

Morgen Leigh
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E-Mail: moezone2001@yahoo.com
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In the Beginning....

by

[Morgen Leigh](#)

Nammu, the Mother who gave birth to heaven and earth, sat atop a grand and wondrous fig tree, checking Her list of things to do.

"Let's see," She said, looking out over the Great Land of Her making. "Got the light down pretty well, just need to do that whole dividing thing and add some stars to the dark. Sky looks okay, but needs color adjustment." The Great Mother wrote *more blue* next to the word *sky* on her list then scanned the slip of paper.

"Rivers and oceans" Nammu pondered this. "Rivers and oceans ... Ah! Yes! I'll put all manner of strange and funny looking creatures there as well as in the trees. Wonderful! Add myriad of odd beasts to walk the land and there's just one last thing to do." She made a note.

"A tough one," the Mother whispered, nodding seriously, Her long dark braided locks shifting with the breeze. "This could get tricky."

With utmost care and forethought, Nammu plucked a coarse black hair from Her head and tossed it to the wind. It twisted and twirled toward the ground and upon alighting on the lush green grass turned into a woman with deep brown skin, long wild hair, and eyes the color of freshly made chocolate (the first creation of the Great Mother). The new invention took a breath of air and sat up.

"Hey there," Nammu called out from Her perch in the tree, knowing the woman could not see Her. "How do you feel?"

The woman looked around and smiled. "I know you, Mother. What is my name?"

Pleased, Nammu said, "I have named you Lilith. And now I'll build you a companion with custom-fitting parts, a good head for menial tasks, and lower intelligence so that you may enjoy many pleasures and the splendid land I have made for you to look after. I warn you, though," Nammu added, "I know well the nature of woman, not so much the nature of man. It's still ... *foggy* and I'm not sure how he'll turn out."

The Great Mother added the word *fog* to her list.

Lilith frowned. "What do you mean *companion*? What is this *he*?"

Nammu explained.

Lilith grew horrified. "I have no interest in such a beast," Lilith exclaimed. "I prefer a she, like me, for a companion. And I don't want babies. I'd much prefer a career, perhaps in alchemy and numbers."

After several ponderous moments, Nammu smiled. "Very well, then," She said and, plucking a hair from Lilith's head, created another woman (a bit rounder and just as honorable) for the first. Together, Lilith and her companion strolled off into the paradise of the woods and flowers, speaking of the fluidity of water and how it could possibly be.

Nammu sat for a very long time, thinking deep thoughts. She selected another hair, this one a bit less coarse, and tossed it to the whispering wind. Looking down, the Great Mother pondered the magnificent creature lying on the grass.

"Hey there," Nammu called out from Her perch in the tree, knowing the woman could not see Her. "How do you feel?"

The woman looked around and smiled. "I know you, Mother. What is my name?"

Pleased, Nammu said, "I have named you Eve, like the time before. And now I'll build you a companion with custom-fitting parts, a good head for menial tasks, and lower intelligence so that" Nammu's voice trailed off. The Great Mother pulled at her lower lip. "Unless you prefer someone similar to yourself."

Eve shook her head. "No. I think it will be a great challenge to have someone very different from me, but equal to my intelligence, emotional fortitude, inner strength, and sense of humor."

Nammu smiled and, plucking a hair from Eve's head, created a man (meaning "part of *woman*, an abbreviation of *woman*, stunted and shortened and therefore less complete than *woman*.")

The man awoke and, upon seeing the ravishing and intelligent Eve (for smarts radiated from her), grunted loudly.

"Oh, boy," Eve muttered, helping the man to his feet. "Maybe I should have summoned an ox."

As the days and nights passed, it became quite obvious to Eve that the man who was created from her was not ... *right*. Though handsome, he grunted and scratched regularly and seemed not to have any interest in Eve's thoughts, ideas, or opinions. So Eve set off for the tall and wondrous fig tree under which she first awoke.

"Mother," Eve called. "This man you have made for me isn't working out. He is unruly and immature. I would much rather have a man with whom I can converse and debate. My brain is turning to mush."

Nammu considered the request carefully then said, "Dear daughter, my only wish is that you be happy and content with the path you have chosen and that you fulfill your personal goals and dreams," and She plucked a hair from Eve's head and tossed it to the wind.

Several days and nights passed and Eve again felt disheartened. The second man (though just as handsome as the first) was lazy and dull of mind.

"The elephant is better company," Eve told Nammu. And so the Great Mother plucked yet another hair from Eve's long black locks.

So it went for many days and many nights. With each attempt came failure and Eve grew increasingly frustrated.

"Will I never find a man who is my equal in spirit?" she lamented.

Nammu, sitting high up among the fig leaves, thought and thought. Finally, She said, "Aha! I will call upon the wisest and craftiest of all creatures," and She clapped Her dark hands together sharply.

At once, Serpent appeared, coiling and uncoiling among the blades of grass at Eve's bare feet. Eve lifted the splendid reptile, smiling. Serpent slid across her shoulders, turned, and looked the woman in the eye.

"How may I serve ye, Woman?" Serpent asked in an Irish brogue.

"Oh, Serpent," Eve began. "It has been eighteen men and still I have not found a single one equal. I'm open to suggestions."

Serpent bobbed her golden blue head and smiled a knowing smile. "Nammu," she called.

Nammu roused Herself from Her list. "Yes, Sister S?"

"Ye have created woman with ... how shall I say it ... intrinsic *knowin'*. Intuition and a lust for learnin'. She is complete. But because man is simply a diluted version of woman, he must be taught. And, like the pain of child-bearin', it is woman's task because she is the stronger and wiser of the two."

"Ah," Nammu said, jotting this on Her list. "You're absolutely right. Any thoughts on how to rectify this dilemma?"

Serpent grinned. "Build a beautiful tree at the center of the Garden. This awesome tree will bear the Fruit of Knowledge. The man who seeks out and welcomes the Fruit is woman's equal, as much as man *can be* equal to woman, for truly woman will always be superior." Serpent's eyes narrowed then. "I must warn ye, though. Some who eat may go insane with insecurity, as man's inferior nature will be revealed to them.

Watch for this, Woman, for these men will be dangerous to your personal growth and self-esteem."

With that, Serpent bowed her golden blue head, slithered from Eve's shoulders, and disappeared into the lush grass.

Nammu finished Her notes and plucked yet another hair from Eve's head, tossed it to the wind and wondered.

The next three attempts produced unfavorable results. Jonathan liked to pick his nose and eat the contents found within. Michael found it difficult to refrain from fondling his genitals at any given time. And Jeffrey much preferred the company of Jonathan.

Eve was quickly losing faith.

Then, on the fourth try, the Great Mother Nammu plucked a rather long and particularly black hair from Eve's tired head. Nammu tied a single knot in the hair, pressed it to Her full brown lips, closed Her dancing black eyes and tossed it to the wind, which seemed to moan that day, and sing. At once, a handsome man lay at Eve's feet and upon awakening beheld the woman from whom he'd been made.

"Woman," the man said, getting to his feet and bowing so deeply that his hair brushed the earth. "Mother, sister, companion, and friend."

Eve smiled. "Now, that's more like it!"

Eve and her new companion Adam spent many days wandering the wondrous Garden Nammu had created. They wondered together about the many plants and animals, observing how the monkey seemed common to them, and how the sloth was so gentle. Eve often went to the tree under which she first awoke to lie naked beneath its

broad full branches, for Eve was quite secure in her body image. On occasion, Eve spoke to Nammu, thanking the Great Mother for all that She had provided, and asking for Her permission.

"May I now show him, Mother?" Eve implored.

"Oh, daughter," Nammu said. "Be careful what you long for. If you feed the fruit of knowledge to Adam he will not appreciate it as much as if he were to come to it on his own. If he seeks it, that will be proof."

And so it came to be that Eve and Adam happened to pass by the Tree of Knowledge on their way to bathe in the river Tigris. Upon approach, Adam suddenly spoke, brushing the rough bark with his hand.

"I have dreamed of such a tree," Adam told Eve. "In the time before."

Eve held her breath as Adam reached for a round ripe red apple, sprinkled with morning dew. Adam held the fruit out to Eve and said, "Eat that you may be nourished, Goddess."

Eve smiled. "You first."

Adam breathed deeply of the fruit's skin then opened his mouth and took a big bite.

All at once, Adam's eyes grew wide. He began to cough and choke, then fell to the ground as though asleep. Eve backed away, remembering Michael's response to eating the fruit. He'd become angry, even aggressive, but Eve had been able to subdue him with wristlocks and groin kicks she'd learned from Bear.

Adam lay on the grass for a long time, unmoving, and then suddenly he opened his eyes and looked at Eve. "Goddess," he whispered, and Eve went to him.

"It is no dream," Adam told her. "How blessed I am that you have chosen me above all others. I will edify your being, for I come from you. Without woman, man's breath is taken. I did not truly know, until now. Mother, sister, companion, friend ... I will forever lift you high and hold you there, for without you there is no life."

And so it came to pass that the second woman Eve and the twenty-third man Adam lived with unconditional acceptance and eternal love in the Garden the Great Mother had created for them to look after. Adam made mistakes, as did Eve (though not as often). But each reveled in learning ... and teaching with utmost care and patience.

High above, perched among the grand fig leaves, Nammu watched all that took place, smiling often and laughing into the wind. After Eve and Adam produced two healthy children (a boy named Cain and a girl named Abel (for she truly was)), Nammu made a note on Her list.

This is the only Law... above all, respect and love one another.

PS: Don't forget the stars.