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Rabbit Blood

I had been taken to jail for a second degree murder charge. I was released on bail. So far as I knew I hadn't done anything to forfeit bail. I was home, in my mom's house, she was home from the hospital, on an oxygen machine. I was taking a shower; I think I had a court date in a few days. The police surrounded the house. I could see them silhouetted outside the bathroom. My mom was terrified and mortified as the announcement was made through a blow horn for me to surrender myself, which I did. I was being taken back into custody and re-charged with first degree murder. In due course, I would be charged with two counts of first degree murder for one dead body. The criminal justice system throws everything at the wall to see what will stick.

How does one find oneself on the run from the law and in a different country? It begins with a heat of passion crime, a hell-laden trip to jail, an escape with the attitude that you don't care how many times you're picked off a fence or even if you're shot in the back. Next a fierce inner motivation to flee, to run for your life, because you don't have anything to lose.

I graduated high school, had a whirlwind courtship, was pregnant and shot my boyfriend. I wasn't even 20 years old yet. I had a paid attorney, Tom, that was at least 40 years old, that I was having sex with. Tom advised me to have an abortion; which I ended up doing. I had no reason to believe he wouldn't do his best to defend me. I was also having an affair with the attorney's detective, Pete, he was about 60 years old but he was married, to a nurse. Surely, I had my bases covered. But just in case, no sense in hanging around. I obtained a passport and started my stint as a fugitive. In retrospect, I thought I was clever, but I was so stupid. I didn't know anything about being pregnant, I remember when I was on the plane, my breasts were leaking and it was like getting hamburger from your elbow. I wasn't prepared for it. If I knew so little about pregnancy; I knew even less about men, life and the world.

My trip would take me to Japan, Thailand, Burma and Malaysia. The people in the Japanese airport were so rude; I thought they may have taken a page from *busy* Americans. I was standing in a line trying to get a quick bite to eat. When it came my turn to order food, I had the translation dictionary but no one had patience for me. I was told eventually that, like Americans, if you're in the U.S. most people expect you to speak the language. I finally got a hamburger and coke, just in time for my connecting flight.

My next stop was Thailand. The people are naturally friendly, so it's very difficult to be incognito. Of course, when you are on the run from the law, it doesn't matter where you are, you feel like people are looking at you.

I had done quite a bit of travelling or so I thought. I grew up around Ft. Myers, Florida and Sanibel Island, I'd been to the Virgin Islands and Jamaica. For my senior trip, I'd been to Mexico. I had grandparents in Thailand. I thought I would blend in. My biological father was 6'2" and mother 4' 11": I am 5'7". I was head and shoulders in height, above every one there; so much for blending in.

Thailand was such an odd country, for me. I guess I feel I'm at liberty to say that because I'm one-quarter Thai. Thailand was formerly Siam; so I'm partially Siamese. In the daytime, there is no T.V., so if you intend to stay inside a hotel room or something. You will be quite bored. I certainly don't want to make fun of any language, but Thai is very sing song, in my opinion, any language at full exposure, without understanding it, will give you a headache.

Initially, I acted like a tourist. The money exchange at the time was 25.50 baht to one American dollar. I went to a bathhouse, at first they refused me service. Then after I stood there trying to figure out how they could do that, they said come in - they made an exception when they realized that I was an American. I went for a massage, and I disrobed and about a half dozen women as small as adolescents, started bathing me and giggling. I asked them what was so funny. I wasn't offended, just curious. I knew it was odd for them because I was a female in there, but they told me I was so obese and had enormous breasts. Which was funnier to me than them: I had a B cup at the time. Can you imagine if they'd seen the average American woman?

There are beautiful old temples, with thousands of years of tradition. The monks start their prayers at dawn. The faithful and tourists alike can buy prayers, in the form of gold paper, and rub it on the statues of Buddha. You can see cars, tuk-tuks, (motorized rickshaws) and elephants all on the same thoroughfare. Even walking down a paved main street, you will see street vendors, hacking off the heads of chickens and plucking them. It gives new meaning to fresh food and makes one grateful for *USDA* choice.

The first and strangest thing I ran into was going to a fancy restaurant and needing to use the restroom and being sent through the restaurant to an outhouse in the back. There was a catalog so you could use the pages to wipe and there was a pan to dump water after you used the hole. I went to a mall and the bathroom was clearly inside. I got into the stall and there were two brick like things on either side of a hole, one of the bricks actually said American standard, it also had a typical handle for flushing. I went back outside to make sure I was in the women's bathroom. I truly felt if I sat on the bricks I would fall in. Luckily, a counter

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clerk came in, she walked passed me, her high heels clicking. Then suddenly, her feet, shoes and all, disappeared from under the stall. As it turns out, people in Thailand balance themselves on these bricks to use the restroom. It makes me laugh but Americans really are creatures of comfort. Thais must think we have lazy boys for toilets.

At night, I went to some movies. The billboard for Superman and the like, all had slanted eyes. It's peculiar that they make everyone Asian. The movie theater has a sound booth in the back that plays English. Before all movies, and almost all public activities, there is an anthem played and people must stand for the King and Queen. It even played on the trolley. It made me somewhat homesick.

I frequented the nightclubs, who doesn't feel better hiding *in the dark*? Thailand is famous for its shows. There was a neon body painting show, smoking through the privates, and girls in baskets: how is that for anonymous sex? I was propositioned a lot. I wondered why. Not that I didn't think of myself as attractive. However, the prostitutes were only one American dollar and a bowl of noodles only an American quarter? I met a couple German researchers, Siggie and Ralph. They'd been in Thailand for a few years. According to them, the only thing more tedious than sheep scat studies, were the prostitutes that looked like children and had to be instructed. Or the prostitutes that had been doing it so long, they were like leftover military robots.

With Siggie and Ralph in tow, off we would go to the clubs, and one time we pretty much took the whole club to a hotel room. I vaguely remember a bunch of licking going on, from the bottom of my feet, up. Truly, the next thing I clearly remember was a clean room, with the guys up reading and the absolute promise that I hadn't been with them.

One night while out clubbing I burned the back of my calf on a motor bike. Siggie and Ralph made sure I got to the infirmary. I had to have some kind of medical card. The doctor and nurse were very kind. Behind them were the typical apothecary jars of tongue depressors, gauze, long handled Q tips. It was an extremely surreal experience, because also in jars, were tarantulas, dried seahorses, terrariums of leeches and all sorts of powders and elixirs.

The medical staff asked which type of medicine I preferred. I went with what I thought was *tried and true* Western medicine. Eventually when I left Thailand, unbeknownst to me I had intestinal parasites. Perhaps I should've let the natives do what they know to do best.

Initially, it seemed like I had a lot of money, I had to move to the YMCA and start to think about what I was going to do. I went to meet my grandparents. I figured the less they knew the better. No reason to bring shame and problems to family, that doesn't even know me. I simply told them that I was there for a couple days. I had a modeling portfolio with me and they didn't really have time to formulate too many questions. They really wanted to take me out for dinner and the bathing suit pictures in the modeling portfolio were almost more than they could bear. They were a very modest people. They had a house maid and landscaper that were born on the property, so they were their servants. It is considered a free country but they have an indentured servant type of system. My grandfather worked in lumber and was considered upper middle class as a Chinese man that had taken a lower class Thai wife, and resided in Thailand. They had four daughters: Pen Pun, Ploy, Dang, and Toe.

I had barely graduated high school, fell into a whirlwind courtship, got pregnant, shot my boyfriend and absconded. I hadn't kept up with what was going on literally a half a world away. My Aunt Dang was getting married. She was to be the fourth wife of an Iranian. Iran used to be Persia, so Aunt Dang was going to have Siamese and Persian children, if she ever had any. In the couple days I was there, I got a crash course on the traditions. Dang was educated in Europe, her husband was a Muslim business man, which would allow her to work outside the home, until they had children. My Aunt Dang was a virgin and while she had the pre-wedding jitters, it was the custom for the women to gather and watch pornographic videos to educate themselves in the ways of sex. Well, Aunt Dang didn't find the videos comforting at all. I have to say that if I was a virgin, I wouldn't have either. It's not like they're exposed to sex education or the male body. In fact, Ignorance and AIDS is pretty rampant. Aids is accepted as a way of life because of the belief in reincarnation. Aunt Dang's counterpart was sanctioned by custom to visit a prostitute. The monk had blessed their wedding bed.

When I left my grandparents, up north in Chang Mei; I headed back to Bangkok. One night, out of nowhere, Pete the old investigator, found me at the YMCA. My first question was "How did you find me?" He was a detective, what did I expect? Pete wanted me to stay out of the country, he was going to divorce his wife and be with me, within a year. Pete was 20 years older than Tom and he couldn't help but leak our relationship to Tom.

My adoptive mom was in Florida. She was in the hospital, not sure if she would make it another year: that brought me back to the states. It was a haughty thought that I could make it back in the country without detection. Unbeknownst to me, Tom figured I was screwing Pete anyway, so my own attorney called the FBI so he could take credit for doing the right thing. I had gotten off the plane; I was headed to my lawyer's office to see what was going on with my case. The F.B. I. met with shot guns in my face and

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back. It wouldn't be until years later that I would find out my own attorney/lover had turned me in. Additionally, years after that, a news station contacted me to see if I wanted to participate in an interview, because Tom had slept with almost all his female clients.

Recently, I had a Correctional Officer ask me *why I quit after three escape attempts*. Well, after the first capture, I spent five years in isolation and lock down. My mom passed away five years into my sentence. Right after, I'd finished my initial punishment for my escape and was transferred out of state to a more secure facility.

Lock down didn't cure me because without family, I had even less to lose than before. But as I matured and had time invested in my sentence, lock time did weigh on my mind and I started to wonder if I would ever be legally released and if I could turn it all around.

When I had served 20 years. I had been flown from California to Minnesota to Texas. As we were driving, I commented that this is not what I thought what Texas would look like. The Correctional Officer said it's because we're not in Texas anymore. There were little oil rigs and they said we were in Oklahoma. I quickly indexed in my mind what I knew about Oklahoma: the dust bowl, "Grapes of Wrath", the musical "Oklahoma", the Sooners and Roy Rogers, I think. The car pulled up to the institution, and I thought I had jumped from the frying pan into the pan. I thought, *they sure grow these broads big out here*, then came to the realization that it was MEN outside playing basketball and I was very relieved.

Oklahoma has the highest rate of incarceration, per capita, for women in the United States. I would later find out the one and only women's prison was located in the community and had no gun towers. However, I found out a bunch of other fun facts about Oklahoma. It has the most lightning strikes in the U.S. and a large meth community and the Oklahoma bombing, and the largest chapter of the KKK (Klu Klux Klan). I realized why they didn't need gun towers, with the open carry gun laws; almost anyone in the community would fill you full of lead on sight.

I have 30 years invested in my sentence. I've spent 10 years in Oklahoma, which has ultimately been very good to and for me. I remember seeing a video clip of Charlie Sheen saying he had Tiger's blood. When I was younger, I had rabbit's blood, which has petered out. That in and of itself should say something about the fact that I've *changed*, but all it has done is add time to my sentence, such is life for the incarcerated. -End