

NO CHOICE

Written by

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Based on, If Any

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EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

MARISSA, early 20s, black hair and blue eyes, sits up, she looks around. A snow leopard beside her.

The leopard just stares at her. Marissa stands up, she takes a tentative step towards the leopard. It sprints away from her.

MARISSA

Wait!

Marissa takes off after the leopard. She stumbles and nearly trips multiple times.

One particularly gnarly root grabs her left foot. She flops to the ground like a pancake..

She flinches, takes a deep breath then she sits up. Examines her swollen black and purple foot.

She stands and limps, gasps ECHO around. Each movement draws out a whimper.

EXT. WATERFALL - NIGHT

Marissa comes upon a ledge, an enormous waterfall rushes beneath her feet.

The ground gives way from beneath her bare toes. Her body tumbles down into the dark water.

Water slams her body. Something lifts her out. She coughs and sputters as she breaks the surface.

A vine, a strong green vine cradles her back, legs, and neck. The vine travels up the cliff to coil around an enormous tree that has eyes.

The vine draws her away from the waterfall and onto the grass. The tree straightens its' trunk.

Its' branches appear to wave at her before it walks away.

A PERTURBED MALE VOICE

You fell into the water. Now it's
tainted.

Marissa looks beside her to see the blue eyed leopard.

MARISSA

So, you CAN talk.

LEOPARD

I just didn't want to talk to you.

MARISSA

Now you want to talk?

The leopard he taps her foot with his left paw.

LEOPARD

The water has healing properties.
You're very lucky. Having a wound
here will stop you from continuing
to the next step.

Marissa glares at the leopard.

MARISSA

Just what the hell is going on? Are
you able to answer my questions or
are you just a clueless talking
leopard?

The leopard stares at her for a long moment before a laugh
escapes his maw.

LEOPARD

My apologies, you are dead.

Marissa stares at her healed ankle, then back at the leopard.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Marissa holds her shaky hands up near her face. she stares down the barrel of a handgun.

MARISSA

Please, you don't have to do this.
We can all just ...walk away from
this.

The man focuses his attention on Marissa, he vibrates.

GUNMAN

Bitch, didn't I say shut up!?

The gunman jerks his hand, takes a step closer to Marissa and presses the muzzle of the gun to her left cheek.

Marissa closes her eyes.

GUNMAN (CONT'D)

You stupid bitch, alls you had to
do was shut the fuck up...

SIRENS ring throughout the store.

The gunman dances nervously beside Marissa.

He shifts the muzzle to her forehead, her eyes cross as she focuses on the dark metal.

GUNMAN (CONT'D)

I wasn't gon kill no one, dumb
bitch.

The gunman shakes his head, pulls the trigger without hesitation.

Marissa's body shudders then crumbles to the floor, blood seeps from the hole in her forehead.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Marissa raises her fingertips to her forehead.

LEOPARD

Cease with this foolishness and
come with me

Marissa stands gingerly and follows the leopard.

MARISSA

But... if I am dead, and this obviously is not heaven or hell..

LEOPARD

This is what many humans call Limbo, Marissa. It is merely a ...station of transit.

He leads them to another waterfall, this one different from the last.

MARISSA

So, what's next? Since I don't... appear to have a choice.

LEOPARD

You DO have a choice. You can go on to wherever you're destined to go or you can start over, reincarnate.

MARISSA

So... what would happen if I moved on?

LEOPARD

I don't have that answer, I am a guide here. That is my only purpose. I have never been to the other side.

MARISSA

And if I were to choose otherwise?

LEOPARD

You would be reborn as something else.

MARISSA

What if I stayed here?

LEOPARD

You cannot stay here.

MARISSA

But how did you get here? Why can't I just be here with you?

LEOPARD

I don't remember how I got here,
all I know is my purpose here is to
guide anyone who arrives.

Marissa's gaze focuses on the softer more gentle waterfall.

MARISSA

All my life, choices have been
taken from me. I have been obedient
to my family, then to a gunman, and
now I am dead.

The leopard blinks at her.

Marissa wanders past the leopard, closer to the waterfall.
She stares down at the crystal clear liquid.

LEOPARD

You are afraid, and in shock. This
is normal Marissa. But moving on
does not have to be a bad thing.

Her toes dangle over the ledge of the cliff. Marissa
trembles.

MARISSA

I want to be in charge of my own
fate.

LEOPARD

You make a choice, that is you
being in charge.

Marissa turns to look at him, tears glisten in her eyes. The
shift of her weight causes the earth to move beneath her.

MARISSA

H-help!

Her body plummets down into the spray. The leopard runs to
the edge, his head peeks over.

She had disappeared into the water.

He lies down close to the edge.

EXT. UNDERWATER

Marissa opens her eyes, bubbles dance around her face.

The water copies her form, which leaves her merely an outline.

She looks down at her body. Now a water spirit. At peace.