

## **Diamond of Solitude**

By: Medha Gaddam

So there I was, as the rain pattered against the old castle walls. Deep cries echoed from within. The ardent fire roared, waiting for me. I couldn't see anything. The wind screamed, telling me to drink it, to suffer, to languish. He glided towards me. The bottle was inches away from my lips. Please, I begged. If I opened my mouth, he would kill me. I backed up, my legs like lead. One more step and I would become pieces on the giant club, hanging in front of the dungeon to protect the castle from intruders. I held the jewel, afraid to let go, to see with my very own eyes my mother dead. She lay on the top tower, almost dead, not breathing. "Please, why do you want it? What do you want to do with it?" I begged him, half crying, half laughing, gone mad. But it was only in my thoughts. His blood stained robes swirled around, dripping water. His silver beard hung down, up to his chest. "Please, my mother needs this. It's the only way to bring her back". He, one of the greatest sorcerers in the world, was deaf to my thoughts. I fell, my head filled with agony. My mother, alone, a whispering voice saying, "I need it," all was gone. I was dying, screaming, it was over. The diamond of solitude was the only thing that would save my mother from her dying madness, and it was gone, it was with him. I looked up to see his wet face, a look of pleading to forgive him, and he was gone. With a painful cry I turned around, and saw my mother dying by the second, her beautiful face twisted in distress, her body writhing with pain. Please, please, I begged, myself seconds away from death. With one last cry, my heart stopped, my tears stopped, but my love, and empathy of pain for my mother and the horror of the sorcerer did not fade.

Silvery moonlight masked my face. My eyes opened, trembling. There was a strong, bitter taste in my mouth. I sat up, retching. I looked up, and suddenly remembered everything that had happened a few hours before. Quivering, I slowly opened my hand, and there it was, the Diamond of Solitude. Why did the sorcerer give it back? Suddenly, a thought struck me. Had he fed me that potion? I screamed, recollecting all the events that had happened before, before this era, before this life.

The early morning sun rose, happy and bright. Mother was young lady back then, named Morgana. She was beautiful, with long black hair cascading down her back, her eyes night black, and her dark red lips small and always in a smile. She was loved by all, but most by her father, the king of the ravens. He was a powerful but kind man, who never ceased to fulfill his daughter's wishes. But one day, she asked for something that broke the king's heart, and filled him with hatred. She had asked for love. Her father had treasured in his heart the only thing that had given him warmth after her mother died, the universal love of his daughter, his daughter's love belonging to no one but himself. His heart was shattered, hearing those words, uttered from the lips of Morgana. He had sent her away, unable to say no, and unable to say yes. That night, the night which my mother would regret forever, was the night she ran away with the man she loved. The king's rage overtook the distance which they had covered, sounding in the ears of themselves. "I shall die, and destroy the Diamond of Solitude, the source of my daughter's life, and that I will do when the fruit of her womb turns the age when the diamond will lead her life instead of my daughter's, for I have learned that my daughter cares not for me, the person that had raised her from her birth, but for another." From then on, as the king aged and grew into an old man, waiting for the day where his heart would be satisfied, his daughter grieved, her

husband dead, tenderly raising myself, her daughter. My mother had told me this story so many times, and I had been dreading the day on which I would have to face the destruction of the diamond, the end of my life. It had finally come.

The king, my grandfather had faced me on top of the castle that my mother had run away from him 25 years ago. He had wanted to take the diamond from us, but had failed, because a father's love for his daughter was unconditional. He had fed me the potion, forcing me to remember everything. He had died soon after, now his cold body lying next to me. Remembering the cause of his sorrow told me what to do. I grasped the diamond and stood up trembling. I took his hand in mine and heaved him over to where my mother's body lay. Putting the diamond in his palm, quivering, I placed my mother's hand on top. Thunder shook the ground. Lightning crackled, bolting down from the sky onto their hands. A resounding voice boomed, saying only five words, "The Diamond of Solitude, sleep!" That told the Diamond to not determine anyone's life anymore.

They both rose, rubbing their eyes. My mother glanced around, and seeing her father, she burst into tears. The king smiled, his eyes wet. My mother turned towards me. "Gwendolyn, thank you." I smiled, knowing that their hearts were peaceful at last. "It's yours." The king said, smiling at me. Picking up the diamond, I threw it over the castle towers, where it shattered into pieces on the giant club.