

## THE WAYS OF LOVE

Some say gods are a myth. Others say that gods are with us in all of our lives every day, everywhere. I know Gods are real. And I would know because I am a God. I am the God of my land, of my people, and of my land's luck. I am known as Time. But, before I was blessed with the power of being a god, I was just a girl. This is my story.

"Come on Titi you need to get up!" I said jumping onto Titi's bed. Titi is my sister.

"Five more minutes," she groaned.

"Mom needs us at the coconut trees!" I yelled in her ear. We live on an island. It is our home, but sometimes I had to wonder what traveling was like. I looked at the ocean and wondered how we got here. Titi was sitting up in bed and I tugged on her arm.

"Ok, I'm up!" she snapped.

"Good, now out of bed or I will tell dad!" I snapped back. Our dad is leader of the tribe and that means one day one of us will have to be leader.

"Ok, Mom needs to see us," said Titi, pulling on her clothes. We walked out of the dark tent and the sun fried my eyes, it was so bright! Titi and I raced down to the coconut trees. Mom called to us, "Titi, Nila! Come, gather coconuts. We need them for the Coming Leader celebration!"

no.No.NO! This is bad. The Coming Leader celebration means dad is ending his rule of the tribe! Titi or I will have to step up to the throne! Next thing I knew, I was lying in the bed of the medicine tent. Momo was standing above me, "Ugh... W-What happened?"

"You fainted when your mom told you of the celebration," she answered.

Then what happened next? I remember clearly...I was going to be leader. I walked out of the tent and everyone stared. I walked through the group of people, their eyes glued on me, and at that very moment the words hit me on the head like a coconut. I could not stop this celebration. I tried to look forward to the day, but I just couldn't.

Finally, the cursed day arrived. My mom helped me into my clothes. They were beautiful! Then one deep breath and... the new leader. Sorrow splashed over me. As my people started to bow down, it just didn't feel right. Sad, I walked back into the tent just to find the same reaction from my family. Nothing would ever be the same for me.

My mom woke me up early the next morning, her face full of shock. I jumped out of bed when she told me the Gods had come. I raced out of the tent to see a large glowing figure sitting before me. Mom pulled me to the ground and into a bowing position.

“Rise,” thundered the god.

I looked into the face of the god and said, “Sin.” Sin is the god of bad choices.

My mom yelled to Sin, “What is wrong in this tribe?”

Sin pointed at me and roared “Her! She is not meant to be leader of this tribe! You will find the rightful ruler and, until you do, this land will be cursed!” Without another word, Sin touched the ground and turning into a cloud of purple dust, was gone. Mom looked as if she had seen her village blow up or something. “That’s it,” she said, “This tribe is done for.” Then, when the news went around, people called me, “Mistake of the land.”

I felt horrible. Titi went around telling all of the people in the village that she the rightful ruler. From that point on, it got worse... Coconuts fell from the trees and died, no more fish were in our fishing grounds, and worst of all... my dad died. I searched and searched but no one was right for the throne. One night, I lost hope and started to cry. Everything was gone: my dad, my hope, and the luck and hope my tribe had. Suddenly someone opened the tent door. It was Titi. She had the look of sorrow on her face. She held a small paddle in one hand and a basket of food in the other. Her words came out and crushed my soul, "Our tribe can't live here anymore; no food, no luck, no hope. It is time to say goodbye... to you."

I could not believe her words. They washed down me, and I fell on my knees. "Goodbye... Never return, Titi, go find a new life with the tribe for all I care!" I yelled, "Leave me here, just leave! Leave your sister by herself to rot, to cry, to die! ... now leave." I could not believe what I just said.

"Fine if you want to stay, stay! Oh wait, you don't have a choice!" Titi yelled back. Then she stormed out of the tent. Now the land and I were alone. Later that night I cried more. But this time something happened... a voice! It asked me, "You are all alone? Find a way to become heaven."

And I knew what that meant. My mom had told me the same thing when I was little... I was going to be a god! The next day, I train harder than I ever would in my entire life. I prayed to the gods, I trained to be a god, and most importantly, I worked hard. Days later I had done it. I finished my training to be a god! People say it is impossible, but with hard work many can try and many will succeed. But I was still missing one thing. Each night, I still thought, "Where is my tribe? Where is my love? I

need these things to succeed, but how can I get them back?" I was lonely, I didn't have anyone. No one knew I was still here, but days later, I found the one thing that could keep me from failing - I found a love for animals. I thought I would be lost forever. No one to love, nowhere to go. But, look what happened! I found love right where I was!

Each night, as I lay down I tell these words to my lost family in the middle of the blue sea, "The world is always full of surprises and when you find them, they can fix your entire life. I was not lonely forever. These animals were the only ones who could help me succeed. I learned to love all animals and some days when I trained too hard and I was barely able to stand, they helped me fight for what I wanted. And for who I wanted back.

There are not answers to everything in life. But sometimes they pop up out of nowhere! People might change over time but deep down inside they're always going to be with you. No matter how far away they may seem, they will always love you. I remember these words. They made me a god.

And the best part of all? As I lifted into the sky, my tribe was there! They came back to see me succeed in all that I wanted. There's nothing in life that anyone can't do. When you put in lots of love and effort, you can do it all, and now I do it all, watching over my tribe.