

**A Skin of Veils**

emma joy hill

© June 2019

Emma Joy Hill  
860.806.5485  
[emmajoyhill@gmail.com](mailto:emmajoyhill@gmail.com)

## Characters:

Miriam — young, the “ideal woman”, underneath passion-heart, guts & blood that hits the surface  
a beautiful voice

Neighbor — young, a man, a poet most likely, strong and dirty and lovely hands

Joe — old, a gentleman, a scholar, a rebel

Father — frightened but tries to hide it, jaw always clenched

Mother — she’s rigid and silk

Panther — the head soldier, biggest baddest of the bunch, a bull full of hate and hurt

Wounded Soldier — a man caught in a cycle, we try not to feel pity for him

Liz — a city of a woman, full of life, antiquity, talks fast.

Woman

Soldiers

\*Mother and Father are played by the same actor. Slight differentiation between their appearance.  
The actor must identify as a woman.

\*The Soldiers as an ensemble can be puppets, objects, weapons, shadows, voices in the dark. I don’t  
see the need for actual human performers other than Panther & The Wounded Soldier. Fill the space  
with more horrifying echoes of them.

\*Liz and Woman are played by the same actor.

## Time:

Part 1 — A single day. An unveiling.

Part 2 — A few days later. A visit.

Part 3 — A day after that. An annunciation.

## Place:

Congo Iraq Syria Nigeria Burma Yugoslavia Bosnia  
Rwanda Columbia South Sudan Chechnya Nepal  
Afghanistan Bangladesh Japan Central Africa Republic  
Cote d’Ivoire Jordan Lebanon Mali Myanmar Somalia  
Guinea Kenya Burundi Somalia Libya Sri Lanka Yemen  
Guatemala Nepal Vietnam Sierra Leone Liberia Manipur  
Darfur Uganda Laos Angola Mexico Argentina Chile El  
Salvador Turkey Peru Korea U S of A etc etc etc etc

## Notes:

The houses are made of gauze.  
Through this gauze we can see the silhouettes & shadows of figures.  
The interior of the spaces are unveiled by rolling up or at times tearing the fabric.

The exterior spaces are occupied by emblems or symbols or crowds of female figures.  
Panty hose tied and filled with sand. Aprons. Water balloons.  
These can or cannot be erotic.

There's a water pump. It doesn't always pump water, I imagine.

Objects are scarce and simple. All natural. Wood, metals, stones.  
Especially stones.

The Woman wears tear-able white.

There's an olive grove. I'm not sure what that looks like.  
It must be beautiful, unearthly but of the earth.  
It's fenced from the town.

1. *A woman surrounded. Enclosed by soldiers. Soldiers standing, chewing. Cud, toothpick, something in their mouths. She sinks to the ground below them.*

Soldiers:

She's pretty.                      Lean.                      Get a smile.  
    Dark.                      Lanky.  
 Tch tch tch poor doll.                      Look at her.  
    Hurts like a curse.  
    Pools in her eyes, ouch.  
    A bad thing.  
 Crying.  
 Cursed thing.                      Get her.  
    Look. Look. Look.

*Panther steps forward from among them. He stands above the woman. Takes out a knife. Gets close to her face. Digs deep in his pocket. Grunts a bit. Still holding the knife to her neck. The Wounded Soldier, not yet wounded, steps back, turns away.*

Soldiers:

Where are you going?  
    Miss the show.                      Ain't she -  
    What we came for.  
    More of-                      something.  
    That.

Panther:

Quiet. Can't you see I'm concentrating. One little slip and I'll -  
 Say, do you like skin?  
 She's so quiet. Sweet.  
 I ASKED -

Woman:

Yes.

Panther:

Yes.  
 She said yes.  
 Me too. You have some of the good stuff. I can tell. Like milk.

*The soldiers laugh.  
 The Wounded Soldier does not.*

Panther:

QUIET.

*They stop laughing.  
 Panther takes out an apple from his pocket.  
 He skins it. Letting the remains drop on her face.*

Panther:

Let me tell you a story.

*The Neighbor appears. He wipes his brow. He notices the soldiers, the Wounded Soldier particularly close. He steps back a bit. He waits.*

Panther:

It's a terrible story and what makes it so terrible is that it's true. It's so true that it happened, it happened like it always happens to a young girl whose skin was just so sweet. Then again, I can't remember if it was a girl or a man, for a knife can change a figure's condition oh so swift.

See.

There are layers.

There is the skin.

There is the flesh.

And there is the core.

I, my dear, am the core. We are the core. And with one slip of the knife we will change you we will -

*Miriam comes out of the door holding a pail.  
Panther sees her. She sees him. She sees the Neighbor.  
She looks at the Woman. She goes to go back inside.*

Panther:

Wait.

*She freezes.*

Panther:

Go.

*The Woman gets up. Runs.  
Panther approaches Miriam. Slow. Looks in her bucket. Smiles.*

Panther:

Empty? Is it?

*Panther goes to touch Miriam's bucket.*

Wounded Soldier:

A - a riot! Riot!

*Panther and the soldiers turn to him.*

Wounded Soldier:

I heard one! There's an order. A disruption. A call. Go!

*The Wounded Soldier runs off.  
Panther sighs. Follows the soldiers out.  
A moment.  
Miriam drops the bucket. Catches her breath.  
The Neighbor goes to her.*

Miriam:  
Don't touch me.

Neighbor:  
Are you -

Miriam:  
I said don't.

Neighbor:  
Mary -

*Miriam picks up the bucket.*

Miriam:  
Don't call me that.

Neighbor:  
You used to like -

Miriam:  
It's not my name.

Neighbor:  
Let me walk with you.

Miriam:  
Where?

Neighbor:  
To get the water.

Miriam:  
Where?

Neighbor:  
Wherever you might get water from.

Miriam:  
Neighbor.

Neighbor:  
Mary.

Miriam:  
Please.

Neighbor:  
What? What?

Miriam:  
You have just come from work. Have you not?

Neighbor:

And I have worked up a sweat.

Miriam:

You can't touch me here.

Neighbor:

Helping. I'm helping.

Miriam:

You must be tired. Perhaps you should go inside and rest.

Neighbor:

Could use something to quench my thirst.

Miriam:

Neighbor, you are in my way.

Neighbor:

I'll always be in your way, Mary. My oath to you.

Miriam:

And are you aware I have already made an oath to someone else?

Neighbor:

No.

Miriam:

An oath that binds. That ties. That bleeds. That kind of oath, Neighbor.  
The kind your poet-heart could never make, not even if you squeezed it dead.

Neighbor:

Let your hands wring it out then.

*Miriam steps forward. He steps in front of her.*

Miriam:

If you don't move. I'll scream.

Neighbor:

If you scream, your father will come outside and then your mother will come outside and they will rain hate on us both.

Miriam:

I believe that hate will be highly directed to you.

Neighbor:

Oh I'm not so sure. Modest Mary, the town's grace yelling in the city square.

Miriam:

Stop it.

Neighbor:

A young man's hand on her -

Miriam:

Stop it!

Neighbor:

I'm making light of it all.

Miriam:

You know nothing of my parents nor their so-called hatred.

Neighbor:

But, I know you.

Miriam:

Please.

Neighbor:

They're unkind people.

Miriam:

Shh. They're my parents.

Neighbor:

If they didn't hate you, why are they sending you away?

Miriam:

So you are aware of my betrothal.

Neighbor:

Yes.

Miriam:

Yes. So, you should have spoken to me then about those matters, for now, it is a bit too late.

Neighbor:

I've been trying to talk to you for days.

Miriam:

Funny, I haven't heard a word.

Neighbor:

I had been hoping you'd come out.

Miriam:

I've been out everyday.

Neighbor:

I haven't seen you.

Miriam:

Well, I've seen you.

Neighbor:

I had been busy.



Miriam:

Have been. You have been busy.

Neighbor:

Yes.

Miriam:

Move, please.

Neighbor:

Wait. I wanted to see you. Of course you know that. I didn't know what to say. How to say it. As soon as I heard about it all I. Well, I wanted to grab that creature by the -

Miriam:

That creature is my husband. And he isn't a creature, but merely a man. While you are just a boy. You have idle fists, they wouldn't know what to do.

Neighbor:

Tell that to them.

Miriam:

I would if your hands ever listened.

Neighbor:

They would listen to you.

Miriam:

Then let me go.

Neighbor:

And let you steal away my heart with your bucket? I don't think so.

Miriam:

As you can see my bucket is empty. Not holding a near thing.

Neighbor:

I think I could fit inside.

Miriam:

Oh do you?

Neighbor:

Yes as a matter of fact. I think there might be a place for me in there.

*He grabs her bucket. Stands in it.  
She cracks a smile.*

Miriam:

Let me pass.

Neighbor:

On one condition.

Miriam:

No conditions, Neighbor.

Neighbor:  
Just one.

Miriam:  
No.

Neighbor:  
A little one.

Miriam:  
People will see you and what will they think.

*He steps out of her bucket.  
Gives it to her.  
Steps out of her way.*

Miriam:  
No conditions.  
Especially if it be to meet you.  
Especially if it be tonight.  
Especially if it be in the field.

Neighbor:  
Under the olive grove?

Miriam:  
Especially then.

Neighbor:  
Especially then?

Miriam:  
Most especially then.