

In the name of Vesta

The flame sputters and dies as does the fate of the servants of Vesta. The flame protected by sisters has perished and the fate of Rome is in peril. This is my final protest before the darkness and hunger swallow me and my presence is scraped by the stone. I will tell my story for the future, ought to know the importance of the Vestal Virgins.

Ad 394 IX days after full moon

My father had a prestigious role as temple master thus being his daughter I was encouraged to take the well-respectable of the holy vestal virgins offering their lives in servitude of the goddess Vesta. My mother died long before this event as did my sisters as I was without female guidance, I was honoured to be taken in by Mother Vesta. In our sight (the Vestal Virgins), we had one pivotal role that we trained thoroughly for; guarding the holy flame which protected the fate of Rome itself. This flame was more burden than any man could take. We held the destiny of Rome in our every action, for as long as the flame burned the future of Rome was secure. Our lives ran on the flame's existence, its bright light earning us adoration. The holy flame was kept in the temple which had long columns adorning its front inside was the holy temple room where the flame continuously roared being pampered by us.

Aside from the terror and apprehension of guarding the flame, interaction with society was thrilling. After my shift I would venture into the town to collect water; all the Romans (regardless of status) would bow and take my respects, placing me before any of their upcoming activities. I was free from any societal requirements placed on women and I could act without judgement. I acted in the name of Vesta. But most of all I was happy serving Vesta at all. My life changed when I heard of my predecessor.

The Priestess before me was buried alive in a chamber for dishonour and disgrace against our deity Vesta yet before crossing the threshold: the priestess professed her innocence, crying in agony but the Roman empire stood by its word and she was swallowed by darkness. My life as a priestess was paved by the death of another. Doubt tainted my rituals, my prayers and my actions. This doubt and hesitation spread out into the rest of our sisters, a false spreading virus infecting us and preventing us from fulfilling our duties. Behind this ornate temple with its flame raging there are lies mixed with corruption pulling the strings to our supposedly righteous

and reputable jobs. To me, the purity of flowing white gowns has been dirtied by the blood of our past priestess. But I must stay strong and devoted to the lives of my sister even Rome itself is endangered by my mind tormented and corrupted by fruitless doubt.

XI days after a full moon

Days passed, as I drifted aimlessly through rituals and prayers while trying to discern the lies weaved through my life. All our sisters were weary and worn as lots of preparations were being made for an upcoming festival. We seated ourselves near the fire and the cosy, mellow golden light. We drifted to sleep, our eyes closing relieved at the peace. No one stopped to think who would guard the fire. No one stopped to think what the consequences would be. Everyone was in the haze of exhaustion, with tears staining our faces and lines of worries carving themselves into our soft skin.

XII days after a full moon

A day passed till we woke up but it would have been better if we hadn't. The Parcae (fates) have cut the yarn, my life before me was slipping. I will go to the palace of white walls for I know I haven't sinned and see the goddess who I served and slaved my life for. She will reward me. Through my death, I will be at peace.