Believe is Birth

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Believe is Birth

by Obstgarten

Summary

Believe.

Belief is like a melody. A song, sung in the rhythm of an endless mantra which thousands have perfected over thousands of years. It is the silent hope and conviction of a soul that needs to believe otherwise their reality would only consist of hope, a reality as fleeting as air. It's a prayer to a spirit you have somewhat known your whole life but never truly seen. It's the wonder of the mind that gives life to everything good and bad.

So what happens when humans pray to another of their kind convinced of their spirit nature?

They create life.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

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Malu remembers what happens when fire gets lit with anger and hate.

She had seen the consequences at the age of nine and then she had never stopped witnessing the horror the Fire Nation couldn't help create again and again.

Burned temples once filled with laughter and joy. Villages razed to the ground in a mad men's chase. Forests reduced to nothing but a pile of ash. It tears through the life of millions of innocents. Leaving nothing behind other than broken souls which are left to pick up the pieces or leave those behind as well.

Malu is one of the innocent that had no choice but to stay silent when the Fire Nation attacked the Eastern Air Temple. The screams of her family never stopped haunting her. While the temple burned, Malu hid in a tiny hollow within the mountain. Hidden from view with her hands enclosed over her mouth for three days to muffle her wailing as everyone burned around her.

The first day the attack came sudden and vicious like a weed snake striking when you least suspect it with poison that kills in a few hours. The whole night she could hear the screaming like a mantra of pain that couldn't be stopped. On the second day the soldiers smoked out all the remaining nomads that had hidden themselves like Malu. It was horrible to hear them all alone with no one by their side knowing that she would be next. Yet she still prayed with every silent tear for their forgiveness and her safety. On the third day the mountain on which the Temple remained was finally quiet with the air still like a blanket, with no wind to sweep away the smell of burned flesh.

She vomited multiple times that day, and quit as a mouse.

On the third night under the new moon, Malu grabbed her mothers staff close to her chest and flung herself off into the tiny wind current that swept by her.

How she even came over the ocean to the Earth Kingdom is nothing short of a miracle.

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‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’ is a spirit that remembers so much pain even in her short existence that it is hard for her not to lose herself in rage whenever she sees even the tiniest of flames.

The village she protects lays between mountains of which she doesn't know the name of. It’s by far not the only home she can recall, however it's the only one that knows *her* name.

She is the most powerful spirit that resides in the local forest protecting it from any harm the children of Agni might bring to it and she loves the people of the town called Gaoling. They are her children for all intents and purposes and their love and adoration they show to her in every offering they gave her for nearly a hundred years since they began calling her ‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’, is the language of love for every spirit in the human world.

It's pure and sweeter than honey.

Though even when she found a home with spirit friends and the children of the earth. There is a certain longing that won't leave her alone.

The plain truth is that ‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’ has not always been a spirit and protector of the earth children.

Once upon a time she was a young woman that was driven by righteousness and the need for revenge. Isolated for years and all alone to teach herself the way of her people that became harder to remember over the years that flew by in a cruel and steady rhythm. She had once been a human who had sought out armies that had come up the mountains, destroying their tanks and other war machines that only brought death with them.

With more and more actions she had taken against destruction, the people who misunderstood what they saw in the stranger that protected them began calling her the spirit of the region. At first that hadn’t changed much, but when belief is reinforced again and again it can turn solid and create something that had not been there before.

She hadn’t known that then.

Such a transformation doesn't happen overnight, it more resembles droplets filling up a bowl one prayer at a time. But at one point it will be full no matter what.

Her children don’t know that she did not always exist in the way she does now. In the form of a floating ghost with lush black hair that goes far beyond her waist. A wooden spirit mask that shows more wear and tear than the paint she adorned it with long ago when she still had a normal human face under it. And dressed in a simple Earth Kingdom dress that flows with her through the forest.

The earth likewise didn’t always hum in greeting when she manifested on it; instead the wind would loosen her locks and swirl her in the air when she had still carried her human name.

Now these times feel like the distant past. Even in her human time no one had ever called the child then teenager and lastly woman by the name of Malu since the Temple had been desecrated. So why should the spirit that was birthed out of the girl care to remember the air

as something she misses and yearns for? Plainly said: No other spirit does it like she does, all of them are comfortable in their existence and don't question their marrow.

Not like her.

Maybe it's because in a way Malu never got to finish off her deepest desires before she had changed under the pressure of belief that had cradled her into the other world. Thus a part of her sometimes felt like a true ghost lingering in the world of the living having unfinished business to complete.

The girl had wished for so many things in her short human existence and now it bothered ‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’ that she hadn’t been done with her wishes. She simply couldn’t concentrate on her duties if the part of her that resembled the human couldn’t find her peace.

However there was a solution to the problem: the two halves of one whole faced. It was a bit messy the spirit could admit but the method had potential and if Malu could finish her human life in a way that fulfilled her then both would on the long run be better off with the experience.

So she did something no spirit had ever done before.

She pushed her submissive human part to the top. Up through her essence through the spirit world like a small candlelight in her hand walking into the human plane flicking and twisting out of existence and back again. She was unstable now without her other part inside, nevertheless resolve overwhelmed the apparition and she began moving her spirit mask from her face. The one artifact that kept her collected and focused on the other side.

When she would be done with what she was doing, the spirit would be nothing more than a wisp of energy and stray throughs similar to the way her other side was right now in her palm.

Without another second to think through what she was actually doing ‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’ ripped the mask off her face.

Then she knew no more and nearly simultaneously two things fell onto the leaf forest floor.

A girl that couldn't be older than fourteen and an old wooden mask.

This would change fate.

End Notes

Hello everyone!
I decided to browes a few more sites since the great 'No-fic November' started and figured posting my one one-shot would not be bad. It now it has nothing to do with the usual characters in the Avatar fandom. I even had originally plant to make this a series but so far nothing has come of it. Well see if it ever will.

Here are some of the original notes from AO3 when I posted there:

First of all thanks for reading, if you liked it consider leaving a kudo and a command. Those are always the best :)

Now here are some facts:
-Malu is in fact not an OC but a rather obscure character from an old Avatar Trading card game. Thus she is mostly not understood as a canon character but I still find that her short origin story fits well into the world. So here we are.

-Officially Malu survived the Air Nomad genocide thanks to her mother who hid her in a cave. After the genocide was over she survied years all alone and mastered air bending all on her own. Then one day she started coming out of hiding to destroy Fire Nation troops. It's said that she had help from spirits and could suddenly vanish whenever she wished. That's why people believed her to be a spirit and began calling her ‘Ghost Witch of the Mountain’.

-I of course took some small liberties with my work and Malu’s backstory here. Since she literally turns into a spirit.

-Gaoling is the town Toph was born into, so maybe I'll do something with her. Who knows? Not me that is.

(My username on AO3 is also Obstgarten for those curious ;)

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