

The Lost Moonflower

Author: Isaac Karoor

Genre: True-life story

Time Period: A.D. 40-90

Locations: Ancient Greece, Israel and Rome

Budget: Large

Target Market/Demographic Focus: 35-50, mixed

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Logline: Set against the back drop of the emergence of Christianity as a major world religion, the story follows the tragic love affair between Luke and Phoebe, whose lives would shape the world for generations to come.

The Story:

In the first century A.D., in the dawning of the Christian world, a young Greek named Luke seeks to prove his worth to his betrothed - Phoebe, the only daughter of a rich magistrate from Philippi - and sets out on a journey to Rome. He takes with him scrolls of papyrus given to him by Phoebe to make a journal of his travels.

During his journey to Rome, Luke encounters a new sect of Christians who spread the word of Jesus by doing great humanitarian works in His name. Unlike his faith, these Christians accept everyone equally and encourage women to accept leadership roles.

He discovers women are important members of the new sect, called "The Way," in large part because the initial gatherings were held in private homes and not in churches

or synagogues. Since women hosted these gatherings, it was only natural that they be church leaders.

Luke was drawn to the new sect in part because of his fiancé, Phoebe, who was not satisfied with the confining role of women in her world.

Luke arrives in Rome and is stuck by the violence and cruelty of the gladiator games. He ends up giving medical aid to an injured gladiator, the brother of a follower of the New Way and through him discovers a remedy for the violence that he has seen.

Eventually, Luke gains employment as an assistant physician in the imperial palace and there he is tempted by his boss' daughter Diana. An accomplished artist, Luke paints a detailed portrait of her but in the end he resists the temptations, vowing himself to his one true love, Phoebe.

Later even the emperor Claudius' wife Messalina tries to endear herself to Luke but when he resists her charms, she vows revenge on him for the humiliation of rejection.

All around Rome, the world is rapidly changing as the conflict between Jews and Romans spill out into the streets, prompting Claudius to expel all Jews from Rome, even those of the new sect of Christians. Being a new follower, Luke is forced out of the city. In the confusion, Messalina's greed turns Claudius against her and she is put to death as a traitor. The Emperor decrees that any man who shared her bed to be sentenced to his wife's fate. Luckily for Luke, his expulsion from Rome protected him from being arrested and put to death.

Luke sets off for home and along the road meets Paul, an Apostle of Jesus and invites him to come to Greece. The two then travel together to Philippi.

Back home, Phoebe hears of Luke's sentence of death and not knowing his fate, she consults the Oracle of Delphi. As fate would have it, Luke arrives not long after Phoebe leaves and the two barely miss each other and Luke follows her to the Oracle.

Phoebe's experience at the temple is thrown into chaos when Luke arrives and the medium shrieks - claiming she had a vision of Luke believing and serving one God. Phoebe and

Luke try to make sense of their newfound faith and the idea that it encourages favorable treatment of women.

Because of his beliefs, Paul is put on trial by Phoebe's father and despite this, Luke and Phoebe are secretly married in a private ceremony. On his wedding night, however, Luke is arrested and put on trial for entering Delphi. During the trial, Diana appears and shows Phoebe the portrait Luke painted of her. Phoebe rejects Luke and seeks counsel with Paul, who tells her to find her place in the new movement.

Phoebe finds more than that and becomes a leading deacon in the new movement and eventually is to be sent to Rome as Paul's pilot. She is not accepted by everyone as the evil Nimrod opposes the involvement of women in religious matters. In his rage, Nimrod rapes and murders Phoebe, destroying the exulted role of women in the Church at the same time.

The story ends where it begins, with Luke looking out over the Harbor of Neapolis where, as a recent graduate, he recalls the gift of a moonflower given to him by Phoebe. That moonflower - which opens at dusk and closes before the break of dawn - sits behind Luke now as he contemplates his future and future of the moment, and of the tragic loss of his great love.

A gripping story that sets a tragic love story against the epic events of history, "The Lost Moonflower" is a journey about love, loss, betrayal and most of all, faith. A cautionary tale of our cruelty and unfairness, it is all an important story for our times and one that might - like Luke and Phoebe - once again change the course of human events.