

# Ilera's Death

by Ochre

Armoured corpses filled the courtyard. Everybody lay dead except one, who held a bloodied, sly smile. Her name, Ilera. She clutched a short spear. It bore similar qualities to her clothes; dark crimson blood. Her face was unspoilt by age and her body singularly wiry. She slung the spear to her shoulder and hobbled away from the dead. When her face hit the streets she was a sight for sore eyes.

Civilians walked past her, concealing repressed fear. No one offered aid, no one except a man. You could tell his poverty by his rags. Despite her rough condition, he couldn't turn his gaze away. Her savage beauty struck a forceful hold upon the man's conscious. He was drawn to her like a moth to a flame. He immediately offered his hand and led her to his house, which was more of an aged, cobweb filled shack. The man laid her down onto his cushioned bed and fetched some water. He took pleasure in cleaning her face with a damp cloth. As he did, her lips caught his gaze. He tried to resist the urge, but love conquers all emotions, and it claimed him for its own. As he felt the exotic happiness of their lips embracing, he also felt the bitterness of a dreadful stab to the heart, literally. Her blade intentionally pierced his heart as he let love blind him to his death. She looted the house, unencumbered by remorse. She took the chance to clean her clothes, before taking her leave. The cleansing of the clothes brought out a tanned colour to her tunic and ebony to her breeches, matching her dark locks. The dusk's dying light marked her passing.

She abandoned her new found sanctuary and set a course for Mithaldrea, the great city of the East. She began her travels immediately, the trip was arduous; it was like catching smoke with her worn hands, even though, before long, she stood outside the city gates. At the foot of the entrance stood a brick bridge. As Ilera made her way across the bridge, an armoured man lumbered towards her. Every movement sent clashes of steel as if his armour fighting itself. "Halt!" Ordered the pot-bellied man. At his side rested a steel long sword. "This is my bridge! If you wish to cross, pay a reasonable toll of ten copper moons!" He explained abruptly. *Reasonable? You call that reasonable?* She thought to herself, her lack of coins drove Ilera to disobey his orders. In the blink of an eye, she ran towards him, preparing her spear for a blow. As Ilera neared the guard, her actions did not deceive him; he raised his sword to knee height. As she entered his range, his sword swung up in an upper cut motion slicing through the air, barely missing. She took the opportunity and jabbed his neck causing blood to squirt out. The crimson liquid dot painted Ilera's clothes, lightening up her usual glum look. As she made her way towards Mithaldrea, city soldiers blocked off the path on both sides. They slowly closed in on Ilera, and as she prepared for defence, a soldier swiftly struck a blow. She effortlessly parried the strike before another sent her crashing to earth.

She awoke upon a cold, stone floor. A cob-web room welcomed her with open arms. A locked gate stood at the entrance of the room and a guard stalked the outside of the cell. The man wore steel armour. He held no weapons. A key wielded with great pride rested at his side. The man unlocked the gate, and with another slave of the law, dragged her out across a cold, stone pathway. A seated man was awaiting their presence. "Sit down!" Ordered the man. He was clothed in a maroon gown. Ilera refused the order. A guard kicked her leg, she crumpled to the ground. In her struggle to arise, the man read out her

convictions. "You are hereby charged with murder, theft, assault and attempted murder. With God as my witness, I condemn you to death!" he exclaimed. The man raised a fist and viciously hurled it towards Ilera, then her vision ceased.

Her awakening was on a wooden cart. Civilians surrounded her, cheering. She glanced up dreadfully. At the sight of the ropes, she knew she faced the gallows. When the cart reached the ropes Ilera was forced onto a wooden stage. A man hooded in a black cloak stood at a handle. A lady wearing a blue patterned dress fit the rope around Ilera's neck. The man pulled the lever and the floor before her fell. The dawn's emerging light set the beginning of a new day and the end of a young soul.