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## A Phoenix Rising

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**Author Bio**

Alyssa Falcone is a first-year hoping to major in Italian. In her free time she enjoys playing violin, cello, and piano, and is involved with Gettysburg's orchestra and the Women's Rugby team. She also enjoys playing Text Twist non-stop and is always looking for a challenger. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support over the years.

## A Phoenix Rising

'I want to be delivered,' she tells the tiny clams as they vanish into the sand. She's on her knees again, knees bruised and painted with a perpetual depression made only by grains of sand. Nearby, the dune grass whispers her song.

She doesn't remember falling asleep, but soon she is 6 again. And such a blissful 6 it is. Father lies on the circus-striped towel while mother applies the sun to her body one blessed ray at a time. Mother is radiant and gorgeous and dark-haired and an ideal wife and woman, she is. The girl digs a hole in the sand and gently climbs in, unaware of how agile and utterly beautiful she is. In the hole, she hides her beauty from the world.

She is 12. She runs from jetty to jetty like it's not the mile or so that it really is. She holds a grain of sand in her palm and wonders if the whole world started like that. She sees her life in that one tiny speck of the universe. Then she drops it into the sea and wonders if she'll ever hold the same grain of sand again. However, she knows nothing of statistics and probability and the ever-changing technological world. She only counts the rhythm of her heartbeat and compares it to the waves that always return to shore.

Eighteen and all the world's a stage. She has her mother's dark hair and her father's light eyes; a Mediterranean beauty that has never left the Atlantic coastline. She is dark and deep and poetic and mysterious, but that's only how others see her. To herself, she is merely the explosion resulting from the close contact of two elements: a sharp mind and a bottomless heart. Those two elements engage in battles so long she wonders when the war will end.

At age 25, she wonders why she spent all that time hiding in her little holes instead of swimming the seas. In her manuscripts, she tells the world that she is a martyr. She says, 'When I die, I want my hands and feet to be mangled and worn from working in the rich earth and drawing the beauty of the skies.' All hail her wisdom and subtle submission and the face she wears when faking both.

At age 54, she doesn't remember those words of wisdom and makes her living by letting her children live on, knowing she can never go back no matter how hard she swims.

She wakes up with sea foam in her mouth and the sunlight is trace, leaving no room for anymore long glances into the past. She is 96 years old today. Without a word, she digs her ancient hands into a coastline that has seen more cultures than grains of sand in the sea. Her hands form a familiar hole in the land and she pours her tears into it, racking sobs that carry her heart out with the ebbing tide. On Earth, she crumples her lungs into little raisins and spends her last breath where she spent her first. Her vision is reduced to a blur, a sketch, and then a faint line, and then she is gone. In death, her muscles go limp and every tendon relaxes for the first time in ages.

Her mangled hand slowly opens. There, like a sacrifice to the ocean, is a single grain of sand.

She is delivered.