



*Martha*

## The story of Martha -

*W“You have to look good, not feel good.”*

...There were other problems, too. For instance: Eva had never found her daughter beautiful. Every day she pointed something out—her nose (“Too big, like your father’s.”), the round shape of her head, her chubby cheeks.

She could never manage a proper hairstyle from her fair hair—though in truth it was she who was clumsy. In everything she found something that wasn’t “perfect.”

Martha wasn’t allowed to kick pebbles, wasn’t allowed to play in sand, wasn’t allowed to build a snowman—those weren’t fitting for a young lady. Later, when Martha no longer wanted to keep pleasing her, it was as if they had switched roles: Eva became the sulky little girl who would fall silent for days if something didn’t go her way. At times like that she would serve Martha less dinner, or hide her favorite toys.

Dragon was the word that came to Martha whenever she thought of her mother. A dragon you’d want to let go into the wind—let it fly—only for the string to snap. For good. Forever....

## The card in the insole

...Her father was an oil magnate. He had inherited the trade from his own father. A respected man—so many believed that even under his skin there was money tucked away. In truth, they weren't far off.

Every day he wore brown Edward Green shoes, and in the insole he hid a bank card. On it there was a sum that could rival a lottery jackpot. Only little Martha knew about it, and she held the secret with the special pride of the privileged.

Her father promised her: one day the card would be hers, and it would save her from everything bad and shield her from the hopeless life of those beneath them.

Every evening, after he took off his shoes, Martha checked whether it was still there. Carefully she lifted the insole—warm with body heat, smelling of leather—until she caught sight of the metal-colored card....

*“I can predict when you’ll be a real big girl...”*

...Martha was eight when she noticed her body changing. Little mounds peeking out from beneath the foam of the bathwater awakened a new feeling in her. Surprised, she ran to her father to show him.

He acted as if a miracle had happened. Martha felt proud.

Later, when her father asked again and again that she show him how much she had grown “overnight,” she no longer understood why the air tightened between them.

One night he slipped into bed beside her. He said, “I can predict when you’ll be a real big girl... if you’ll let me help.”

Martha let him—she was curious. But something shifted all at once. Her father’s breathing quickened. His touch became something else....

## *A door opening before a storm*

...She didn't arrive late. That was the first thing I noted, though I knew it meant nothing—and still, it meant everything. Those who arrive precisely are often trying to keep control. To discipline their own collapsing world.

The handle moved gently downward, the spring inside slowly tightening. The door of my office only cautiously let in the someone I'd been expecting for days.

She was tall, but not the domineering kind. Her entrance cast a shadow over the candlelight. Not because of her height—because of the screaming past she carried with her.

The air changed. It grew heavier. Like the sky tensing before a storm....

*“I don’t know how to give life...”*

...When she finally spoke, she didn’t begin with a question. This was the first sentence that left her mouth:

I don’t know how to give life to someone... if no one has ever truly brought me into the world.

I let her speak.

“I was thirteen when I first felt disgust toward my own body. That’s when it came for the first time. I wasn’t frightened, but I didn’t know what it meant exactly, what I was supposed to feel.

“I went to the bathroom and just sat there for hours. There was no point telling Mother. Not because I was angry with her—only because she was cold.

“So... I went to Father.

“It came,” I said in a trembling voice.

He was reading the newspaper. He looked up at me, and his smile... it looked strangely tense.”...

## *“Body memory” and the whispered name*

...At university, I finally had a language for trauma. In a psychology seminar I heard the phrase “body memory” for the first time.

That night I fell asleep crying. Healing didn’t begin. Only the questions multiplied inside me. All the therapies I’d had so far had done nothing but scrape the surface.

I knew what I had lived through. I recognized the patterns—yet inside, nothing changed.

That was when I first heard of you. Dr. Velwetina.

They whispered your name.

It was strange: not from psychological studies, but on a forum I read about you. Women wrote that you don’t give diagnoses—you give experiences.

At first I laughed.

The next day, I booked an appointment....

## *The body-map notebook*

...“And this...” Martha said as she sat down, “this is really the beginning of every beginning.”

She brought something with her. Her voice was quiet, but it no longer trembled. In her hand she held a small notebook.

“I wrote about my body.” She handed it to me. “Not everything... only what I can bear.”

On the pages there weren't stories. There were words. Colors. Sometimes only a sentence:

“I don't feel anything here.” “This part is cold.” “There's always tension in my shoulder...”

The drawing was the silhouette of a sexless body. A dark-blue blot at the lower abdomen. A red dotted arc at the shoulder. Nothing at the chest.

“I didn't know what to write here,” she said, pointing above her heart. “As if this part... isn't even mine.”

***“Mom... I have to tell you something.”***

I went home to her. Rain tore at the streets, yet I didn't take a taxi.

She sat in the living room, in the same velvet armchair as in my childhood. I sat down beside her, and I said:

“Mom... I have to tell you something.”

“When I was eight... Dad...” The words snagged. “He... touched me. Not the way a father does.”

At first Mother didn't move. Then, very slowly, her face contorted. Not with anger. Not with outrage. With pain.

She began to sob.

“Why didn't I see it?” she whispered. “I'm your mother... I ruined your life...”

That was the first time I saw the person in her who wasn't playing a role.

Two separate pains met inside the embrace.

*...I dreamed.*

And then... at dawn, before daylight had begun to seep into my room...

...I dreamed.

Martha's body was there. She wasn't lying down—more like resting, floating, in a soft warm space.

I touched her. Not with passion. Not with profession. Not with sex.

With love.

Under my palm her skin began to glow with a golden light. I traced my touch around her. My hand paused over her womb, too. Something pulsed there—something she herself had buried—and now it was starting to wake again.

From her body tendrils pushed outward, velvety green braids.

And there, at the center... a flower opened.

A lily.

I woke up.

My body was still hot....

## *The first handshake*

...And then... slowly, I moved.

I reached across the table and placed my palm gently above hers. She drew back a little, then cautiously slid her hand beneath mine.

I didn't touch her at once—my hand only hovered there, like a cloud that hasn't yet poured down the lukewarm rain of summer.

Martha froze. Her whole body began to listen. Her shoulder tightened, her arm twitched, her pupils widened.

Then, slowly—softly—I placed my hand on hers.

Skin to skin. Breath to breath.

She didn't pull away.

Her fingers shifted... and she let the faintest weight settle into my hand.

For the first time....

## *To be continued...*

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With love,  
Dr. Velwetina