

# Forbidden Voices – Victory

by Judith Nolan

Once I rode in my bronze chariot with pride. I grasped a great spear in one hand, and the winner's wreath of laurel leaves in the other. I had a name, then. I was Nike, the goddess of victory. And I was beautiful.

I had a place of pride on a rich man's desk. I was admired and caressed, for luck and the power I represented. It should have always been that way, until...

I became lost, in many moves, and the eventual dissolution of my owner's vast power. Then the unspeakable happened. One of my wings was broken off by a careless hand. My owner held my pieces in his hands, staring at me, almost as if he blamed me for his stunning fall from grace.

My fate was sealed. I was thrown away. I was abandoned as I had become valueless in his eyes. The bronze from which I had been so lovingly forged was said to not yield enough money to make it worthwhile to melt me down. Would that have been a worse fate than the one that did befall me?

I was consigned to the detritus of abandonment. A wide bin in a rank back alley, without ceremony or care. I lay there among other discarded things, slowly decaying and dying. Over time, my spear vanished, and then my laurel wreath dropped from my hand. I did not know where my broken wing lay. My shame was complete.

Then, one night, everything changed. My saviour leaned into the bin of rubbish, and grasped me, lifting me gently. I felt the surety of his strong palm. He held me up to the light of the moon. I saw the look in his eyes that said he found me beautiful. I would have felt whole again, except I still had only one wing.

My saviour saw my incompleteness and dipped back into the bin of forgotten things. To my amazement, he found and retrieved my missing wing.

He carried me far away, and deep within the earth. He took the time and care to repair my broken wing. I felt blessed in my new life. I was placed among so many of my fellows, so many broken things that had been repaired and found a place here.

That time lasted for years, then one night everything changed. A new beauty came into my saviour's life. I watched them together, so happy and content in each other's company. But it was not to last.

Another unforeseen change came. My saviour appeared to lose his reason and his

direction in life. I wished I could help, but all any of us in that chamber could do was watch and wait. Would we be abandoned all over again?

My saviour walked slowly to the place where I stand. He grasped me gently and lifted me. Again, I felt the surety of his strong palm. It had been too long. I missed our unspoken connection.

But my master's gaze was absent, unseeing. He did not appear to see me. Perplexity darkened his eyes. Suddenly he stilled, like a quarry at bay. Together we heard footsteps and sensed the impending presence of another.

He placed me gently down, his gaze sharpening with confusion. He turned to look, and we both saw \*her\* again. The beautiful woman who changed everything for my saviour that first, fateful night. And changes things for him, still.

She stopped in the chamber entrance and smiled. She waited for him to understand why she had come, and for him to go to her...

END