Strands
by Ester Bossi

CHARACTERS
Young woman
Middle-aged woman
Old woman

SETTINGS
Black background, dimly lit, the scene is almost empty, three chairs can be seen and an old spinning wheel.

The Young woman enters the scene carrying a basket full of wool in her hands. She settles it beside the spinning wheel, before sitting on the chair that is closer to the pedal of the tool. The Middle-aged woman enters too, she sits on the other chair, placed close to the reel of the spinning wheel.

YOUNG WOMAN
Here we’re again to spin wool all together. It’s been a while ...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
It’s been a while indeed, but there’s always wool to spin.
YOUNG WOMAN
Spin, spin and spin.

_She sighs_

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
You spin the wheel, the spinning wheel goes.

YOUNG WOMAN
The wheel turns and never stops, as Time does.

YOUNG WOMAN & MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Time stops for no one.

_The Old woman emerges from the shadows._
_Silently she sits down on the last chair. With an imperious gesture of her hand she asks the Middle-aged woman to pass the thread of already spun wool to her._
_The Middle-aged woman does as told._
_Silence follows, broken only by the creaking sound of the spinning wheel pedal_

OLD WOMAN
As cutting of a scissor the Clock will take thee.
Cut, cut, cut!
Cut off with a clean cut!

_She slashes a piece of woolen thread with a pair of scissors_

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
That life could have been left alive more, sister.
It was still young, full of hopes and expectations... and above all it was worthy.

OLD WOMAN
It had come its hour. The wool was ready.

_She shrugs_

YOUNG WOMAN
And what about this one?

_She takes another thread of wool_

OLD WOMAN
No, this one not. The wool’s not unravelled enough.
Make it do a few more spins, you will never know what it might arrange.
YOUNG WOMAN
But look the bad quality and this wool! It’s so filthy and wicked!
How can thou say’st that it must be left running yet? More than the innocent life
thou just cut’st off! Now that was excellent quality!

The Middle-aged woman tries to calm the Young woman’s sudden utter

OLD WOMAN
Shut thy little, pretty mouth! Thou art still too young and guileless to understand.
When you will be in my place, you’ll see!

YOUNG WOMAN
When I’ll be in thy place, I’ll severed the lives that have to be severed
and I’m letting to flow those that deserve to be let flow!

OLD WOMAN
What nonsense!

She sniggers bitterly

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Sister, it’s not nonsense. Just a different opinion of thought.

OLD WOMAN
Realize the difference between opinion and truth before speaking!

She cuts another bit of yarn

YOUNG WOMAN
Look at this life! It was still an infant! It will never see its first Summer!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
My child, lives are cut for many reasons.

YOUNG WOMAN
And for such heinous reasons can this wickedness be committed? Evil lives are
spinning longer than virtuous lives, why?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
What’s done cannot be undone!

OLD WOMAN
What’s done cannot be undone! Of course!
If lives were all cut to the same height, what fun would it be?
Without pains and mischances mortals become lazy and idle and they fail the beautiful experiences life offers them between an agony and a tragedy. Happiness is fleeting and it always precedes a bigger misery.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Lord, what fool these mortals be!

YOUNG WOMAN
But those who want a noble life and dream of the glory of a lifetime in goodness...

OLD WOMAN
Like madness is the glory of life!
Better one hundred days as a fiend than one as a good man!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
In the end my sister takes thee anyway.

YOUNG WOMAN
So that’s it. But why the fiend lives longer than the good man?

OLD WOMAN
Here’s another nonsense! What a meaningless, juvenile question!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Sister, she’s still a maiden.

OLD WOMAN
Thanks to the fiend the good man can be considered himself as such. There are few good men, far too many fiends!
What do you think would happen if all evil dies before virtuous?
Hell may also seem empty and may seem that all the devils are on Earth, but in fact Hell’s a seething cauldron and it’s always full to the brim.
Must wait for a part to evaporate to add more wood to the fire, or risk to overturn everything!
Instead there’s space galore in Heaven’s immensity!
And they’re eager for good men, they cannot help it!

Silence

OLD WOMAN
It’s not me fault. I just do me job.

She cuts another piece of wool
OLD WOMAN
I do me job. What happens on the mortal Earth is not me business.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
It should not matter even to thee, my child. Alas, there's no remedy.

OLD WOMAN
Everyone has their own fate and the more people try to avoid it, the more trouble they get into.
Better to succumb to a fate as a fiend that be good and await the scissor cut.

*Only the wheel spinning can be heard*

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Time has passed. The Clock chimes and we've to depart from here.

*The Young woman stops the spinning wheel pedal*

OLD WOMAN
When shall we three meet again?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
When Time wants.
And thou know'st as I do that Time can be lazy sometimes and likes to waste several whirling of hands.
Maybe when will be here the set of Sun.
Perhaps in the blackest Night, no Moon nor Stars showing the path.

OLD WOMAN
Until then, farewell.

*She exits*

YOUNG WOMAN & MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN:
Take a safe return home.

*They collect the basket of wool and leave*

*The brightness of the scene fades, but before it gets completely dark all over, the Young woman comes back on stage and approaches the pile of cut wool threads, abandoned beside the Old woman's chair*
YOUNG WOMAN:
Thou hast experienced so little, thy life has been cut off too early… farewell to thee too.
I can reassure thee on thy short, but worthy work in this wicked World.

_She bows, then turns to the audience_

YOUNG WOMAN:
Farewell to you all, sitting in the shadows! I pray that Time will deliver your woolen thread to the Old woman as late as possible.

_She glances around, before turning and exiting_

_Dark falls._

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