

# The Parable of the Widow

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Beloved one, would you like to hear a story? Okay, we will have what has been called a parable; in other words, a story.

In your language, a long, long time ago there was a young maiden. She was quite comely, good looking, pretty you would call her, and of good demeanor, happy, so that in her village she had many suitors, young men who were interested in having her spend the rest of the lifetime with them.

Her father looked over the various young men who were interested in marrying this young maiden and he chose for her one who came from a family that had many golden coins. And so the young maiden married this young man, and together they grew to love each other. She gave birth over time to some children: first a boy, and they rejoiced in the boy, and as he grew to be a toddler, there came to be another child in the family, a little girl who very much resembled the young maiden when she was a very young girl.

As that one became a toddler and the boy became a bit older, there came to be another child in the family, another boy, a younger brother, and they rejoiced over the younger brother and it was a very happy family.

And in the fullness of time, there was another child born, another little girl, so that the young maiden, as she grew into womanhood and motherhood, had two boys and two girls, and she rejoiced in the small ones. She rejoiced in what they were learning and what they would share with her, how they would run and play in the sun, how they would run and play in the rain, how they would tend the cattle and the sheep.

In time, as is the way of the world, news came to their village that there was a warring going on in a neighboring land, and the oldest son chose to go off to be with some of the other young men to fight for what he saw to be right and to protect his village.

His mother was not happy to see him go, but it was his choice, and so she gave him her blessing, as did the father, and the young man went off and left the family.

The first daughter grew to be a young maiden, again very comely and pretty, resembling her mother when she was a young maiden, and she had suitors, young men in the village who were interested in her. So in time she was married to one of

Misc

them and moved to a section of land not far away where they built their own dwelling. And in time the mother became a grandmother with great rejoicing.

News came from afar that the older son had perished in a battle and would not be returning, and there was sadness that the mother felt, because her firstborn held a place deep in her heart and she lamented that he was not coming home.

But she had the grandchildren, and the other younger son married and stayed in the next village, and in time there were grandchildren there, and in time the younger daughter also married and had children, so there were quite a few of the grandchildren around her, and she was quite busy with them.

And there came upon the land what you would now call a plague, a sickness, and the older daughter and some of the grandchildren perished in the plague. So there was a sadness and a sense of loss again for the ones she had loved and held in her arms. She could no longer do that with the body, but in her heart she still felt the love.

In time, the beloved husband passed on and released his body, and she became a widow, a widow with two of her children and some of the grandchildren still in her life. Then there came the hoards of what would be called the barbarians who overran the land. Her two children and all of the grandchildren were slain before her eyes.

She, being a widow and being very elderly at that point, was spared, in fact ignored. The barbarians did not even see her and did not care. She was too old for them to care about, so she was left in a corner of the dwelling place alone. She began to feel, "What is the use of a life? Where are all the friends, the neighbors, the children, the grandchildren, the husband? Where even are the cattle and the sheep?" for they had been taken by the barbarians who overtook the land.

Everything around had been burned, and she looked out upon the charred land with grief in her heart, because everything she had loved, even down to the blades of grass, seemingly everything had been destroyed and taken from her.

She spent some time rocking herself back and forth in great grief, asking of herself, "Why? Why love, when it is going to be taken away? Why live? Why am I still here?" She held herself, hugged herself with arms around herself, and rocked back and forth, back and forth, and back and forth.

In the rhythm of the rocking she saw herself as the small child that she had been in her mother's arms when she was rocked as a baby, and she felt the love that she had known then. And in the rocking, she felt the rocking that she had done with her own small children when they were small, and she felt the love that she

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had shared with them and how she had rejoiced with them. And she felt, again, the love of each child as it was a babe in arms.

She remembered when they started to grow a bit taller, and she remembered the love they shared with each other as a family. And in the vibration of rocking, in the vibration of remembering love and feeling surrounded by that love, physically surrounded in that love, she came to understand that it was not the loss that was important. It was the love that had been shared that made life worthwhile.

And she came to realize that no barbarian, no stranger, no one could take that love from her. The love that she felt was always hers, was always with her and could not be taken from her. That love was what would always be the value of a life. And with that realization, she drew her last breath and joined her loved ones.

That is known as the parable of the widow, the realization that all that matters in life and all that makes life worth living is love, and that love can never ever be taken from you. Everything else can be taken. Everything else is temporary, but the love that you feel is yours always, and that is what makes life worth living.

Now, beloved one, when the world will present to you its eccentricities, when it will speak to you of vulnerability and that you had better defend yourself, remember the love that you have shared with friends, with family, with ones of like mind. Count yourself blessed by every moment of love, for truly that is where your treasure lies.

Remember the parable of the widow. Remember her realization as she drew her last breath and went happily to join her loved ones, for truly, that will be your story, as well. For each and every one of you, your story has a happy ending, for in the last moments what you will remember is the love of loved ones, of family, of friends, of caretakers, whoever is with you, either with body or definitely with spirit.

And the next thing you will experience is the light, the light of understanding that, "I am and always will be." So when the world will present to you its eccentricities, take the deep breath, think upon a time when you have known love. Think upon a person, a beloved pet, an experience when you knew yourself to be unassailable by all of the world's troubles. Think upon a time when you knew yourself to be all-powerful, free from the challenges of the world, and breathe love.

Then go forward into the world, taking your peace into the world. You cannot take the world into your peace; it disturbs your peace. But you can take your peace into the world, and it can help others restore unto themselves that which seemingly has been lost.

Remember love, as I have loved you.

So be it.