

# The Sacrifice (Alternate World)

By : Mistress of Word Play

The story of Cape Town, Africa in an alternate world. A story of war and political upheavel and the men and women who believe that freedom is worth paying the ultimate price.



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# The Sacrifice (Alternate World) : Chapter 1

What price for freedom I ask of you?  
What would you forfeit or chose to do?  
Would you give your life dear friend?  
Would you fight until the bitter end?

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Celine walked deep in thought beneath the muted light of Terra's twin moons. The strong spring breeze would occasionally whip her short black hair across her youthful somber face. Her blue eyes sparkled brightly as she made her way down the avenue. The fabric of her loose white shift caressed her body and caused Celine's light brown skin to tingle. Feeling the cold on her skin, Celine pulled the cape around her slender form. There had been peace in Cape Town for over twenty years. She had been born toward the end of the Fifty Year War. Celine could not remember any of the events which took place, but her father and Tristan Celine's older brother made her aware of the details when she was older. Her mother Amalia died shortly after Celine's birth. Celine and Tristan's father never remarried. Heartbroken he took on the care and upbringing of his children with love and devotion. Celine still regretted the fact she had never known her mother. A special bond had formed between Celine, Lester, and Tristan because of Amalia's tragic death, but there were times when Celine felt alone and longed for her mother's presence.

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Celine's father Lester was leader of Cape Town's fast growing population. It was the only democratic city left on Terra. In fact there were no other major cities left on Terra, at least none that she was aware of. There were a few outposts and settlements outside of Cape Town, but most of the major townships and cities had been destroyed during the war. The residents of Cape Town had rebuilt the city and most of the war's survivors lived within the city's perimeter. Though Lester was Cape Town's leader the government was democratic. A High Council was elected to share the responsibilities of making and enforcing laws to govern the people. Every five years an election was held and all residents of Cape Town voted. No one ever ran against Lester so he remained in office.

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Celine and Tristan were for the time unique; they were a new and different generation of children. Lester had married Amalia during the war at a time when their marriage by society was considered taboo. Lester was born of the darker skinned race while Amalia was fair skinned. It had been hard for the two star crossed lovers, but they had endured and gone on to produce two offspring. Celine at times was uncomfortable with her bizarre and unconventional lineage; she was however very proud of her parents. Celine's father went on after his wife's illness and death to become a hero of the Fifty Year War and eventually he became the first leader of Cape Town.

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Celine had learned at a young age from her brother that Terra was once populated by many others, but as the planet became more and more overcrowded the environment suffered from polluted skies, soil contamination, and water pollution. Once the damage was done to the atmosphere Terra's inhabitants suffered severely, as land mass began to disappear beneath the mighty oceans and seas. A melt down of the ice caps had taken place because of the green house affect which occurred due to excessive pollution. As the land disappeared food and shelter became more and more scarce. The people who did not die from starvation or disease soon meet their end when the war broke out. Millions of people were slaughtered as the rich and powerful planned a new world. Lester and others who were not content to sit idly by as more innocents perished, gathered together as a group of resistance fighters and soon rid Terra of the conquerors, or so they thought.

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A handful of the former aristocrats and rulers escaped to the Western lands of South Africa and started to regroup. Peace and all Lester believed in would soon be in jeopardy once again. There was an uneasiness Celine began sensing inside her heart. As Celine continued her evenings outing she remembered something her father would often tell her.

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"What price do you put on peace and the welfare of every person? I tell you daughter no price is too great to have that peace." Lester would say to her with firm conviction.

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Celine thought of many things as moonlight settled softly on her face. She knew what had to be done if need be. Celine was after all her parents' child and believed in all the things they had taught her. The night air began to make her shiver. Clouds began to gather overhead as Celine continued her walk. An uneasy feeling had manifested itself in Celine's mind. She had hoped her stroll would have banished it, but nothing seemed to rid her of what plagued her inner peace. Tired and irritated, Celine made her way back home.

## Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Thrust your hand into death's fire.  
Do you have all which you desire?  
All things worthwhile have a cost.  
Are you found or hopelessly lost?

It was a week later that word came from the insurgents, a group which planned to capture Cape Town and overthrow the democratic city. Those who had escaped through the Fifty Year War had amassed sufficient men and arms to either claim the city as its own or tear it to the ground and kill all who dwelled within the city's perimeter. Lester, Tristan, and the High Council held a special meeting to discuss the proposal which the insurgents had sent. Celine though not invited to the meeting sat secretly and quietly in the wings of the Great Hall listening to the heated discussion.

"You are not really considering bowing to their demands are you?" Char the Head of the Council asked shaking her head in disbelief.

"All things are being considered," Lester replied sadly.

A rumble of discontent began as the members of the High Council realized how grave the situation was. Celine unobserved by the others felt a hysteria rising among the group. She could feel her own mind reeling at what her father had so remorsefully said.

"Let's have order!" Char exclaimed to the crowd.

Once the roar of the voices was subdued Lester cleared his throat and began reading the demands.

"Cape Town will surrender all buildings, supplies, and residents to the Alliance," Lester read with a clear concise voice, "Furthermore the daughter of Cape Town's leader will be relinquished to the Alliance. She will be married to Thorn the leader of the Alliance in an effort to insure a peaceful reign. If these demands are not met within ten days the Alliance will destroy said city and all the people who are residents of Cape Town. Not one man, woman, or child will remain to darken the glorious reign of Thorn."

Celine gasped as she heard the demands the Alliance had sent. Chaos erupted in the Council hall. Members of the Council screamed out their disgust at the proposals. Char and Lester waited until the din became a murmured ripple.

"You cannot seriously turn Cape Town and your daughter Celine over to these thugs?" one of the Council members yelled from his seat.

Another round of loud talking and words of anger arose. Lester stood waiting until the noise level dropped. Celine witnessed the worry lines deepen in his strong face and there was a sadness she had never seen before. She never realized just how much her father had aged over the last few days.

"I will not see all that we have worked for destroyed by these radicals," Lester said firmly, "For the sake of Cape Town and our children we have no choice. We have witnessed first hand what these demons have done to the smaller settlements not far from here. All that remains of those dwellings and people is desolation and ash. Is this the fate we want to experience?"

"Surely we can try and reason with Thorn and his Alliance," one of the Council members yelled out.

"I am afraid there is no compromise with these people," Lester replied remorsefully, "We fought against them for fifty long years because they wanted to control everything. I doubt they will see reason."

A wave of discussion began. Celine from her vantage point could see the hopelessness on her father's face. How she longed to hug him and reassure him, but Celine knew he would be angry if he discovered she was there.

"I have an idea," Thar one of the Council men said as he stood up, "There is a way of destroying them once and for all. We have at our disposal strands of a deadly virus. It was found in one of the Alliance's laboratories during the war. Our scientists have deduced the virus is so deadly the person dies within forty eight hours. We could send Celine to them after we infect her with it. I know she is your daughter Lester and I hate to bring it up, but it seems we will all be dead soon no matter what we decide."

A deadly silence came about. Not one soul spoke. Celine gasped as she heard what Thar had presented as a way of preventing bloodshed. Peace would continue for all in Cape Town, but she would have to die so others

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might live in peace. It did not take Celine long to decide as her father's words resounded in her head.

"I'll do it!" Celine cried as she came out of hiding and began walking toward her father, "I can do this to save Cape Town."

As the group watched Celine made her way to where Lester was standing. His face had turned white. He stood shaking his head in a negative manner. The Council members held their silence as Celine walked with determination to her father.

As she approached him Lester was muttering, "No, you cannot do this child. I won't let you do it."

"I will do what is needed to keep Cape Town safe," Celine said to the Council and her father, "What is one life when that one life can spare so many?"

"You will not do this thing!" Celine's father exclaimed, "I forbid it. You are my daughter and you will do as I say. It is better that you marry Thorn. I cannot and will not let you kill yourself."

Celine looked at her father imploringly, but she saw the determined look on his face and knew it would do no good to continue the line of discussion. The Council members upon hearing Lester's reply began talking among themselves.

"It is decided then," Char said speaking loudly as she tried to regain control of the meeting, "In ten days Cape Town will surrender to the Alliance and Celine will be married to Thorn. This meeting is ended."

Celine walked with her father back to their home. They made the trip in silence. It would not be Lester's decision as to what Celine's fate might be; she had already decided what needed to be done.

## Chapter 3: Chapter 3

What is one life compared to others needs?

What is a heart if it acknowledges and concedes?

What better fate then to give and not receive?

What more does a soul have then to believe?

Celine waited until her father had retired for the night and undetected and unnoticed found herself at Thar's home. She stood for a moment and looked at the twin moons of Terra, the stars, and all that the people of Cape Town had fought to preserve then she knocked on Thar's door.

"Celine, why are you here?" Thar asked looking to see if anyone was with her.

"I came to speak with you in private," Celine answered, "Can I come in for a moment?"

"Of course," Thar replied gesturing to her, "Come in and let me know what's on your mind. Does your father know you are here? Has he sent you?"

"No," Celine replied as she entered Thar's home, "I am here and he does not know I came to talk with you."

Thar motioned for Celine to have a seat, which she did on Thar's overstuffed sofa. She sat for a moment wringing her tiny hands with a far off look in her eyes.

"What is it that I can assist you with?" Thar eventually asked spying the distressed look on Celine's drawn face.

"I want to be injected with the virus," Celine replied her voice so low it was barely audible, "I see no other recourse in all of this. I have no intention of letting the Alliance have Cape Town. All that you and my father have worked for will not be handed over to these murderers. I am willing to pay the price, but on my terms, not theirs."

Thar gasped as Celine made her intentions clear to him. He sat for a moment sizing the young woman up. He had always known Celine to be level headed and intelligent as she grew into womanhood, but Thar had never realized how caring and devoted Celine actually was.

"Has your father agreed to this?" Thar questioned.

"No he has not," Celine replied the tone in her voice rising as she answered Thar, "It is my decision and he need never know until it is all over with and done. You know yourself there is no other way."

Thar sat deep in thought for what seemed an eternity to Celine and then answered, "You are right Celine.

There is no other way. I will not inform your father of our talk or the fact you intend carrying this plan out."

Celine smiled at Thar and thanked him, but Thar could see sadness in Celine's beautiful eyes he had never seen before. He walked over to where she was sitting and hugged her much as a father would hug his own child. Celine sat with her head down crying.

Thar and Celine spent part of the evening making plans. She would take the injection with her and administer it in route to the Alliance's headquarters. If she took the injection too quickly Celine would not be able to deceive Thorn and the others. Then all would be lost.

As Celine left Thar's residence, he handed her a small syringe filled with a liquid. This Celine concealed in her cape's interior pocket. She turned and thanked Thar as she left promising him she would try her best to carry out their plan.

At first morning's light Lester came to see Celine. His face was more haggard and worn. He walked as if in a dream state. Celine watched him as he entered her room and hoped when it was over with and done her father's smile would return.

"Are you ready to go?" Lester asked Celine, "You know it will take you the better part of the day to walk to the rendezvous point?"

"Yes," Celine answered as she pulled her cape around her shoulders, "I love you father."

Lester stared lovingly at his daughter and tears streamed down his cheeks. He was so overcome with sorrow it was hard for him to speak.

"Father, please don't be upset," Celine said pulling him close, "You know there is nothing we can do. It will be fine. I will be fine."

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Overcome with emotion, Lester clung to his daughter until he had regained his composure. They walked together in silence and with a mutual understanding that this might be their last time together. Tristan greeted the two as they left Celine's room. She looked back one last time at happy memories she had spent within those four walls and then with brave determination and head held high began her journey.

Celine left Cape Town long before the residence were awake. She wanted no long farewells or well wishes extended. It would take her a day's travel to reach the appointed meeting place which the Alliance had indicated to her father and the Council.

Although spring had arrived early in Cape Town a cool wind bit cruelly at her exposed skin as she walked alone and unattended. Celine wound her cape tightly around her body. As she traveled she saw the piles of rubble and bits of block which had once been homes. On the ground below her feet lay the ash which her father had spoken of. The Alliance had developed weaponry that could take anything or anyone and with a single blast turn it into what was now littering the ground. She gagged as she studied on the fact some of the ash had been people.

"So many people dead, so much destruction," Celine wailed to the wind, "How can someone do this to another?"

Time passed slowly and soon Celine realized the pick up point was close at hand. Her fingers shook as she withdrew the syringe from its hiding place. Taking care that no one was present Celine plunged the needle deep into her flesh and released the virus into her vein just as Thar had instructed her to do the night before. The initial pain of the needle prick was nothing compared to the terrible burning sensation she experienced as the needle's contents coursed into her system. She wanted to scream, but fear held the outburst in check. She had one attempt to save her people, there were no other options. Soon the throbbing and burning in her arm stopped. Slowly she stood up and walked the short distance to the designated area.

Celine did not have to wait long in the distance she saw the vehicle as the dust cloud approached at break neck speed. She stood and wondered how long it would take for the virus to overtake her immune system. Then her thoughts darted back to her father and brother as the car approached tiny bits of ash and dust settled and clung to her cheeks. With her hand she wiped the tears away; she would not let them see her cry.



## Chapter 4: Chapter 4

Into death's dark deep tunnel I shall go,  
Where might it lead me I do not know?  
Though difficult I will make this sacrifice.  
Perhaps it is enough and it might suffice.

The two men spoke not a word as they took Celine to the Alliance's home base. She noticed one of the men carried a strange looking rifle. She wondered if this was like the weapon of destruction the Alliance had been using to destroy the people who lived outside Cape Town. It mattered little now, so she rode in silence taking in the desolate and harsh landscape.

Africa had once been covered with a wide variety of trees and vegetation. Wild animals of many breeds roamed freely. There was nothing left of what had been. All that remained was sand, barren land, and the ash the Alliance had created. Perhaps one day given the time her people would revive the land and make it beautiful once more.

As they approached the complex Celine noticed how down trodden and frail the population looked. Unlike Cape Town's people who were happy and healthy the people here lived in fear and terror of their masters. It was a shame the innocent among them would die as well. Celine took her hand and rubbed her forehead. She felt the drops of sweat as her hand made contact. It felt as if she had a fever.

The car they were riding in soon came to a halt in front of a large building surrounded by armed guards. Celine took a deep breath and followed her escorts inside as she walked sharp pains radiated down both her legs.

Thorn met the group as they entered the building. Celine could feel her muscles tense and took a guarded stance as Thorn stood staring at her. His hair was long and unruly and unlike her father's face which was kind and gentle, Thorn's face revealed the cruel and vile nature of the man.

"So this is my prize," Thorn laughed as he grabbed Celine's arm and drew her close to him, "Well I must say you mixed breeds certainly are an attractive lot."

Celine jerked her arm free of Thorn's grasp and spat directly in his face. Thorn's hand came up and he slapped Celine across the lips. She whimpered in pain and backed away from him.

"Just so we understand each other," Thorn growled wiping her spit off his face, "I am your master and soon to be your husband. You will obey me."

Too tired and sick to fight with Thorn, Celine simply glared at him. Thorn laughed as he observed her look of contempt.

"Take my bride to be to her room," Thorn bellowed at his men, "Have her dress for the feast we are holding in her honor."

"Yes sir," the larger of the two men replied as he took Celine's arm and lead her away.

Celine was taken to her room and given a revealing low cut gown of emerald green. Shoes had also been provided for her. An elderly woman stood waiting to assist her in anyway necessary.

"My name is Rose," the woman had informed Celine in a formal tone.

"I am Celine," she replied, "I can manage just fine dressing myself."

The elderly woman had curtsied and vanished without another word. Celine dressed in silence and applied a cool compress to her bruised face. Her whole body was aching from fever and she was finding it hard to stand. The high heels Celine wore made it difficult for her to walk. She steadied herself and waited.

It was not long and Thorn came to retrieve her. He bowed jokingly and offered Celine his arm. Celine pulled away from him hoping he would see the animosity she felt for him.

"So we are going to play Miss High and mighty are we?" Thorn said sarcastically and then before she could answer he pulled her close and kissed her on the lips.

This time Celine did not push him away, but welcomed the close contact with Thorn. The virus had reached its peak and soon Celine would not be here to suffer at his hands. She hoped he died slowly writhing in pain. Thorn felt the beginnings of a smile on Celine's bruised lips and he pushed her back and away from him.

"What's so funny?" Thorn asked.

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"You," Celine answered, "Just like a man to take what he can't have any other way."

"Just thank your lucky stars I decided to marry you and spare Cape Town," he replied taking her arm into his own, "I could have just killed you all."

They entered the grand dining hall and Thorn seated Celine next to him. Celine could feel the tightness in her chest as she drank and tried to eat the meal in front of her. The festivities went on until well into the night. Celine felt death as it approached her. A light headedness and coolness touched the outer edge of her brain. Her last thoughts were of her father and brother. Celine prayed what she had done would spare them. Celine's head went crashing forward onto the table as she died.

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It was not long after Celine started her trek to the Alliance when Lester found out what Celine intended to do. Thar came to him and delivered the news.

"How could this happen?" Lester groaned, "I told her to marry him and she disobeyed me. What was she thinking?"

"She was thinking of you and the others here in Cape Town," Thar replied sadly, "Celine told me one life compared to the lives of many was a small price to pay. She knew what she was doing. Her act of self sacrifice has saved us all."

"Not my child," Lester answered as tears trailed down his cheeks, "Not my child."

Four days after Celine left Cape Town word reached Lester that the Alliance had crumbled. Most of the population had perished over a two day span. A handful of people remained but they too would soon be dead. There were no celebrations in Cape Town. All that lived within the city knew the price that had been paid to insure their freedom and happiness.

Thar and the members of the Council commissioned a statue of Celine and erected it in Cape Town's main square. Inscribed on the bronze plaque were these words:

What price for freedom I ask of you?

What would you forfeit or chose to do?

Would you give your life dear friend?

Would you fight until the bitter end?

I would!

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