

*I flew through this story. I didn't feel like it was rushed and I wasn't trying to write it so fast, it just happened. Which is good because going into it I had zero idea what I was going to write about and thought it was going to be one of those, "Oh shit, I have writer's block this is going to be a tough one," days. I leaned a little bit more toward horror this week. I hope you enjoy and thanks for reading. Have a very merry Wednesday.*

### Mother

**Word Count: 1053**

**Writing: 41 minutes**

**Editing: 12 minutes**

**Total Time: 53 minutes**

The city was so bad, even the animals were mean. It didn't matter to the young man though, this was where he'd grown up, it was home, and he knew how to handle himself on the streets unlike most of the pilgrims who passed through. Dodging and ducking through the fallen pillars and debris he made his way to the worship center where there would be a parcel of food waiting for him as there was every week. Mother had grown sick years ago when he was only just a boy, but before she had, she'd taught him how to handle himself like a man.

"And what do we do the second we leave the house?" She'd asked him each time they departed on whatever new mission of survival that day held.

"Grab hold tight the handle of my blade, for if it's a fight they want, we aren't the ones to be slayed." He smiled now as he squeezed the very same handle that lay sheathed on his waist. Mother had always made easy rhymes to help him remember the rules and keep safe, and once he'd repeated them to her she always smiled down on him and said with a pat on the head,

"You're a good boy."

Some of the older people, his mother included, would tell him stories of the world before it'd changed, but it was always hard for the boy to imagine. For him, it was like trying to imagine one's own birth, a memory a man could pretend to remember because he knew the mechanics of the situation, but never truly know. From what he'd heard though it'd been a magical place.

Color lit the streets of the city where they lived and people sold amazing mechanical merchandise that had powers beyond his own simple understanding. Men, women and children had parties day and night celebrating nothing more than being alive on the Earth that was. Then the flying people appeared in the sky, and life went dark for the human race.

A noise rattling behind the young man's left shoulder brought his mind back to reality and away from his memories and legends of old.

"What do we do with our eyes when we walk through the street?" Another of his mother's questions danced nostalgically through his mind.

"We keep our eyes on the prize, so the gypsy witches don't pluck them and use them as spies." In his head, the voice that repeated the rhyme to his mother was not the deep voice of the man he'd become, but the sweet light voice of the boy he still felt he was. Although it'd been some time since he'd come across a gypsy in the streets, he knew they were always there, watching and waiting for some innocent traveler to be moving a bit too absentmindedly.

After another moment of stealthy running he came upon the door of the worship center, and just like every other week he knocked on the door using the heavy piece of metal that had been attached.

"Name?" Came a deep voice that seemed to echo from the sky.

"Son of Theda," he replied.

"Mother Theda?" Asked the ominous voice.

"Growing stronger by the day," it was the same as every week for years now. Though the young

man had never entered the place of worship his mother had been a member, and the place always took care of its members, after all they were the ones that had once fought the flying people.

Without another word a heavy, wet parcel fell at his feet. There were no more words to be exchanged, the young man grabbed the brown package and turned to run back the he'd come.

"And when do we walk my sweet boy?"

"Never." The boy replied in his head. This was not a command to be taught with a rhyme, mother had made it clear, to walk, meant to die.

As he ran back the way he came he looked down the street at the horizon. A pilgrim man mother and he had met once told them of something called salvation just beyond the dark and beaten city. It was why strangers even decided to pass through the town.

"The road to heaven is paved with miles of hell," the strange man had said. The boy hadn't then nor did he now know what the words meant, and before he could ask, mother had cut the pilgrim down. It was another lesson for the boy, strangers who babble aren't to be trusted and should be killed on sight.

He smiled as he remembered all the wonderful things his mother had taught him and he rounded the final corner to their house.

"And when we get home what is the final thing we do before leaving the street?" Her voice in his head was magical.

"Turn to make sure we're not known, and if so draw the blade from the sheath." It was the final step to ensure their safety and now the young man scanned the street with his back against the heavy wooden door. Once he was satisfied no gypsy witches, pilgrims, or other dangers lurked in the dark he entered the house.

"Mother, I'm home safe with food for the week." He called running up the stairs and dropped the package on the table where she sat. It was her spot and she'd been there for years.

He shooed the flies that remained away from her body and wished the sickness hadn't stolen her voice. At first the smell of her was nauseating but now he welcomed it like the aroma of a favored memory.

"Mother will you be eating this week? You're looking much better." The exposed teeth and jaw didn't move and the empty eye sockets told him nothing. He sighed and opened the parcel.

"Very well, maybe next week you will be feeling better until then I will make sure no food goes to waste. After I'm through maybe we can play a game or read a story." Those were his favorite things to do with mother. And though she wasn't as interested as she'd once been before the sickness took hold, he knew she enjoyed the activities. After all, they were one of a kind, each other's forever and ever.