

# Encounter with Lover's Daughter

*by* Lila

Last night on a plane, I met his daughter. I only saw her once when he flipped open his wallet to find cash. Usually we ordered in using a credit card due to the sensitivity of our meeting time.

She was a tiny creature with large blue eyes that must have looked almost exactly like his. I never saw those eyes in so much light; I could only feel them in the dark whenever he moved around me, against me, inside me. I knew the eyes were of the color of the ocean, the far one where we wanted to sail together. Yet his eyes were the sea at night when you could only hear the sounds of the wave and the scent of salty water and the vastness of the dark sky above you - sometimes with the moon and lots of stars. Her eyes were the sea of a sunny morning where the water constantly unfolded itself with a million of starry sparkles above the beautiful blueness of unfathomable depth.

What was she doing on the same plane? Why did he not talk to me about this? Didn't I tell him I was going to come back last night? Oh wait, I didn't. I just told him I was going to go somewhere, and he wished me bon voyage. He always respects my privacy and would never inquire me of where I go, whom I go with, or what I do. I can tell him if I want to, but he'll never ask. It is his safe way to trigger my sense of reciprocation, so that I will never ask him about his whereabouts and rendezvous. After all, we are not supposed to know much more about each other than the world we share together whenever we see each other. That world is usually the size of a nice, small, elegant hotel room downtown. Or the back of the car with dark windows. Or the empty alleyway around some corner. He locks my careless questions with his lips or with the tips of his fingers. He

kisses on my eyelids before I could get to my tears. He understood whenever I wanted to break out of our black universe, and knew how to keep me inside, for he knew if either of us got out, we would never be able to get back. And we would be forever separated. To be separated when you are not even officially together is never a pleasant thing. The two of us are too polite and respectful to do that upon each other.

But his daughter, last night, was sitting right next to me on that airplane. The morning light from the tiny oval window was lying on her smooth skin, her eyes, and her golden hair. I then decided to speak up.

*Are you traveling alone?*

*Yes.*

*What a wonderful experience. Where are your parents?*

*They are at home. I went to visit my Grandma. Now I am heading home.*

*That is great. How is your Grandma doing?*

*She is doing fine, thank you.*

*I am very impressed that you seem so confident traveling alone at your age. How old are you?*

*I am eight. I have traveled by myself several times before.*

*That's great. What do your parents do?*

*My Father is a writer and a research fellow at a university. My Mother is a psychologist.*

*That's very nice. Do you want to become a writer or a psychologist as well?*

*I want to become a doctor. I also want to be a philosopher.*

*It is indeed possible to become both as long as you have the passion.*

*My Father said that too.*

*He must be a very wise man. Must be busy too. Do you get to spend time much with him?*

*I do, not too much though, he is very very busy. Especially during the week. Sometimes he sleeps over at the university dormitory or at*

*another researcher's apartment. I see him most during weekends.  
I see. Well weekends are good since you don't have school then.  
Yeah.*

*What about Mom? Is she very busy too?  
She is but she goes home every day and makes dinner for us. She is  
also teaching me how to swim, how to play the piano.  
That's fantastic. Can you swim yet? How are you enjoying the piano?  
I can swim a little bit now, not too far. The piano is hard but I love it.  
I am learning to read the notes.  
I'm sure you're gonna do fine. Playing the piano and swimming are  
very similar - you just have to keep working at it, feeling instead of  
fighting the water and the music around you, then it will become  
part of your nature.  
Oh wow. My Dad says the exact same thing...  
We all do, just at different points in time.  
Yeah.*

We kept the conversation for a little while. All this time I was looking into her eyes and thinking of him. I felt almost angry at him for his absence at the scene, and angry at myself for not being able to mother this child of his. She belongs elsewhere. She will never need to know of the dark world her father and I share.

I left the plane feeling like I was still up in the air. The innocence of her blue eyes haunted me. I stopped by at a Starbucks. My favorite coffee tasted like contaminated water. I felt like crying, but I could not. He had kissed away all of my tears. When you take away somebody's tears, you imprison her forever in a sensation that cannot physically burst, and since it can only go back inwards, it will slowly drive her insane.

Forty minutes later, I was walking without thinking to the baggage claim area which was empty with only a few suitcases lying on the floor. I got mine, dragged it out the automatic door, went to the taxi

waiting area, got into a cab, told the driver my address, and closed my eyes on my way home.

