

the ONE asking: “where are all the Good men?”

by Guru Mani H

The tears run down her face; red eyes sore from the crying. He doesn't notice, or *pretends* he doesn't, continuing to use her to “meet his needs”, a phrase he so often repeats. She *longs* to have the courage to say “no”, to SHOUT “NO”; to escape. Fear holds her there. Fear of another drunken beating; of another sober beating. Fear of what would happen to her, and the children, if she *ever* dared to speak out. Fear of *not* being believed, or of *being* believed but then of the consequences; from him, and those around him who also fear him. Having seen all this in her dad in the *past*, she can't understand how she ended up with another like him in the *present*. She dreams of her knight in shining armour, and hopes that today's secret rendezvous in the arms of another might be the one she's been looking for; but she's abused, yet again. Like a magnet, she attracts men that are bad. She's not deliberately repelling the men that are good; she just can't find them.

“I found a good man, but through my constant nagging, I lost him.”

It started off as care. She *really* thought that this time things might just be different. He was so thoughtful, but she'd no real clue what lay beneath, waiting to unleash itself. Once her heart was his, once he'd got his prize, once they were committed to togetherness; the *care* moved to *control*. It was slowly at first, but over time, a controlling of her decisions, her friendships, her actions, even what she wore and ate. The change was so gradual that she didn't notice until it was too late, at which point she was too deeply in, and to be honest, too blind to properly see. His death brought an end to her secret torment, but the fear of being controlled again leaves her paralysed emotionally, unable to receive care, even if it's genuine and true. Are there still any good men? Maybe, but she's too scared now to take the risk, the one *bad* man stopping her being open to finding the one *good* one.

“I had a good man, but didn't appreciate him; so, he left me, for someone who did.”

As another unfulfilling time comes to an end, and he lays there exhausted, she longs for him to understand that women and men *really are* different. For him, it's all about the one thing that gets him excited; the conclusion that he's always so quick to reach. For her, it's different, and if he *just* took his time and thought for a moment about *her* pleasure, then he'd explore and find *all* the different ways to fulfil her; time and again. He'd use everything available to him, all the god given body parts; not just the one. She'd be fulfilled, and here's the crazy thing, he would too! She tries to talk about it but he takes offence, like she's questioning his manhood, and as she lies there next to the snoring, she longs for the man, she fantasises about the man, who would do her good.

"I had a good man, perfect for me, but I valued my career more highly, so in the end he left. I fell apart, and so did my career."

He comes home late; again. There used to be excuses; there used to be flowers, but not any more. She knows, and he knows that she knows; knows *what* he's done, knows *who* he's done. She longs for an end to the betrayal, the pain, the charade. The beginning was easy, filled with a world of possibilities. The end would be so hard; an impossibility. Even though her soul is dying, she lives with that death, just because she can't face the turmoil of the end. She cries herself to sleep at night yet again, and asks herself the question to which she *never* finds an answer: "Why?"

"A good man loved me, and proposed the commitment of more; but I said 'no', in case *good* stopped me from finding *perfect*. Now I have neither."

He holds open the door, allowing her in first; a gentleman. He respects her opinion, values her contribution; a gentleman. He encourages her dreams, invests in her; a gentleman. He believes in equality of the sexes, esteems her for who she is; a gentleman. He makes sure she always has flowers by her bedside, and chocolate treats; a gentleman. He makes her cups of tea, and regularly cooks; a gentleman. He respects her when she says "no", allowing her control of her body; a gentleman. He takes her on dates, that *he* has planned; a gentleman...she's heard about this man, read about him,

seen him in the movies, but not yet found him. She's still searching, but has *no idea* where to look. This gentleman, this good man; is he real? Can he ever be found? If so, her question is...where?

“Where can a good man be found? Often inside the body of ugliness, so he never gets a chance, because I don't give him one.”

He earns money; it's a plus, not all she's been with have done that, but then he wastes it. He's out with his mates, drinking, then more drinking at home; latest mobile phone, large TV they don't need, shining and accessorizing the car like his life depends on it. Gadgets, and more gadgets, but when it comes to responsibility for her, mother of his children, and the children themselves, well, that weight lands on her; and it's a heavy one. *She's* the one who has to sacrifice, her comfort, her health, just to survive. In the culture of those around her, the society she's in, it's just considered normal. It's what men do, and it's what women do, but if this is her culture, if this is her society, then she wants out. If this is her man, who is anything but good, then she also wants out. But where to? Who to?

“My best friend was a man; a good man. I wanted something more; he didn't. I pushed, and now I don't know where to find him.”

Her kids mean the world to her, they *are* her world; but they never seem to be *his* world, or even a small part of it. They long for his attention, crave his approval, but even when he's physically present, his head is somewhere else; his work, his clubs, his football team. For years they tried to get his attention, but slowly, as childhood moved into teenage years, they gave up bothering. After so many broken promises of events he was *definitely* going to come to, but didn't; special occasions he wouldn't miss for the world, but did; and family times that *she* arranged but *he* cancelled or made his excuse for not joining in, she now acts like she's a single mum; except that *he's* still around. Her man is like a ball and chain that she drags around behind her, like having an extra child to

be responsible for, but one who *never* grows up. A good man? Not in any definition of the word 'good' that *she* would ever use.

"I got to know a good man. He was interested in me, but I was too scared to take the risk; so, I didn't."

He's never hit her; yet, but his words hit her, like poisonous darts, arrows fired straight at her heart, wounding her esteem, injuring her value; invisible to the human eye, but real. She walks on eggshells around her own home, constantly in fear of when his destructive words will hit her again. When he gets angry, which can explode out of nothing, the negative words become like giant grenades, shattering her soul, destroying any shred of dignity that she's managed to salvage for herself between when he stormed out of the house and now that he's returned. It's been twenty years; no-one else knows. They're the perfect couple, to everyone else; he's the perfect man, to everyone else. She's found the elusive good man, says everyone else. Except, she hasn't; and it's killing her inside.

"My dad was a good man; god rest his soul, and no-one else I meet quite measures up to that, so I'm stuck in the past, never able to move into my future."

Romantically, she's found a good man; amazing in fact, always turns up with the big gestures. However, in the day-to-day, in the small things of life; he's no-where to be found. Reliability, stability, predictability; absolutely zero, literally nothing. As much as she wants the romantic, for this to last, she needs the rest as well, but it's just not there, and she doesn't think it ever will be. For her, and she can't speak here for others; good in one area, no matter how good, just isn't good enough. She needs a man who will step up and be a man, not stay as a boy. She's looking for the all-weather guy, not just a whirlwind. She needs one who will enjoy the journey with her; each step, and not just one who wants the occasional big adventure but not all the little ones in between. A truly good man...so hard to find!

“I’ve seen all the movies; I know the fairy tales, and the reality in front of me just doesn’t measure up, so I keep waiting for my knight to come riding in.”

- - - - -

“Where are all the *Good men*? I’ll be damned if I know!”