

A world once burnt to the ground from an epidemic had been revived on new foundations, something unconsidered since the beginning of time. Time itself had been a concept ignored and disregarded amongst the routine of the people that trod the earth. To say that this epidemic had changed the way humans view the world would have been an understatement.

The world had been left in ruins after COVID-19 had swiped across the planet, scrolling past countries on its invisible screen and infecting them one by one, with every little touch of its finger. "Plague" was a good word, but still unable to fathom the epidemic that had been COVID-19, the destruction of every country's foundations.

Doctors and key workers had become revered amongst the populace, people once regarded as just doing another job becoming saints overnight, and thus a secondary kind of epidemic infected people's minds, a fever that spread through every single cell in their body. Fervent, the people of the world had created a completely different system to embrace their saviours, one of status and rank, wealth and fame, and of utmost importance.

The system had been overthrown, now ruled by those who believed that doctors and key workers during the epidemic were sent by God, and those who had refused to succumb to such views were left in the alleys to rot to dust in the dark shadows of this new era. The shadows of the new world.

Now one may ask, "how are these people now revered? What are these ranks you so speak of?" Well my friend, here's the story of Sylvanna Torres to explain how life had changed....

Before the coronavirus had swept across the world, I had just been considered another person doing a job amongst many. A hard job, one that took decades to perfect, but a job nonetheless. I believed that anyone, regardless of their background could and should be given a second chance, so that pushed me towards becoming a doctor. I wasn't the best in my field, I was relatively mediocre, mildly better than average in comparison to my co-workers.

Then COVID-19 turned from a small new virus that was affecting the Chinese to a global epidemic all had become fearful of, and I was on the frontlines in this battle against nature. Something I had thought of as nice became a terrifying concept, having to put yourself at risk for others. But I continued on, pushed through my obstacles and rammed down and brick walls that stood in front of me, continuing what I thought was a thankless task.

Then a whole year passed, the world started to heal from its scars. It was a brief peace. Peace that disappeared quicker than it had come, while the second epidemic that had been brewing under the surface reared its ugly head. Fervent people had started to riot, rebel and protest against the treatment doctors and other key workers had received prior to the outbreak.

"They're not being paid enough for saving our lives!"

“What bullshit is this that you can’t even thank the people who saved us!?”

Riots rumbled through the streets and echoed through the walls of surrounding houses and shops. Government buildings got raided from the outside in, infiltrated by this, this fever that had brought me and my colleagues out to be the very centre and starter for the massive firestorm that has washed the street from then on. My feet had gotten swept from under me when this second epidemic had begun.

People would swarm our workplaces, hospitals invaded by those who showed us with their praise and worshipped the very ground we stood on as a sacred place. And thus, new religion had formed, one that dictated that doctors and all other key workers - from farmers who provided the food, to shopkeepers who sold it to the general public to truck drivers that delivered the goods to people’s houses - had been humanity’s saviour, and that they must be treated as such.

“Saints!”

“Messengers from God telling us we’re not forsaken!”

Such praise entered my ears daily. People stalked my house, stood guard around me wherever I went, and my very daily life became a public commonplace that had to be protected at all costs. Two new words had also been formed during this time: lasteryo and vasti. My parents were the vasti, those who brought the saints into the world. Lasteryo was my husband who had been “chosen” by me to continue the legacy that I would pass onto my children, the saints of the future.

My friends had been forced away from me, having been told they're a possible danger to my life, despite being the very thing that had kept me going through medical school and university, the hellhole of centuries past and future, where poor students had to endure countless lectures on the human body and different procedures and surgeries and pills and antibiotics and conditions and treatments and possible solutions for unseen illnesses.

‘Saints’ my foot! We had become the prisoners, more tightly caged in these fervent ideals, chained by the very profession we hadn’t been thanked for doing for decades! And now they wanted us to become their saints!

At first, it was a cage of unappreciation. Now, it was a cage of worship. It was one extreme or the other, and you had to choose which one you were most comfortable with. And personally, I would prefer to keep my friends, give my kids a choice in profession, and have my personal life be, well, *personal*. Some bathed in their new fame, wealth and infinite glory. I refused such a caged life. Due to this craze and my apparent unhappiness, I was called crazy.

“How could you **not** want to enjoy all this?”

“Do you understand the advantages we now get?”

So my colleagues settled in with their new life while I planned my escape from this second hell I’d found myself in. University was one thing, being called a saint and messenger of God while having all my private and personal life out on display for

others to judge what's good and not good for me was a whole different story. And not my life at all.

I refused to give up on being a doctor, my principals from young having been strengthened into tungsten steel. But I refused to do it their way, in front of the crowd worshipped by a bunch of maniacs who think it's a good idea to so quickly give power to those who didn't used to have much. As one could guess, my concerns were validated soon after I had left my post and disappeared into the abyss of shadows with my husband and immediate family, who had agreed to accompany me and refused to leave me to fend on my own.

People I used to know and work with had become power hungry psychopaths, making the country from one of equal rights to medicine and healthcare to a country where money ruled over the health system. Medicine and treatments became grossly overpriced, and those who couldn't afford such treatments were left to rot in their homes. Me and my family did all we could for such people.

We used my parents' knowledge of herbs and traditional medicine to make as much medicine we could, used my knowledge of illnesses and treatments to diagnose and solve their ailments. During our journey, my husband and parents made me promise to never have children, something both they and him had wished for dearly. I hadn't been fussed about having mini me's running around, however the shock of their wishes had struck firmly into my heart how far the world had fallen after COVID-19.

Even decades later, the fever that had overtaken the world had not died down, and my husband had taken over all of my parents' knowledge of medicine to continue to try and help me do my job of a doctor as I had once: without prejudice or discrimination against those without money to pay for it. That principal was once one of the main principles of being a doctor: treat indiscriminately and without worry for their racial and cultural background, criminal records or status.

Treat everyone who needs it. But this world had broken that principal and turned it into another money scam for those within the profession. My deeds had spread among the poorer populace, and even reached some of the people up top. I guess inadvertently, I had started another rebellion against the system, for many others had been given the smack off their illusionary throne back into the reality of a doctor that they needed. And so, many other doctors had started to leave their posts of fame and wealth to continue doing what they were supposed to do: treat and save lives without a care for who the person was.

And the second rebellion had also commenced. This time, not against the unfair system towards the doctors, but the unfair treatment towards those unfortunate enough to be unable to afford all that was required of them in order to be treated. People had asked me countless times to go to the forefront of this new revolution, to lead the world on the right track again, but now that I was given a choice, I vehemently refused to be put forward on a pedestal of chains and have my freedom taken away. I had started the revolution because it was a necessary change, not because I wish for the fame of being the one to restore the world to order.

However, everyone else had refused to do it, saying that it wasn't right if it wasn't me

who was leading and at the forefront, as I was the one who had saved them from the illusion they had been caught in. The illusion of power.

“Saviour again am I? Well too bad I’m not nice.”

So the revolution remained unled, the momentum being the single thing keeping it going. But my husband had been thinking through the consequences and had refused to let the fire die out without fixing what was now an even more broken world. He wanted to free the world from its chains of greed that had gathered within a community that was the most important aspect of human civilisation, the thing that kept us going forward and what should have been the single thing left untainted.

So he said if I refused to take the role, he would. We had argued and argued for nights on end about the pros and cons of such a drastic decision, but in the end I had lost our fight. It wasn’t because I had a weaker argument to make, or because I had run out of reasons as to why that was a bad idea. It was, in fact, because I knew what being ripped away from the ability to make your own decision felt like, and I refused to do the same thing to him. However that also meant that our paths were going to have to go in different ways.

So we made our plans, said our goodbyes, and went our separate ways. I worked from the shadows, where I wouldn’t be seen and keep my freedom, but didn’t have the ability to make much choice in the way of the revolution. My husband took to the light, leading this rebellion forward into a new age, shedding his freedom for the sake of a better world and working at the forefront towards the new age. He had risked his very life towards a better cause, shedded his skin of freedom for the ability to lead others towards a better future.

So I write this in his memory, and the memory of my parents, who had also lived their lives until the

very end refusing to accept the new world that had forced their daughter to go into hiding from sheer fear of what the world had become. My parents died of age. My husband died from an assassin. And I continue to work forward into the new age, helping the new age from the shadows like I had chosen all those decades ago.

I don’t have the same drive as I did all those years ago, but I pick up my virtual pen and write for the hopes that those for continue the future may be able to avoid a tragedy of the past, and continue to push the world forward into a new age, one of prosperity and true equality, unlike both eras before. Before the COVID-19 epidemic, and before the doctor worship. An equal place. It may take decades before the world reaches that place, centuries into the future, much further than my life could hope to take me to see.

But I will hope and wish for such a world, and write towards that goal. It’s a summary, but I’ve written about my life in hopes that others will read and maybe realise the errors in their judgements, or that they read and understand what wishes, and decided that it’s a worthy cause for them to pick up and continue forward. I have no children to carry on my legacy, and I’m glad that they don’t exist to carry this burden forward.

I hope that whoever decides to take it upon themselves does so after much thought and of free will, not because they feel indebted to the revolution or for some other

reason. Their strength will be too weak to carry this upon their shoulders. So I hope that you, who picked up my legacy, have steeled yourself for the disasters to come, and know what you're doing. I hope that you will not regret this decision later in your life and that you feel proud of your achievements. I hope that for you.

If you've left this behind, I wish you the best of luck in your future, and can breathe a sigh of relief that you did not force yourself to carry a burden that you didn't have the ability to carry. I wish for the best in your endeavours in the future.

Sylvanna Torres