

THE FABULOUS FABULISTS

The twins were not born together. The original child was named Korema and by all accounts was physically normal until her fifth birthday. She was mischievous and liked to play pranks like anyone her age, so when she complained about the pain in her side her parents thought it was just a ploy to escape school. Sent to class with a packed lunch and a smack on her bottom, she returned in the afternoon weeping in pain. Alas still her father did not believe her and her stern mother sent her to bed with no supper. No one thought to check under her shirt. The next morning she had a lump, then day-by-day the lump grew until one day Korema awoke with a sister sharing her bed. Her sister was a mouthy girl and so their parents quickly discovered her, despite Korema's desperate attempts to disguise her.

The father thought Plus was a clever name for the new addition to the family, but the mother preferred Patrika, so they compromised on Plustrika. The girl thought that was such an ugly name she went by a shortened 'Plus', which from then on gained her an affinity to her father. Korema thus became her mother's favourite.

Their lives were lived in tandem as those literally joined at the hips often are. Needless to say wherever Korema went, Plus tagged along close at her side. They shared friends, partners and enemies. Many found the sisters grotesque and told them so, but together they persevered all the same through life's myriad of challenges, finding a special niche for themselves as storytellers.

Often in life, curious circumstances become hard to explain, since the weirder the event the larger the likelihood of any singular witness being seen as an unreliable narrator. Having a permanent partner means the twins always had a verification for the tall tales they'd spin. They very quickly became renowned among their community and the children would gather around 'The Fabulous Fabulists' as they came to be known.

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No matter how tight their relationship was though, the twins would constantly bicker, well into adulthood. Their father died in his middle-age while they cared for their mother who surprisingly stayed quite agile for her years. While she did not approve of the sisters' profession it was hard to argue against a two-headed wordsmith. Especially because they spent so much time practising against each other.

Eventually Korema got sick and started to wither away. Plus did not contract the same illness and feared for her companion's life. Their husband rushed around to many villages but none of the doctors wanted to operate on such a complicated case. He returned swiftly but it was too late - Korema died in her mother and sisters' arms then was absorbed into the body she had shared.

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She left a vacuum in the family's hearts. Everyone grieved for a time but without her twin Plus knew she had to work much harder to keep an audience and concoct stories to delight. She tried to use her partner as a replacement but to no avail, he was as dull as a stone and had no showmanship. Her mother was secretly bitter that it had been the better child, the original child that had died. There was a secondary reason too. While Korema was dying, something strange was happening to Plus. She became more full of life, more youthful, larger, plumper. And slowly the mother suspected, then became convinced, that her darling had been drained by this parasite. But she took this secret to her grave, and soon after she too died.

Mourning the loss of her last family member Plus decided to finally give up the story-telling business and join her husband as a carpenter, until finally he died and she was all alone. By this time Plus was well into her nineties. However if you saw her you wouldn't believe it. In-fact she was closer in looks to someone in their late fifties, and had the energy to match. She was smart with her finances and with a well-balanced series of investments and various systems of cash-flow she did not have to worry about money. The only things she regretted was not having her sister or any children to join in her final days.

When she started to feel a pain in her side Plus did not seek any medical attention as she believed it was the beginning of the end. The pain subsided but the lump grew larger and larger. One day she woke up, as her sister had many years ago, and had a companion again. It strongly resembled Plus but also Korema, though it could not be said to be identical to either. Rather, this sibling was something new. Overjoyed, Plus named her Stevenia after her expired husband and began educating the child as to her history, as well as the ways of the world.

The end Plus had prepared for was not as near as she had expected. Through many years of travel and the reinvigoration of the Fabulists in a plethora of states across the world, she and her sister found no turbulence from the weariness of age. It was as if they were in a stasis, untouched. Only when Stevenia reached the age Korema was when she died did things change. As if a switch flipped, Plus quickly became weak and shrank as her sister has, then to Stevenia's horror, shrivelled away till she was no more.

But with Stevenia's birth Plus had begun to understand the patterns at play and took careful notice to begin creating a list of instructions for her sister, so as to give her guidance to the path she should take. She wouldn't be able to save her sister from the anguish of her own death but at least Stevenia would be ready for new life.

For her part, Stevenia followed the guidelines to the letter and when they were lacking she improvised, then added new rules to her evolving dogma. When it came time for a new sister to join the fold, Stevenia passed on the laws to their lives and swiftly left the mortal coil as so many before her and with every iteration their wisdom grew.

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It is thus that the Fabulous Fabulists have survived against such adversity, to this day. The teachings of a religious leader or authority figure pale in comparison to someone who is with you night and day, hour after hour and understands you to your core. While the sisters still argue, there is a deep respect for the elder by the younger and neither wishes to disrupt this now sacred bond. Cycle-after-cycle they become entrenched in a shared life that is strengthened by every new birth. For many they are simply a pair of Siamese twins with an overly active imagination. But while it may be difficult to believe their story, if you watch them tell it you will have no doubt. Their eyes betray no sense of falsehood, no concept of trickery. In fact it is this author's opinion that they may be the only truly truthful beings left on this Earth, or at least the ones with the most faith in what they say.