

The Desertion of Lemons

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The girl looks down
at her soft hands, with freshly manicured nails.
She pumps lemon-scented hand cream into her smooth palms.
It trails a fragrant aroma that wafts into
a place of alchemy, a studio where raw materials are spun into delicacies.
A bloodless battleground, one rarely visited by the girl,
yet it homes one soldier--
a woman stranded in a sea of her own making.

The enemy does not ever care to ask how the delicacies came to be
nor how they appeared in front of him.
He devours, leaving the remnants of his disappointments and pleasures like a wine stain on a
linen couch.

The girl goes into the front lines,
looking at the woman is like staring into an abyss,
she is but a faceless entity that one entirely forgets about once she has left your line of sight.
The girl asks,
“Why don't you leave him?”

The silence succeeding is all-consuming.
The girl once pitied the woman for being weak, until the pity grew

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into resentment for allowing the cycle to continue.

The desperation to both weep and yell at the woman forms a void.

Death, the girl thought, would be better than this silence.

She had never been one to confide in the woman, nor had she ever thought to look into her eyes and view her as a person, not until now.

Her gaze drifts down to the woman's

calloused and wrinkled hands,

nails cut short,

with the residue of a frothy dish soap lingering on her nail beds.

The woman pauses scrubbing plates,

she likely would've scrubbed until her hands emerged with fresh scars.

The woman glances up at the girl's

hands, her eyes seem distant and a small smile blossoms on her face as she says,

"In Hinduism, lemons are believed to remove negative energy; a sacred fruit, used in rituals."

The woman pauses, she seems small to the girl when she speaks again,

"My child, lemons are scarce,

do not lose yours."

The girl realizes that it is her mother's first time living too,

and in a quiet voice her mother says,

"Losing mine has been the cost of you keeping yours."