

Village Sutra

Long ago there was a wanderer who lived in a village close to a large settlement. The wanderer was empty inside, and could not find any of the joys in life. They wandered the streets day after day, looking for a place to rest their questions of meaning. Countless times they tried to improve their situation, by moving to a far away place, or picking up work in order to get out of the village, but they always came back to the same sleepy place they were always in.

The wanderer's dream was to find a place that felt like they belonged; a place that felt like a home. There were days when the wanderer would go into the settlement to find something like this, but they were often disappointed in the results.

Sometimes they went to a monastery in the settlement, where the monks played music and wore fancy clothes to celebrate the artistry that they had in their blood. The wanderer stood and watched the ritual, but felt out of place, saying "I am not like them, I am not a monk." So they went back to the village.

Sometimes they went to a temple in the settlement, where holy people rejoiced in the words of blessed figures and meditated with fervency, drinking warm tea while speaking of their lives with each other, the words flowing easily out of their mouths. The wanderer rejoiced and drank with them, but didn't know what to say, thinking "I am not like them, I am not holy." So they went back to the village.

Sometimes the wanderer ingested herbal medicine, the kind that people take in order to understand their existence and the universe more deeply, people who deserve to see the connections between us all. The wanderer became depressed every time they tried it, and thinking about the experiences they have heard, said "I am not like them, I am not worthy." So they laid in their bed and slept.

In their sleep, they had a dream. In the dream, they were not in the village, and they were not in the settlement, nor were they in any of the lands they had visited, but a more mysterious, different place. The place looked like a small city in a wide forest. The trees were tall and had full green leaves, blossoming out of the packed dirt in the warm weather. They canopied the buildings that were made out of every material imaginable, with diamonds and emeralds packed together with weathered bricks. It felt like a real home, not like the village they were used to, but they didn't understand why it was different.

They walked through the narrow paths and gazed at the houses, and came to a tree stump surrounded by dark purple bushes. It looked like a comfy place to sit, so the wanderer sat down and meditated. Sitting up straight, they became a lightning rod to the energy that surrounded them. A presence crept up in their psyche and sat down next to them.

"What are you?" Asked the wanderer.

"No one," said the presence.

"Then why are you here?"

"To tell you why this place is your home."

The presence placed its metaphysical hand on the wanderer's shoulder.

"As you walked along here, you noticed all of the details that made this place special. Is this true?" Asked the presence.

The wanderer thought back to the trees flowing in their canopy, and all the incredible plants that bloomed out of the ground. Even the purple bushes that enveloped them.

“Yes, I was so fascinated by how beautiful it is here,” confessed the wanderer.

“Back in your home, do you ever notice the plants and buildings?”

The wanderer imagined the homes in the village, made of bricks of all different colors, with the trees and grass that grew on the lawns. They thought about the sun coming through the clouds, warming up the earth and brightening up the day.

“No, I don’t. I’m always so focused on where I’m going that I rarely pay attention to the scenery.”

“Remember this: All corners of life are beautiful even if they are not seen. There is nothing wrong with being in any place, as long as you keep your spirit from being affected. You are always in good company: You are surrounded by divine things, as you yourself are holy too.”

“I’m not worthy of beautiful things, I’m just a wanderer.”

“Yes you are, you are divine.”

“I’m not divine, I come from a small village where nothing happens.”

“Then you are holy; you are just like everything else.”

“I’m not holy, I’m not like everything else.”

“Then you are human.”

The wanderer woke up. Light came through the blinds.

They got up and opened them, and looked out the window. It was cloudy, but still bright outside. Their lawn didn’t look exactly like the place in the dream, but it was still beautiful and alive. They had their coffee and tasted how rich and warm it was. They meditated and felt the love and peace radiating through their body. They saw how everything had such vibrance to it, just in their way of being.

They had found their home.