

# Recipe For a God

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There was a time when I would sit in the living room on the large rug, the only part of the two-story that wasn't made of stone, and stare at the ceiling. There used to be a mural my dad had painted there of Him. However, that was a long time ago, when I was as tall as my mother's legs and my father wasn't dead. The mural is gone now, it flaked with age and was eventually painted over. Somewhere in the rug, there were still flakes of Him, of the mural, but they were so small that He danced with atoms.

There was a simpler time when you could throw stones at the wall, charge an ox with nothing but your determination, and kiss the floor. Now the rocks are gone, the ox dead from famine, and the floor no longer belongs to you but another man who doesn't speak your language, drinks, and talks about his *Him* with no pauses.

My man is named Gabriel, he wears robes on the weekends and cavalry armor during the week. He takes women from the village out to the alleys at night, and they always come back bruised. He's a nice man, other than when he beats your mother and whips you when you don't know how to read his books.

"God put me on this Earth so I could teach you, Mutahar, how to live a good life." He told me once while sitting on the ottoman that was no longer mine. "And you not listening to my careful worlds will doom you forever."

He wrapped my hands in a wooden cross and covered me in robes that barely fit. I was maybe as high as his fat waist. He was taller than most of us, but not as tall as others who occupy my neighbor's homes. He was average.

I was sheepish around him, but I wanted to learn. I tried to put my all into it, learning his language and the rules of it, learning of his *Him* and how he formed the world and us. It was difficult, especially at night.

"God believes in you; like how I believe in you, Mutahar." He told me while sitting on the rug, I sat on the stone floor because the rug was no longer mine. Gabriel became more sincere and gentle over time, but those nights... those nights were always the same. Those nights really tested me; brutality comes to mind, but they were tests of my will toward the new Him and He and Gabriel would want me to succeed.

I only hope that at the end of the road, I can have a floor to kiss, a house of my own, and I can be the man, the man like Gabriel, who lives in a house that is not his own.