



*Arcane Gearsmith and
DragonScribe Entertainment present:*

Amazing Microfiction

Season One, Episode Four

Hello and thank you for tuning in. I'm your host Michael C. Miller, author and gearsmith.

Each episode I choose stories from my own genre based micro-fiction and read those selections to you like they were audiobooks. Some times these stories may be incomplete, but in general they are meant to convey ideas to you the listener.

But you might ask me, what is Micro-fiction?

Well, Microfiction generally refers to short stories between 50 and approximately 300 words in length, there is some debate over this, but for our purposes, we will keep our selections under 300 words.

This week I have chosen three of my stories that all have strong female characters.

Alright, let's jump in to this weeks stories...

Selection One

Withheld

Length 272 words

Sara wept as she answered the door. They had come. How had they known? Had she told anyone about her sister?

"Where is she?" Asked an aging grey haired man.

"In the back."

The man nodded and a group of people rushed inside the small hovel and back to where her sister had the fevers.

Sara began to follow but was held back by a rough looking man in a guardsmen's uniform.

"Let me go!" She struggled, momentarily braking the guards grasp. She stumbled forward but was caught again in his powerful grip. Sara reached out toward her sister, desperately flailing her arms to break her restraint. "No!"

"Hold her, damn you! Keep her back!"

The old man disappeared into the crowd.

A scream tore through the air like thunder. Her sister's scream full of anguish and pain.

"What are you doing to her? You Animals!" Sara began to sob, helplessly trying to pull away from her minder.

Another scream, only louder this time. She could hear muffled orders from the old man, and watched as the crowd rippled into motion.

Another scream. More movement from the crowd. Sara wanted these people gone and her sister safe. What were they doing to her? She was with fever and they were just letting her scream. It made her heart melt.

Her sister screamed again, the sound consuming Sara's thoughts.

Murmurs rippled through the small crowd of people around her sister. There was another heartbreaking scream. The crowd suddenly quieted.

A sharp cry pierced the night. A sweet high pitched thing, that meant only one thing. Sara Smiled. Her baby niece had finally arrived.

Selection Two False Temple Length 299 words.

Victor knew the temple was close, the Katarin symbols etched into the cliff had marked the ancient trail. The narrow path climbed the north canyon wall and was headed up to a plateau with adobe dwellings nestled beneath the overhang.

Samantha in her safari outfit, clung to the rocks, her pith helmet askew as she struggled to follow the professor.

"Were is the village?"

Victor pointed up the path. "It's about a hundred yards ahead. Don't worry. It's close."

Sam nodded and stayed behind Victor as they continued. The path opened up onto the plateau. This place was ancient. There was a symmetry to the place, the buildings radiating from a central structure. The Temple.

There were no signs of life.

Amazingly a fountain near the temple bubbled with fresh water.

"There must be an underground spring or river beneath us." She walked over and took a long drink. Victor did the same.

He pointed to the temple, its surface shining in the late afternoon sun. As they approached the building they realized that it was made of gold. Ancient Katarin glyphs covered its surface.

"Sam, get the camera, these are incredible!" Victor turned to his assistant. Where had she gone?

He walked back to the fountain and found her standing there. "Did you see the temple?"

"Yes."

"We need to get back and take photographs before we leave."

"No."

He stopped and faced her.

Sam leveled a disruptor pistol at him.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm claiming this temple for the Fourth Kingdom."

Victor's eyes grew wide in horror. "No, you can't!"

"But I already have." Sam raised her other hand, revealing a small pulsing crystal. From the shadows came the others, an elite squad of Fourth Kingdom Troopers, armed with disruptor rifles, and victory in their eyes.

Selection 3 Galen Length 299 words.

Gwen's head felt like it was going to break open. She was unable to move, tied to the damp stone altar with thick leather cords that cut into her wrists and ankles. Her head was immobile as well, fastened to the altar by a braided leather mesh. It was similar to a horse's bridle, but much more rigid. There was even a wooden bit jammed into her mouth to prevent her hurting herself.

The water dripped again, smacking her in the middle of the forehead. Gwen counted to herself: One. Two. Three. She reached a count of thirteen and was struck by another drop of water. Again the counting. Again the drop. Over and over. She had counted the dripping water thousands upon thousands of times. And she had lost count just as many.

How long had it been? Hours? Certainly. Days? Maybe. Gwen had lost track of time. There was no way of knowing how long it had been.

She was in a large room with only torches for light. There was no daylight by which she could measure time. It felt like an eternity.

Drip. Her lips were cracked and bleeding. Her mouth dry as a desert. Drip.

Gwen was weak. She could feel it in her bones. She wouldn't last much longer. With all her soul she called out to the Creator. *How much longer must I bear this burden?*

Then, a peace came over her, like a wave of comfort and warmth. Her body relaxed, the long tense muscles resting after the strain. She *knew* had done it. She had passed the test. She *knew* that she had saved her people.

Alright I hope you enjoyed the selections this week. I'd like to thank my daughter Megan for filling in for some of the female voices. Say hello Megan..

Hi.

She was great, and put up with me for a couple hours while we did this and it was a lot of fun. What do you think, do you want to do this again sometime?

I would love to.

Thank you for tuning into Amazing Microfiction. This is a bi-weekly podcast, but we will be adding extras episodes whenever we get some spare time. If you've enjoyed this podcast, or have any questions, please let me know. You can visit our new website at AmazingMicrofiction.com, and you can leave me a note there.

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