

WHIRLING LITTLE GIRL 31

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Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a country called Ifriqia, in North Africa.

She felt very lonely because she was forbidden to do many simple things, such as playing in the streets, climbing trees, dancing in the sea, just because she was a girl. She found it so unfair.

The thing she suffered from the most was the violence. There was a lot of violence from men

against women, boys against girls, just because they were women, just because they were girls.

The little girl, we'll call her Coco/Kaouthar, felt that was so unfair. She suffered so much from the violence of one of these men, her Babbo, her dad, against her mom, and her sisters.

She couldn't help it but stand up in front of her father to protect her mom. She would try to cover her mom's body with her tiny body and take whatever punches she could to protect her mom.

With every punch she would remember what her grandmother said to her, *"A man can hurt your body but make sure he never hurts your soul. You must protect your soul, no matter what."*



To protect her soul, Coco/Kaouthar danced. Every day. She had invented a whole ritual of dance movements to protect her soul from the violence of her Babbo and the men of her tribe. She had two favorite places to dance: the toilet and the sea.

The toilet dance had the 'Caca' (poo) repertoire. All the shit that she had to get out of her body. She began with shimmies, shaking movements, to cleanse herself of the shit of fear. The fear of her father's violence, which paralyzed her.

She started with a small shimmy in the knees. Little by little, these small shimmies became bigger and bigger, turned into fire, which rose towards the top of her body, from the knees, towards the legs, the pelvis, the lower abdomen, upper stomach, chest...

Her whole body was dancing with fiery shimmies, and the fire became a volcano and dissolved all those knots of fear that were stuck in her body... And here, she was like a Phoenix burning to ashes...

Once the body warms up, the volcanic fire turns into lava, into a glowing liquid flowing through her body. Then her body starts to undulate slowly, in a mesmerizing way, like a snake, in a big wave starting from the hips, to the belly, to the chest...



Dancing the big wave from down to up, rising with the lava energy from her vagina, to her belly, to her heart. While her body undulates, she opens her arms and starts dancing with snake arms, spreading out and flying, to the highest altitudes.

There in this dark little toilet, she felt reborn again, full of hope and courage, fierce like a warrior, ready to face any

monster. The phoenix arising from the ashes. Then she flushes the toilet, flushes the fear of the monster, and goes back to face her destiny, like a phoenix.

Sometimes the toilet dances were not enough, she needed more space, to spread out. She would go to the ocean.

She liked to dance the story of Moses crossing the Red Sea, as told by sister Marie-Thérèse at the Catholic nun's school she attended in the winter, and by 'Hadj Ali' the teacher at the Koranic school she attended in the summer. She preferred the Muslim version, as it was more adventurous and fun. And scary.

Little Coco/Kaouthar would stand in front of the ocean, focusing on the horizon. She would slowly wade into the ocean while making figure-eight movements with her hips, just like the letter 'H' in Arabic, one circle to the right, one circle to the left, pushing the water out to the sides with her hips.

She would imagine her hips 'opening' a dry pathway through the sea.

She would spread her hips as wide as possible to push the water out to the sides, so that the dry pathway grew wider and wider, transforming into a long, wide highway that would take her to the other side of the water, to Europe.

Like Moses, she must escape the pharaoh-Babbo, go faraway, out of reach of the violence of the men of her land. She would not look back, so as not to be frightened by the sight of her father and the angry men (and women) of her tribe pursuing her, like the Egyptian army pursued the Israelites led by



Moses into the red sea. And with the power of her hips, she would part the 'White Sea' (the Mediterranean) to allow her to cross to the other side. Once she felt out of reach, she'd look back to enjoy the sight of the sea water returning to normal and engulfing those angry men led by the Pharaoh-Babbo.

And when it was full moon, she would celebrate her victory, by whirling on the beach, feeling the caress of the hot white sand under her feet and the silver reflection of the moon on the ocean.

She would spin, spin and spin, like her Sufi ancestors, the Dervishes wandering from Turkey, passing by Ifrigia to Andalusia, whirling with their dances of ecstasy. And she would dance in endless circles and spins until she fell on the hot sand, exhausted in a trance...

She would lie there on the sand for a while, and then crawl, rolling like a seal, to enter the sea and let herself be carried by the waves to the abyss of the ocean, focusing on the moon and imagining she's gently carried by the sensual waves to the land of Syracuse, conquered long ago by her ancestor Hannibal of Carthage.

And once there, she'd dance like a Queen, like a Goddess "On Top Of The World," her hips swinging fiercely and sensually up and down, her small breasts pointing proudly and tracing circles, her arm raising to the sky, carrying the flame of victory to enlighten the world with her feminine power.