just get it done? I chanced a quick glance up. I tried desperately to look back down, but my eyes were trapped. Another's eyes had caught them and I couldn't get away. My appointed judge. But those eyes looked at me like no man had ever looked at me. For a split-second, I forgot my tears and my accusers and I felt my heart leap. This is what I had been searching for all my life. Love did exist! It was in those eyes. This was the end to the search that was now the reason for my death. My moment of joy turned to anguish. Now that I found the treasure, I was about to lose it.

I caught a glimpse of hands reaching for stones and I sunk to the ground bracing myself. Why, after all my life, would I find him only now when it's too late? My body grew tense as the stones began to fall, but I felt nothing. Why weren't they hitting me? Was this a new form of torture, to drive the victim to insanity before killing her? All sound died out, but I didn't dare to move. Finally I lifted my head and found only him before me. They had gone and I was alive. Because of him, I was alive.

I looked once again to the figure on the cross. Once I had thought that love was not possible—not for me. I had been on my way to die and I thought that no one cared. But he had cared—for here he was, exposed, vulnerable, and mocked in front of everyone. He was taking my stones.