

Edie

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This story seems to indicate it's about a girl named Edie. But that's only half of it. The other half is the guy you're about to meet. His name's Eric, and although he doesn't seem that interesting, he's rather pivotal to what happens in Edie's world. Enough chatter though, let's get to the story.

We'll follow Eric around for a bit to see how he gets involved with Edie. Pardon me for saying, but when you meet the two of them they make a rather cute couple. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Today Eric's in a bookstore. Normally he avoids these like the plague because he hasn't found a book yet that'll hold his interest. He finds most books too lame and not exciting or intelligent enough to entertain him. To be honest and blunt, he just hates reading. But today, he decides to give it another shot. While walking down the aisles of the bookstore, and a rather large bookstore in a major chain, he spots an in-store advertisement for a new book by a rather well-known author. The title of the book? Edie. But as always, he doesn't bother to check it out; at least, not immediately. He'll wish he did in a second.

Now the strange events begin to happen. A woman walks into the store with something large in her hand. The object is wrapped in leather, but bears the shape of something pointed that's typically used for poking or killing. The security guard seems to miss this fact, and the woman walks into the store and makes a beeline for Eric. Eric doesn't notice until she's next to him, pulling out the knife and chanting something he can't understand. He looks down to see the knife heading for his stomach and turns to run. He moved too slowly, though. The knife makes it into his right side, and he feels this odd tingling sensation as he's dropping to the floor. Everything around him seems to distort, his vision goes blurry, and sounds become muffled. Then with a snap he feels his entire being sucked into a bright light, and in an instant he wakes up. With a start he wakes to find himself on a bus. Right side, second seat from the front to be exact. The bus driver asks if he's okay, but Eric just looks at him for a second. He musters a reply, and the driver just looks at him and shrugs. They pull into a gas station, the driver saying he needs to stop for a moment. They waited for about five minutes for the driver to get going again, and the entire time he's looking at maps and looking up at a building across from them. Eric guesses he's looking up to think for a moment.

"Um, sir..."

"Not now Eric, I'm busy thinking."

"How do you know my name?"

"You know I know everybody's name by now. We've been traveling for a while. You sure you're gonna be okay?" Then he looks up again. "Finally!"

He starts the motor of the bus as Eric looks up to what he's spotted. An archer is on the top of the building across from them, with an arrow aimed at what looks like Eric. Eric lets out an "Oh my---" and ducks as the arrow comes flying into the cabin of the bus and plants itself into the seat in front of him. The funny thing is, it didn't break the glass nor did it leave a mark. It seemed to pass right through it. If someone had had a camera, the look on Eric's face would have been priceless as he watched the arrow dissolve and reform. But he couldn't keep watching.

“Might wanna sit back, cuz it’s time to go!” And the bus driver puts the bus in gear and takes off. Eric has no choice but to sit back as the force compels him. When he looked back at the seat, there was a young black lady sitting there. He could only see the back of her head though.

“I can imagine how you feel. Not quite sure of what’s going on, feeling a bit out of place.” She turns around to see him. “You’ll figure it out in time, just trust yourself.”

Eric, upon seeing her, couldn’t help but think of how beautiful she was. She had very smooth caramel skin, long hair that alternated between strands of dark chocolate brown and a light caramel, and light hazel eyes. She was very slim from what he could tell, but no less elegant. She also spoke with a very southern accent. It was then he noticed that things seemed a bit older than they should have been.

“Wait a minute... Who are you and where am I?” Eric asked.

“My name’s Edie.” She said after a chuckle. “And your name?”

“The name’s Eric, but that still doesn’t answer my second...” She puts her finger up to his lips to shush him.

“I’ll try to answer your questions, as there’s no doubt you don’t belong here. The old woman must have done this to you, but I cannot answer why. I just don’t know that answer myself.

“The year’s 1979. We’re in the Greater Province of Japan. It was purchased about 200 years ago from the original settlers and then settled by the Japanese. They even purchased the ‘tools to settle the land with,’ meaning slaves. Time went on, but we were still slaves to the Japanese even to this day. This bus contains transfers to one of the most prestigious residences in the land, actually THE most prestigious. A Kikuru Morisato. He’s currently the head of the council that governs this province. And it’s mainly his voice that keeps us where we are.”

“But what does that have to do with me? Why am I here?”

“Again, I don’t know. If you could ask the old woman, she’d maybe tell you.”

“Edie, sorry to interrupt. Just wanted you to know that your stuff is here on the bus. Hope you can do it.”

“Thanks Hank, I hope so too.”

“You two know each other?” Eric asks Edie.

“Kind of. We knew of each other prior to my arrival, and only to expect each other.”

“So why weren’t you just one of the original riders? Why all the hocus pocus?”

Edie stifles a giggle.

“Because, there are road checkpoints along the way. We just passed the last one before my arrival. If they knew I was on the bus, then I couldn’t do my job.”

“And may I ask what that job is?”

“I can’t say right now, but maybe you’ll learn of it when the time’s right.”

So there Eric sat, trying to soak in all he knew. It was still quite a juxtaposition being in a world that looked so familiar, yet was quite far removed from his own. He counted his blessings that he at least fit in with the rest of the bus, at least in some form. He may have been of mixed heritage, but he still looked and was mostly black. He pondered his situation the entire trip to the camp, which was a large estate with what looked like an apartment complex on one end. He guessed right when he thought that’s where they were staying.

He helped them unload their belongings from the bus, though he himself had nothing but what he was wearing. He remembered what Edie told him before he

disembarked. She'd touched his hand in reassurance and told him "Everything happens for a reason; find your reason and you may find your way home."

They'd found the place that would be theirs. Normally, the apartment wouldn't have looked so bad. It was a nice-sized apartment, two bedrooms and approximately 800 square feet. The problem is they were trying to fit anywhere between 10 to 15 people in each apartment. This time, they shot for 20, the entire busload. They were allowed to place their belongings and socialize before the police came in around 10:00 p.m. to sequester them to their quarters. As people prepared for bed, Eric found himself rather restless and unable to sleep. Even after the entire apartment was asleep, he himself could not sleep.

"Finding it hard to sleep with so much on your mind?" Eric looked over to where the voice had come from. Edie was on the bed across from where he stood in front of the window.

"Admittedly it's a bit hard to comprehend what I'm in. I can't figure it out still."

"Then don't try. Let things happen until the answer comes to you. You cannot force time's hand." Eric, appreciative of her advice, settles down for the night as best he can.

The next day they're roused from sleep with the new arrival of a woman to be added to their already cramped apartment. No one argues with them, and Eric is held back when he attempts a protest. Upon sight of the new addition, Eric stops as if he's seen a ghost. He swears it's his mother, but when she's announced to them, her name's far different.

The new arrival is hardly given any time to settle in, nor are any of the others given time to accommodate her when they're called away to work the factories. Their work day started at 10:00 a.m. and lasted until 7:00 p.m. Fortunately for them, Eric learns, part of the council worked to shorten their work days since they were not needed to work such long days anymore with the advances in technology available. Else, they would have worked from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. with still very few breaks and a 15-minute lunch period in the middle. Unfortunately Jera, the new arrival, could not keep up the pace. She was ill-treated the entire work day, and at the end was utterly exhausted and very abused. Eric, feeling very empathetic to her, brought her his meal since they refused her food. She was very grateful for this stranger who seemed rather interested in her well-being. Edie took note of this as well.

And then the police came in. Under a supposed 'spot check' of the apartments, they found Jera eating despite her earlier judgment of no food for the night. Even though Eric protested that he gave her his food, they still took her away. Hank reminded him that he cannot help her if he's imprisoned or, worse yet, dead. After they took Jera away, Eric stepped out onto the patio for a bit. Edie came out to join him.

"It's good to see a person with a heart strong enough to stand up for others."

"Doesn't do any good if I can't help them."

"Well, that's rather selfish. Unsatisfied with the fact you could not save them your own way, never realizing how you've helped give them hope."

"But she's been taken away because of me!"

"You really are blind, aren't you? She'd have been taken away regardless. Your act of kindness gave her a glimmer of hope that someone cares." And she walks back inside to leave Eric with that thought.

Later Eric decided to go where they'd taken her to try and get her back. He found, instead, Hank leaving from the residence where she was.

"Don't worry, she's okay. I've bought her some time. But don't go crashing in there solo, you'll only make it worse for her and get yourself killed." Hank said as he brought Eric back to the apartment.

Later that night, after everyone was asleep, Eric awakened to movement in the apartment. He saw Edie dressed in a red Chinese dress, knee-length, with her hair braided into a bun. The dress was embroidered with gold accents outlining the fire dragon encircling the dress. She tosses him a black pants and shirt set, also Chinese in design.

"You might want to put these on if you're coming with me." She says quietly.

"But where are you going?"

"I have a job to finish, one that will free us from this day forward." Then Eric notices the sheathed katana behind her back. It's a plain emerald green sheath with a similar pommel. "A certain man and his family must die if we are to be a free and equal people. He is the only one left holding the council from declaring us a free people. The old woman has seen our future, and his family will only work to keep us under. So even his children must die."

Edie begins to walk out of the door, leaving Eric to struggle and get his clothes on. He catches up to Edie on her way to the Morisato residence.

"What do you mean even his children must die? They haven't done anything!"

"Not yet, but they will. Even now they're trained in the same manners as Morisato himself. They will only know the abuse and misuse of slaves, and nothing more." Her face is very grave with the duty she's been assigned.

"And what of the rest of the camp once Morisato's found dead?"

"We will walk free. The guards only do as they're told, and most do not agree with Morisato's rule."

"I can't let you kill those children. If Morisato's as bad as you say, then I have no regrets there. But those children must be given a chance."

"We will see, or more precisely, you will see."

When they arrived at Morisato's home, the guards on duty spot her. Only one attempts to stop her, the other is well aware of her job there. Edie cleanly disarms him and guts him before he could even move to attack her.

"You might want that weapon, you'll need it." Eric, more out of obedience and shock than agreement, picks up the weapon. The other guard at the door stops Edie before she enters.

"Many blessings on your journey ahead."

"Thank you Kugari-sama. And may this night end well for all of us."

Both Edie and Eric enter the estate and quickly make their way to Morisato and his family. Morisato, appalled to see intruders in his home, quickly arises and retrieves his naginata. Morisato moves to attack Edie, and his children move in from behind to assist their father. The cries of their mother to cease their attack go unheard, as Eric is forced to defend himself and Edie from their onslaught. Fortunately for him, he'd at least taken a few years of kempo training, so the naginata in his hands did not feel foreign. Of the five that attacked him, he took down three. The other two boys backed off at the request of their mother. Eric felt bad having to strike down the youngest boy and the only girls.

“This is what awaits you Morisato.” Edie said. “Your own children and wife must die because of your arrogance and unwillingness to change with the times. Now, the time of your family is up. Your honor long gone, why continue to fight?”

“Because I will not let you go free! Not even my own protest my rule. They know their role, and you should know yours!”

In mid-attack Morisato attempts to slice and stab at Eric, who deflects the incoming blows. Eric was not anticipating Morisato moving with the flow and turning the failed attempts into a successful knockdown. Then Morisato caught Eric in his right side. Edie attempted to disarm Morisato, but he dislodged his naginata in time enough to deflect her incoming attacks. With Morisato’s attention elsewhere, Eric was able to return the favor and catch Morisato across the chest with his naginata, leaving a deep gash. Morisato, enraged, attempts to stab Eric with the spiked base of his weapon. Eric manages to move enough for the tip to slip past his neck and under him. Eric comes to rest on the staff portion of the naginata with his body, and then takes his own naginata and slams it down on Morisato’s weapon, cleanly breaking it in two. Edie takes the opportunity and disarms Morisato. Morisato, as a last effort, attempts to break and grab another weapon. Edie stops him before he can get two steps away.

“You’ve lost Morisato. Die with dignity, at the very least.”

Morisato, very displeased at having lost the fight, kneels to the ground to accept his fate.

“You may have won, but our family will not willingly give you your freedom. Nor will the other families that have sided with me.”

“They have already lost, Morisato. With your death their power no longer exists.” With that, Edie cleanly removes Morisato’s head from his body. Eric can see the looks of vengeance in the eyes of the boys.

“I regret having to take the life of your children, Shisen.”

“It is okay, if our lives are given so that justice exists, then so be it. They would only live to carry on after their father anyway.” Morisato’s wife is very grief-stricken, but has accepted her fate.

“Maybe I should still let them live. Maybe they will learn the value of right as they grow older.”

“No, Edie. You cannot allow their lives to go on. They’re old enough now that they know right from wrong. And they will still choose the path of evil.”

“She’s right Edie. Look at them, they’re almost adults now. They’re old enough to fight, and they’re old enough to die. I regret saying this, but they will do your cause no good alive.”

“Very well then, your lives are forfeit young men. Die with dignity in your heart.” Yet they died with hatred in their heart, their eyes still showing it as their heads were also separated from their bodies.

“Live a peaceful afterlife, Shisen. Your sacrifice has given us much, and we will honor that for years to come.”

“I only wish that we could have won this battle sooner. I would have much to talk to you about, you seem a very intelligent and kind person. A person I would like to call friend.”

“We are friends, Shisen. Only a friend could willingly give her life as you have.” And with regret in her eyes, she takes Shisen’s life. For the first time, Eric sees Edie show an emotion other than the icy calm she’s shown so far. He sees her shed tears.

“I can’t say I would have done what you have, Edie. It’s taken a lot of courage to do what you have. I knew you were something special when I saw you, but I had no idea.”

Edie walks over to him and holds him. She admires his strength and resolve, given his situation. She also cannot deny that she has wanted him since their first meeting, but had to hold her duty first.

“We were meant to cross paths. You have shown that one can still have compassion despite their tribulations. I would like to have you by my side always, yet I fear this is not to be.”

Eric feels a jolt shoot through his side. He notices he’s bleeding pretty badly.

“I feel the same way, in an odd sense. I don’t even know you, yet I feel I could be with you always.” He gasps in pain and clutches his side. He begins to black out again, but as he’s going he hears Edie say something to him.

“I love you...”

After a while, Eric wakes with a start. He’s in a hospital bed, and definitely in pain. The nurse watching him looks up from the book she’s reading and notices he’s awake. Eric sees she’s reading “Edie.”

“Good to see you awake. How are you feeling?”

“Like I got slammed by a truck. What happened?”

“Well, the reports go that you were attacked by some crazed old woman in the bookstore. They never caught her though. Witness reports say she was chanting something the whole time. Some people need to be locked up in the ward.”

“Maybe.” Eric pauses for a moment and looks to the book she was reading. “So how’s the book?”

“Huh? Oh, that book. It’s pretty good. Nice writing with a strong lead. Kind of a coincidence the main character’s lost love interest is named Eric too. Was stabbed in the same spot.” This piques his interest.

“Do you mind if I read it? Sounds interesting.”

“Oh sure! Actually you can have it. I rarely keep books I’ve read once.”

During his recovery, Eric read the book through and through. He never once saw anything stating what happened to Edie after his disappearance. The book seemed to end on his death. To this day I still wonder what happened to her.

I’m sorry, I meant to say he.