

Short Story: Broken Mirrors

Urban Legend

Marie was skipping happily down the concrete road, plastered with shiny balloons that glistened in the mid-morning sun. They swung to to fro on the post that said, *Buy a balloon, only for a cent!* Marie was jumping up and down, begging for one. Her mother smiled and bought three, one for herself, one for Marie, and one for Marie's father, Joseph. They smiled at each other and walked down the path of Okinawa's warm spring sand, once again.

Marie was drenched from the accident by the coast of Okinawa, the boat ride under the brick bridge. She had fallen off into the murky water. Her brand new red dress turned more of a faded orange color, but Marie didn't mind. She was having too much fun!

They bought some *Yakitori*, delicious chicken skewers, sold for 20% off. They had just opened the small booth for food by the WC, or bathroom. The wind was lapping Okinawa's *Ishigaki* waters by Marie's legs.

Suddenly noticing a hazy color in the sky, she became scared. Mama had told her about fires. She had never seen one, blazing and dancing with the wind, but she didn't like it's description. She knew it turned the sky dank and grey. She shifted toward her mother, who sniffed the air, as she noticed the haze and the smoke's strong smell. Joseph, her father, ran out of the park to get a closer look. It seemed to be generated from the mountains.

Joseph shouted in true alarm.

Soldiers were pouring out into the parking lot with rifles and bullets. Innocent people were shouting with fear, shielding their small children. Some were running. The soldiers were shooting the runaways with great skill, and scary determination to kill all that were left in the parking lot that day. Luckily, Ann, Joseph, and Marie escaped through the dirty, dusty vent by the Small Town boat ride they had just been in, having so much fun. *Why does only happiness stay for the shortest amount of time?* Marie sullenly thought to herself. *Or is it just my luck,* she questioned again.

Many days went by so slowly, after that.

A MONTH LATER

Tucking Marie into bed, her mother, Ann, kissed Marie shyly and hugged her daughter before saying, *I love you*, then leaving Marie's room. Marie was left to look up at the sky. Tears that were hidden so well poured down like a waterfall. Her chin quivered, but didn't make a noise. She didn't want to give it away to her mother.

Marie was a Japanese girl in World War I. There was war everywhere. Just last month, she found a dead body in the electrical wires underneath her elevated loft house. Her friend had disappeared shortly afterwards.

Nothing had ever come so suddenly. Just *one day* on Okinawa's Ishigaki beach in Japan, and that happy feeling just whizzed out of her body in mere hours. *Japan had done something bad to make this happen, though*, she thought. *Do I have to pay the price for what they did?* She started crying again. This time, they were the waterworks.

Her mother rushed in quickly, carrying a knife and a baseball bat. When she found her daughter crying from memories instead of bloody murder, she seemed relieved. Marie jumped up and hugged her mother tightly. She knew she would have to do her best to never let go. The soldiers' strategies were confusing.

Unexpectedly breaking up the sadness under the creaky boards, a crash came from the back porch. The sound of breaking glass, very recognizable. The glass pieces shattered into even smaller pieces. The window was broken, Marie realized. She cautiously stepped forward when a glass shard entered her foot slowly and painfully. She screamed in sheer pain, and gave away her hiding spot. A group of American soldiers sprinted like cheetahs, right into her house. Marie, too shocked to move, stood paralyzed in fear below the wooden planks that hung close to her face. The lead American soldier slapped her with a nightstick, since she was crying so loudly.

"Please, don't take my family away from me!" Marie shouted.

"Kid, some things just don't change! Get into the truck!"

"Please..." she trailed off, while a soldier hauled her into the truck.

What did he mean by some things never change, though? She thought silently to herself, wiping away her tears. *I have to be strong. I'm not a baby anymore.* She had turned 11 on March 24, though it was March 27 then. Her attention turned to a cry in the corner of the truck.

A Japanese man whipped out his large ten-inch knife. He whizzed it by the soldier's head. Red liquid poured out of his neck and onto the floor. He tried to speak, but blood came out of his mouth.

Gasping, he fell onto the floor. He tried to stand up *one last time*. He fell to the ground below the truck, and he laid there, motionless.

From fear and pure terror, she collapsed on the bench.

Waking up again, she recognized that she was in a strange place. Her eyesight blurred. There were iron bars surrounding her. Her bare, scarred foot felt cold on the iron floor beneath her. The chains and shackles that tied her feet left marks on the places they were first located on, shifting constantly.

The American soldier rapped on her iron bar door with a large fist. Marie became tense. *He's holding a knife! He's holding a knife!* Marie let out a horrifying cry, and she pleaded for remorse.

"Please sir! I didn't - "

"Honey. I'm not here to hurt you. I want to *help* you. I'm George."

Help me? He's here to help me?

"You are?" Marie sniffed and looked pitifully at the soldier.

"Yes. You shouldn't be chained up like an animal, honey."

Marie could hardly believe her ears.

"What day is it?" Marie asked.

"March 29."

She was in a coma for two days and no one had even paid attention to her. Of course, like her mother had said before, she was apparently a *minority*. "People aren't going to pay attention to you," her mother had explained, "they see you as a minority. Secondhand. A bad thing, this war. We will get over it together, my child. Goodnight, sweet dreams." Her mother had slowly shut the door, so she was left in the darkness.

The soldier explained modestly that he was behind the electrical and technical jobs in the prison. He knew where each part was located, and where the vent was.

"We can escape through there," he said.

He pointed at the small vent by the windowsill, and smiled.

My first danger escape, Marie thought mischievously.

Step one went well, with no flaws. They got into the vent with no problem. He was on duty, and no other guard, so that meant that they were not watched by anyone or anything else. Step two would be harder.

Getting out.

At the end of the vent, there were many guards there to protect the exit. They had noticed that many prisoners were escaping through the ratty exit. *Pretty genius though*, Marie had agreed with George's remark.

George was plotting something else for this step. He would turn Marie in. He wasn't the perfect angel Marie had gullibly mistaken him for. He was *much* worse.

In fact, he was the execution officer.

He pulled Marie's hair behind her head and tugged as hard and fast as he could.

"You didn't think you'd get away *that* easy, did you, rat?" George snickered.

"Sir- please! Please let me go!" Marie was crying and trying to claw her way out of the vent.

"Well, I've gotcha now, don't I?" George began to pull out his gun.

A cloud of red stained Marie's shirt. Rasping, she muttered, *brok-en-mir-rors, w-ho-am-I?*

Her head dropped, and never rose again.

A Year Later

George was whistling to himself quietly as he gathered the documentations of the war that were simply laying around the desk. A thump came from his bedpost. *I've heard worse*, he thought. He went back to gathering the papers.

A soft hum came from the back room. He whipped around in surprise as Marie, the girl he had killed long ago emerged from the shadows in the background.

Br-ok-en m-irr-ors, she whispered.

She screamed and ran out of the room with her one leg and one arm. The mirrors in George's house shattered into many pieces.

George shrieked and pleaded for forgiveness. Marie was gone. He blinked and sat up. Going to look at the mirror damage, he looked into the mirror. He looked *exactly like* Marie, but man version. His face melted into a mess of flesh and skin. George stumbled, and fell to the ground.

He was gone.