

THE LAST PRIESTESS

Based on an reincarnation memory, written by **Saana Saarinen**

SYNOPSIS

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Three women are sitting on the cliffs of a Greek island looking out to sea. One tells the others about her previous life as a soldier on this same island during the East Roman Empire period. The scene moves to Greece in the year 530 AD.

The soldier stands on a ship, disappointed and angry. He is traveling to the village of Telendos with 50 of his men and his mother. He is bitter and confused about the things that happened in Constantinople.

In his memory the young man arrives in the capital and starts a career as a soldier. Among other duties he is to pursue persecutions of the pagans. In a battle against Persians, he saves the life of the cowardly Emperor Justinian. As a reward, he is promoted to one of the four main bodyguard officers protecting the Emperor.

One day the emperor calls for the officer and gives him a secret mission. He is to travel to a southern island to protect a pagan priestess for the rest of his life. The soldier, who has dreamed about more heroic tasks, is disappointed and puzzled. Why does the Emperor command his special bodyguard to protect a priestess when he persecutes heretics at the same time?

Obedying, the soldier together with his troops arrives on the island and builds camp near the temple. He does his best to motivate the men who do not know the real purpose of their mission. He meets the arrogant priestess, who suggests a trip to the stars. Doubting, but amused, the soldier accepts.

Before nightfall the soldier meets a village elder, a wise old man. He asks the old man if he might know the reason for this mission. The old man tells him that a previous priestess, in order to gain spiritual power, made a treaty with the power hungry Emperor. Gradually it becomes clear that the soldier has fallen victim to their deceptive plot.

That evening the soldier takes a trip to the stars with the priestess. These become nightly trips that open a new and wonderful world to him that he wishes to experience over and over again. He and the priestess fall in love. Violating the virginity of a priestess is a deed punishable by death. So, the priestess suggests that they change bodies. In an extraordinary lovemaking scene the priestess in the soldier's body makes love to the soldier in her body. Breaking the holy boundary opens a gate to a boundless erotic life.

The priestess becomes pregnant. The parents have met their future son during their trips to the stars. The soldier reveals the situation to his mother, who assists with the delivery. The newborn son must be kept hidden from the villagers.

The soldier and the priestess continue their trips to the stars for their own enjoyment, gradually becoming addicted to the pleasure. The spiritual powers, however, do not tolerate a selfish motive. The two are given a warning and are ordered to stop the trips. The priestess ignores the warning believing the trips are her privilege.

The threat becomes real. One hot day the hills of the village are set aflame. Although the fire is brought under control, a severe storm is approaching. It lashes the island and the family seeks safety in the temple. The soldier hears his mother's voice and goes out to look for her in the terrible storm. He sees a bolt of lightning crush the temple, destroying the priestess and their son. An earthquake destroys part of the island setting off a tidal wave that buries the village. Left alone and wanting to go to his loved ones through death, the soldier falls upon his own sword.

Return to the present on the island. The other one of the women is revealed to have been the priestess, the other one the soldier's mother. At the end they find his sword on the island.

THE PRESENT DAY CONNECTION

A friend of hers who claimed she had been a soldier on a Greek island in the 6th Century told this tale to the writer. Intrigued by the tale, the writer and her friend together with another woman made a trip to the Greek Island of Cos. There they found out that the island connected to the story was the island of Telendos which is near Cos. Telendos had been separated from Calymnos in an earthquake 535 AD and the village had been buried underneath the sea.

After the tale was written, the women learned that a golden sword and some golden coins dating from the same period had been found on Telendos. The woman who told the story remembered where she had hidden a pot of golden coins, and she is willing to show the place to archeologists and witnesses.

Furthermore, historical accounts of happenings during the same time period match the woman's story. For example, the Emperor Justinian was told to have made an agreement with Beelzebub, the devil. Justinian hated pagans and ordered the reincarnation doctrine removed from the Christian religion.

Saana Saarinen first published the Last Priestess as a book in Finland in 1998.

MAIN CHARACTERS

THEOS - An officer of the Emperor's bodyguard troop. A strong and handsome soldier, who develops into a loving man. Having been a disbeliever, he cannot deny the reality of the spiritual world.

ATHENEAS - A self-conscious virgin priestess who sacrifices her morals and duties for love and selfish motives.

LAIA - Mother of Theos. A modest, down to earth country woman and devote Christian.

JUSTINIAN - Emperor of East Rome. An earthly and spiritual autocrat who is cowardly, ruthless and unpleasant.

SELOS - The old, wise man of the village. Modest and knowledgeable about spiritual matters. An important help to Theos.

LUCIAS - A pagan priestess, who uses black magic to get spiritual power. Her stepbrother in Efesos accidentally kills her.

APOLLONIOS - The chief of the village who is friendly and sharp sighted.

HEROS - A brave and loyal soldier who is the closest of the soldiers to Theos during his time on the island.

TIMON - Son of Theos and Atheneas who lives only four years.