

Like the *faces* of the moon

It was time for a change...

Death came knocking at her door, her husband's silhouette on the other side. His wolf-like yellow eyes, vibrant against the night sky behind him, bore into her so intensely that her scars and bruises came alive with an inhumane torture. Her heart was beating too fast for a pulse, and the pounding in her head was in sync with her hammering heart. As he slammed the door behind him, an aura of darkness emanated from him like deadly musk. He barked her name so ferociously that she tasted the bitterness at the tip of her tongue.

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She felt his absence even before her eyes opened to the morning sun. Without doubt she knew he would be in the kitchen, so she freshened up and headed downstairs. He was hunched over the stove, encompassed in the smell of scrambled eggs. As if sensing her presence, he turned around. His smile lit up his face as he greeted her and served breakfast with his contagious energy. She knew that today would be a good day.

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He approached the dinner table with such arrogance, as if he could reach the sky in height or tear apart the earth he walked on. "The food is colder than the devil's heart." Before she could articulate a response, his hand lashed across her face like a whip. She felt the stinging imprint of the monster's hand on her cheek, burning like a fire brand. She tried to apologize, but he grabbed her by the hair and threw her against the wall. She sank to the

floor, lying like a beautiful corpse. Her acidic tears dissolved every inch of skin they touched.

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She couldn't see his face behind the enormous bouquet of her favourite red roses he cradled in his arms. He came home early to take her out for a movie and explore the city with her. He escorted her to the car and held the door for her. After getting settled himself, he turned up the radio, knowing she loved nothing more than to sing along to the music as he drove. Being in each other's company made them both happy. They laughed until their eyes watered and their cheeks burned. When they finally got home, she was happy that she had captured their day and could preserve the memories.

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The anguish thrust her back into reality, and even now, the pain of those memories still lingered. Some scars never heal – they claw inside the soul and carve themselves a home. He would return with a handful of salt to apply to her fresh wounds. She never escaped the battlefield, at least not mentally. She shattered and scattered into infinite pieces on account of one touch.

The click of the key in the lock signaled her husband's arrival. It was impossible to tell which face of his she would see today. As he entered the doorway, she chanced a look at his face; it was as pale as the full moon behind him. Today he didn't need an excuse, his hands just ached to strike her, scrunching her vulnerable face in his massive animal hands. He didn't understand that things were different now – she would take a life to save one. Her

fingers clutched at his wrist, digging so deep, as if intending to sever his hand from his arm. He was taken aback, bewilderment dancing on the surface of his eyes. His grip faltered and he retreated backwards. She pounced on him like a predator on its prey, and her slap sent him crashing against the floor.

It was as if he possessed an alter ego, and this side of him made her doubt his humanity. She had to put an end to this shape-shifting nature of his.

“You are hurting me, and our baby.” In an instant, the harsh lines of his face eased, and instead contorted into a painful image. Tears spilled down his face, and she knew he was seeing their world through her eyes.

“I, I...I don’t want this life for the baby. I want our baby to have a father.”

She knelt beside him, and he held onto her like she was an antique, able to bear and endure the worst and, simultaneously, the most vulnerable and fragile of things. He whispered into her ear, “It is time for a change.”