

LIFE FORCE
BY
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Rain traced lines down the large viewing windows as Alex looked out across the runway.

Jet engines fired powerful thrusts filling the air with sound.

Alex could smell the powerful fumes of aviation fuel as she looked across the shimmering runway at the planes backed up for take off.

Athens witnessed the heavy storms that had buffeted the mainland before heading toward Santorini and Crete.

Crete felt its full force with cars washed out to sea and coast roads and cliff paths alike disappearing beneath floodwaters and waves.

Alex turned facing Marko and she smiled wryly.

“Tell me just how long have we been waiting for this flight.”

“About three hours but look on the bright side we have a week on the beach to recover.” Marko replied.

“Why are you so calm about this Marko?” Alex stated.

“How many times have you failed to make a flight”? He challenged.

“Never but it’s a working holiday the sooner were there the better.” Alex replied.

“Stop worrying we are getting paid for sitting on a beach every other day some call it research but its happy days relax and go with the flow.” Marko answered.

Whilst they talked an announcement boomed out.

“Olympic Flight 3030 for Santorini will be boarding from gate 33 in forty five minutes.”

“Air Olympic apologises for any inconvenience caused by late arrivals inbound due to the adverse weather conditions.”

“We will be riding donkeys down the cliff path and walking in pain at the bottom.” Marko joked.

Arriving late into the resort airport they waited patiently for the hotel mini bus.

Late into the hotel and hungry, a trip for a bite to eat was needed.

Checking into separate rooms, they freshened up before venturing out.

They were soon walking along narrow winding streets searching for a café bar.

Alex spotted bright lights on a side street in the distance.

“Marko look an open café bar.” Alex stated.

They entered the café and watched like hawks as the busy staff served customers.

With envious eyes, they looked at the rows of inviting ice-cold beers lined up in the chillers.

Thirsty and hungry they headed back to the hotel with their chicken dinners washed down with ice-cold beers.

Next morning they explored the resort.

Santorini was just as it looks in the brochures stunning deep azure blue seas framed by steep dark volcanic cliffs with whitewashed buildings like icing on a wedding cake.

Walking down the narrow winding stone cobbled streets, nearing the cable car station; Alex noticed an advert promoting an art exhibition in a local museum.

“Look Marko.” Alex exclaimed.

Marko turned and read the flyer out.

“Akrotiri speaks to a new world through beautiful frescoes reanimating a world trapped by Nature and preserved in time.”

“Sounds interesting we can see it on our way out this evening.” Alex replied.

They dressed smartly first nights away are exciting.

“Look at you Alex you look almost datable.” Marko teased.

“Your the hired help remember get your camera and less of your lip.” Alex answered.

Alex looked at Marko for a moment he was a friend but work was work.

Pictures, interviews, and the head of marketing lining up days of endless seminars on telecoms, it was to be a very busy week.

“Are we heading for the restaurant overlooking the bay Alex.”? Marko enquired.

“Yes we can stroll down to the jazz bar for a nightcap later.” Alex replied.

“Have we enough time to take in the exhibition on our way Marko.”

“No problem boss lets get going.” Marko smiled.

Winding dark passageways led them to a narrow cliff top path that had a sheer drop over a small wall.

They admired the views as the evening sky was lit up by shimmering street lights around the coastline away in the distance.

“Marko how far up is the museum.” Alex enquired.

“See the archway at the crest of the hill just behind that a long driveway leads you to the entrance.” Marko stated.

“We will have about an hour before it closes Marko.” Alex stated.

Moonlight illuminated the early evening sky and danced across the ancient bay formed over 3400 years ago by the Minoan eruption.

They reached the heavy double doors of the museum and entered.

A receptionist greeted them she was sat at a desk situated near the doors.

Brochures and flyers on Santorini covered the desk.

“Good evening.” The receptionist greeted them.

“Two tickets please.” Alex replied.

“You can follow the route on the tickets or take a random tour around the exhibition.” The receptionist added.

Marko looked at Alex and shrugged his shoulders.

“Toss a coin heads I take the route tails you.”

Alex threw the coin high into the air and they watched intently as it landed on the polished black marble floor and rolled under the receptionist’s desk.

Alex shook her head and smiled broadly at Marko trying hard not to laugh.

“Marko you take the random tour meet me back here in an hour.” Alex stated.

“Take your time Alex enjoy the tour.” Marko replied.

“Be careful Marko.” Alex answered.

He turned and walked on then stopped dead in his tracks and he milled over her words.

Be careful what of he asked himself.

Displays led Alex around the atmospheric museum the vivid colours and modern appearance of the frescoes captivated her senses and fired her imagination.

Alex was fascinated she had never seen the frescoes up close before.

Sacred blue birds perched on the branches of sacred oak trees a goddess dressed in blue robes and two handmaidens dressed in white and yellow sat on a sacred rock.

A scene from a lost world captured by an unknown artist for millions of eyes to admire for eternity.

No words are needed when you have the work of talented artists filling your mind and vision with rich vibrant colours and life from an ancient world.

Alex was drawn to the figure of the goddess she stared into her large almond shaped eyes.

She had red crocuses painted on her cheeks and large dragonfly earrings whilst around her neck a chain with butterflies, honeybees and sacred birds rested gently on her tanned chest.

She wore a flared bell shaped light blue saffron dress with dark blue red and yellow circles on the arms and hem with a dark blue sash belt drawn tight at the waist.

Her dark almond shaped eyes glowered back out at Alex sending shivers through her body.

Hairs stood up on the back of her neck.

Lights repeatedly flashed and she felt herself spinning her stomach churned and heaved as she fell faster towards the darkness.

Her mind was in turmoil as she continued to struggle against the strange feelings overtaking her senses.

She awoke slowly feeling tired and dazed she looked around at the light sandy coastline before looking out toward the distant horizon black sails dotted the horizon.

Before her, she could see figures on the shoreline dancing wildly hands raised towards the heavens.

A man approached her wearing a golden mask with three silver doves inlaid on the cheek.

“Mistress your people wait will you speak to them directly or let the spirit within talk.” He enquired.

“What is this some sort of weird cult”? Alex replied.

She was unsteady on her feet and nervous.

“Mistress the spirit within you speaks a tongue we do not understand.” Replied the priest.

People watched her mesmerised by her words.

Open mouthed the priest stared at Alex.

Crowds gathered around her, chanting, and singing hymns, they stared wide-eyed as she spoke again.

“You’re like the figures in the frescoes I must be dreaming.” wake up Alex wake up.”

She shouted loudly.

Two maidens approached her they gently held her hands and led her toward the shoreline.

Waves gently lapped against her feet cooling them as the water ebbed back and forth.

They pointed towards the fast approaching oared ships black sails billowing in the stiff warm summer breeze.

“Paiawon and Rhadys have guided our fleets return from Sicania.” the handmaiden stated.

“With your blessing Britomarpis they sailed and your power protects them Mistress.”

Alex listened but she had no idea what the maidens had told her.

“Sorry... I know you mean me no harm but I wish someone could understand me.” Alex replied.

She felt confused and alone what had happened to the world she knew.

People gathered and looked expectantly towards her waiting on her words.

Alex had become Britomarpis high priestess and mistress of animals.

She thrilled crowds her magical powers had them spellbound.
Alex looked around her the landscape was lush and green and the sea surrounded the island on all sides.

It formed a perfect circle like a shield cast upon a lake.

Cone shaped peaks reached towards the clear blue skies above.

No electricity pylons or busy roads spoiled the views but it was quiet only the noise of waves gently breaking on the shoreline interrupted the silence.

Was she dreaming she looked at the tall figure approaching bracing herself for the worst?

“Where are you from?” The priest asked as he stared into her eyes.

“Who are you spirit talk to me?” He demanded menacingly.

Alex smiled at the priest and pointed to the sky copying the actions of her seven handmaidens.

“Mnoitai you serve me never question what is beyond your comprehension.” Alex replied.

She looked at the crowds as they continued gathering on the shoreline.

Closing fast the fleet of black sailed ships loomed large into vision and one by one, they beached.

Men and women embraced as they ran wildly down the sandy beach.

Laughter filled the air as excited voices chattered like birds before sunrise.

Alex looked down the quayside road and was startled by the dark tall figures walking purposefully towards her.

As they neared, they lowered their eyes and removed their helmets.

“Britomarpis you look beautiful as always Kydonians loss is our gain.”

Alex could understand every word he spoke.

Paiawon looked at Alex and smiled.

“Sister we have good news our alliance with Sicania is secured at a price.” Paiawon stated.

Alex could not take her eyes away from the warrior stood beside her brother.

He walked slowly towards Alex and stopped in front of her.

Leaning forward, he whispered “Britomarpis you’re free cast the seal of Poseidon into the sea he has Minos and Aeacus in the underworld for company now.”

Mistress wears the seals of Phaistos and Kydonia rule with me claim your birthright.”

“Rhadys your father will soon be here and he will need your support his loss is greater than the campaigns rewards.”

Alex walked slowly to the headland she stopped on the edge and wrapped the seal of Poseidon in an old fishing net.

Then cast the seal into the sea below from the cliffs edge.

Alex ...Alex...Alex...she could here a faint voice calling repeatedly.

“Are you OK?” asked Marko.

“Let me go back life is sacred there please let me go.” Alex rambled

Her voice faltered as she slipped away again.

She laid motionless on the black marble floor her shoulder length jet-black hair blending with the floor.

It was quiet the only noise breaking the silence came from Marko as he cradled Alex in his arms tears traced paths down his cheeks.

“Please don’t go stay with me Alex.” He whispered.

Alex could hear the sea gently lapping against the shore Rhadys held her hand gently and talked to her slowly.

“Release the spirit Britomarpis be yourself once more.”

Rhadys replied.

“Poseidon as no control over you the gods cannot control or hold spirit Britomarpis they envy its power.” Rhadys stated.

Britomarpis blinked three times then sighed as she breathed out and closed her eyes.

Alex lay motionless on the museum floor as the paramedics scrambled into the museum.

Marko felt a mixture of guilt and relief as they began to revive her.

“Are you her husband?” Enquired the paramedic.

“N... No.” Marko stuttered.

“We work together she is a friend.” Marko replied.

“What’s she called?” enquired the paramedic.

“Alex.” Marko answered.

“Alex... Alex can you hear me you have had a fall were just checking you out and will put you on oxygen to help you with your breathing were going to put the mask over your nose now nothing for you to worry about Alex.”

“Does she have a history of blackouts or as she complained of feeling light headed.” the paramedic asked

“No I can’t remember her having a day off sick in the four years I have worked with her.” Marko answered.

“It looks like an adrenalin inrush as forced her heart and lungs to work overtime causing her to blackout.”

“Once we stabilize her breathing she should be fine.” He finished.

Marko looked away, he caught sight of a small butterfly its wings gently caressed the air as it circled gracefully above Alex.

Alex moved and opened her eyes slowly looking around the room she looked confused and startled as she studied the people surrounding her.

“Alex... Alex can you hear Me.” the paramedic enquired.

She stared right through him and then spoke.

“Santi ke-ke-me-na pa-I –to.”

“What language is she speaking.” the paramedic enquired.”

“She speaks English and Italian but I have never heard a language like it before.”

“Alex... you ok.” Marko asked as he stared into her eyes.

“Pa –ji-wo.” She replied.

She stared at the frescoes behind Marko and smiled as she studied them.

Scenes she had known since she was a young girl displayed in the temples of Phaistos, Akrotiri, and Kydonia covered the wall.

Britomarpis looked at the blue butterfly circling her and knew Rhadys was right spirit was stronger than the gods.

She looked at Marko and smiled then closed her eyes and when she awoke, Rhadys was stood beside her.

He nodded “your spirit as returned Britomarpis, Poseidon no longer controls your life or feelings you deserve to live free from service we can be as one.” Rhadys replied.

Marko listened as the paramedics spoke to their colleagues before giving her the all clear.

They checked her reflexes and her vision as she sat up slowly.

Alex felt sheepish about all the attention and fuss as the paramedics continued checking her blood pressure and heart rate.

“You know how to shake up a museum and me.” Marko whispered gently in her ear.

Alex smiled at Marko and replied.

“Relax Marko we will be on the beach tomorrow thanks for staying with me.”

“We could be more than friends Alex what happened today confirmed my feelings for you.” Marko replied.

“This new Marko sounds interesting a change for the better.” Alex replied.

“Is that a yes to my question Alex”? Marko answered.

Alex nodded her head and Marko smiled broadly as they embraced.

