

A Butterfly is Born

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by

Theresa W. Chaze

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This book is dedicated to my mom, Anne Whitworth. Her belief in me gave me the strength to believe in myself. She kept me going when I was ready to give up.

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Just as a snake sheds its skin, we must shed our past over and over again.

...Gautama Buddha

The Awakening

She awoke and squirmed a little. But only a little for there was very little room. She looked around. She saw no one and nothing. She was alone. Frightened, she began to cry.

“What is it, my child?” A soft voice whispered. “Why do you cry?”

Even more frightened, she tried to look around, yet she could not move. She still saw no one. “Who are you?”

“I’ve been known by many names.” The voice replied. “Most call me Mother.”

“Why?”

Mother chuckled. “Because Little One, from me all life comes. To me, all life returns to rest until it is time to be born to learn and grow. Just as you are doing now.”

She pondered. “Who am I?”

Mother chuckled again. “Long ago when your soul was first born, you were named, Shylon. But now that you are awake enough to ask, you may choose another name.”

“Shylon?” She liked the sound. “If I can choose any name, I choose Shylon.”

“I approve Little One.”

Shylon ate and slept and then ate some more. After a time, she could move around. She shifted and turned. She wanted to know more about this place. But all around her seemed the same. “Mother,” she called.

“Yes, Little One.”

“What is this place?”

“It is your home. It is the safe world that I built for just you.”

“Why does it shrink when I sleep?”

Mother chuckled. “It's not shrinking. You are growing. As you eat, you make room. When you sleep, you grow. Soon you will outgrow it and have to leave.”

Leave? Why would I want to do that? Shylon started to panic. *I don't want to leave my home. Mother made it just for me. I like it here.* Then the idea came to her and she spoke up. “You can make it bigger.”

“No, my Little One. I can't do that.”

Shylon started to cry. She didn't want to leave her home. Mother made it just for her. She felt special and loved here. She was happy and safe. She had everything she needed in her world. *Why would I want to leave it? Mother must not love me anymore.*

“Little One, why do you cry?”

“You don't love me anymore.” Shylon whimpered.

“Why do you think that?”

“You made this place just for me. Why do you want me to leave it?”

Mother chuckled. “When it is time, it will be your decision. Free will is our highest law. Not even I can break it. Nor would I want to. You see, that is how we learn and grow.”

Comforted, Shylon settled back and ate some more. “If I decide to stay here always, will you still love me?”

Mother continued to chuckle. “Yes, Little One. I will always love you. There is nothing you can do that would make me stop.”

There came a time when she had a great deal more room to move. Her food was no longer soft and sweet; instead, it had become bitter and more difficult to chew. The light sometimes made it to difficult sleep. With the light came the heat that made her world seem so much smaller.

The light did help her find the sweet-tasting food, but it also showed how little there was left. Shylon reached for it. An eerie shape moved. Fearfully, she moved to the other side to get away. It moved along the wall, following her. Her fear was quickly replaced

by anger. *It must have taken my food. That's why it was gone.* She cried out, "Mother! Mother! A monster! A monster! It stole my food!"

Mother laughed. "Little One, it's your shadow. See as you move so does it."

How did the shadow get inside my world? That's not possible. This world belongs to me and me alone. Mother made it just for me! Her anger exploded and she lashed out at it. But it shrank away and disappeared only to reappear someplace else. "Mother, make it go away! It's bad! It ate my food. All I have left tastes terrible!"

"Little One. Little One." Mother's voice began fading away.

Shylon could no longer hear her. She was too busy chasing the shadow. But it always escaped. She squirmed and turned until she was too tired to move. More exhausted than she had ever been, she cried until she had no more tears left to shed.

"Mother, help me."

But there was only silence. Shylon didn't know what to say or do. *Mother had never ignored her before. Mother doesn't love me anymore.* The thought made her sick. How can I get her to love me again? *I don't understand. Why did she stop? I must be bad,* Shylon thought. *I didn't mean to be. It just happened. The shadow scared me and made me angry.* "Mother, if I promise to always be good will you love me again? Please? I'll be good. I promise. Please love me again!"

"Little One, I will always love you?" Mother's voice sounded strange; it was like she was suddenly far, far away.

Hearing her voice calmed Shylon, but the fear remained.

"Your shadow was always there. But it was too dark for you to see it until now."

"It stole my food!" Shylon whined.

"Shylon!" Mother scolded. Her voice was clear and strong as before. "You know that is not true."

Surprised by her tone, Shylon became silent.

"No one has taken anything from you!" Mother continued. "You still have food to eat."

"All that is left tastes bad."

“There is always bitter with the sweet. Otherwise, you wouldn’t know the difference.”

“I’m sorry!” Shylon cried. “I’ll be happy with the food you give me. I promise.”

“Little One, I would never give you less than what is for your best and highest good. When you learn how to trust you will understand.”

I wish I could believe that. Shylon thought as she cried herself to sleep. She dreamed of a place that was too wonderful to describe. There were colors she had never seen before. There were new sounds that she had never heard before. It was all so bright and beautiful. There were others there that looked like her and many who were much different. She felt safe and happy.

She longed for the dream to continue. But she woke up and her world didn’t seem as wonderful. She had never noticed how dark and small it was before. The light made it easier for her to find the last spot where the food was soft and sweet. She ate it until it was gone then began eating the other until she made a hole and the light streamed brightly inside. It was warm and comforting. It reminded her of the dream.

Her shadow became bigger and darker as it danced on the wall. It startled her at first, but she no longer feared it. Something came through the hole and touched her, but she couldn’t see anything. It was cool, yet not. It smelled sweet. *Wind*, she thought, but she didn’t know how she knew that. The sounds reminded her of the dream.

Curious, she looked out of the hole. Things moved. Startled, she jerked back. A big piece of the wall fell outward and she could see beyond her little world. Her curiosity over-whelmed her fear and she briefly stuck her head out. But just as quickly ducked back inside. “Mother, what is that?”

Coming in from the outside, Mother’s voice was louder and clearer than before. “That is outside.”

“Outside? Is that where you are?”

Mother chuckled. “Come out and see.”

Shylon looked around. She loved her world. It had kept her safe. But she needed to know what was out there. She wiggled out of the hole. *Besides*, she thought, *I can always go back inside if I don't like it.*

Emergence

Shylon stuck her head out. Everything was so big! Shylon felt small. She tried to go back inside, but the pieces fell away and she was left naked without shelter.

“Mother! I don’t understand!” Panicking, Shylon curled up into a tight ball. “What is this place?”

“It’s your new home.”