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Unseen Beauty

by James Stiffel

There are a lot of things we don't want to know about the people we love. She's walking towards him. She smiles. She caress's his face. She walks away. Why must she keep him wanting? Even here she is mysterious.

The wind blowing through the window. The seagulls singing. The wood creaking. The gentle swaying. Sea lapping at the shore. He is awake. He opens his eyes. The world is hazy. He wipes his eyes and squints. The world is still hazy. He frowns. He still hoped that each new morning might bring back his eyes. But alas, no. He could still make some things out. Bed. Fruit. Sword. Tree's. Accursed wrecked ship. He sighed and frowned. No. It wasn't an accursed ship. If it wasn't for the ship, he'd been dead long ago. If the ship hadn't got stuck on these rocks, who knew where he could've ended up?

It seemed well enough at the moment, providing him with shelter. If he could thank the gods for anything, it was that he had everything that a man desired. Food. Water. Safety. Health. And...a wife? Well...perhaps. He smiled. 'She' was near perfection. Oh yes, even out here. A thousand leagues from home. Out on an island, in a part of the world he has never seen before...almost literally. He fortuitously has found somebody that he could call his own. Or rather, she had found him.

He was calling out for people and she had come. Not at first. She had been quite hesitant to answer his cries. He had even wondered if she had followed him for a while before approaching. Those slow gliding movements in the sand could have been the skirts of her robes. That was three months ago. He had gotten quite fond of her company. Tending to him. Getting him food and water. She helped him walk around without tripping. He spoke. She listened. She laughed. Oh, her laugh. Like a trickling waterfall. She seemed almost amazed by him. Encapsulated by his words. Hesitant, but not afraid.

But when it came to asking questions of herself. She would not answer. Her name? No. What was she doing here? No. What did she look like? What mysteries lie under that hood? A pause, then no answer at all, as she walked away.

He had the courage to ask once, "I'll bet you are more beautiful than Goddess Athena herself?" She hesitated and in her voice, he heard her smile. Maybe...smirk? And she had answered, "nay good sir. More so."

His curious nature peaked. "Sweet lady, I must know. Tell me your name? Whisper it, so I can speak it in my dreams," he had pleaded. She had sighed.

But the touch of her hand on his face had settled him.

"My name...means Protectress. And that is what I shall do, until I...at last...draw breath."

Her statement being lost to his feeble ears. "That is most kind. You humble me sweet 'Temptress'. But forgive me. Did you mean, till you last draw breath?"

Her reply almost dripping with tears. "Alas. No, I did not." He'd left it at that.

Something clearly still raw within her. There are a lot of things we don't want to know about the people we love. She'd turned to leave. The skirts of her robe still dragging behind her. She'd stopped and turned to look at him once more. "Sleep now. Travel to dreamland. And take with you my love. And the name...Medusa."