

# Forces

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## One Stitch at a Time

Lauren Limburg

Thread has always told a tale. Humans have long been fascinated with thread. It's woven all throughout myths and legends. Metaphors hiding a history of string that is just waiting to be pulled. I wanted to chase that thread. I wanted to pull and pull, unraveling like my old sweaters under the paws of a beloved cat.

I gave myself three weeks to learn how to knit. It was my own quest. In my eyes, I had nothing to offer in terms of trade. Not physically. I cannot draw. I cannot weave or use a loom. I wanted to learn a craft. A trade. I wanted to sit at the feet of an expert and watch her hands create.

And so, I sat.

On the first Thursday, we learned how to hold our needles and cast on. I held the needles like a child or like one might hold their cutlery. Eventually, we all learned that the needles were sharp enough to puncture fabric but not our skin. Although even now, I hear the mantra our teacher taught us to remember the knit stitch: stab it, strangle it, pull out its guts, and throw the body off the cliff. We never drew blood, but the mistakes hurt all the same. It was a slow process, unraveling a misplaced stitch or counting and finding you had magically and erroneously added a new one.

At the end of the night, as we packed up our needles and skeins, she said, you are creating fabric, you are creating something, never forget that. As if she was scared that we would diminish our skills like those before us. That we would forget how far we had come. That we would forget what we now had to offer.

On an island, there was a thread that conquered the beast. No one sings the praises of Ariadne or her string. They sing of Theseus. They sing of a fearsome minotaur and a labyrinth. We forget the thread. A single strand to bring a

**Dickcissel**

Daphne Babcock



hero from an impossible labyrinth. A single gift. Ariadne gifted no sword or magic lantern. Those would not have been hers in the first place. She gave what she had to offer: thread.

On the second Thursday, we learned how to purl and combine it with a knit stitch. We were creating patterns within our own works. Within our thread.

At the end of the night our teacher gave us her rule: never stop in the middle of a row.

Maybe it was hubris, but I would forget those warnings as the sun fell every night. On my lap sat a rectangle, for a moment a perfect square, and then a new rectangle. As my confidence grew, so did my speed. I laughed at the girl I was a mere week ago. I had adopted the continental style to match my pace. I continued on.

Knit.

Purl.

Knit.

Purl.

I paused, reveling in my excitement and success, to look down at the work in my hands. Athena would not have bothered to curse me. I would not have been good enough. I was not Arachne. But I still tempted my own success by

laughing at the rules, assuming I would never make that mistake. I had forgotten to pull my working yarn.

On the third and final Thursday, we learned to cast off. We learned to say goodbye to our work. We learned to start something new.

At the end of the night, our teacher told us she hoped to see us again and with a completed project.

She was tempting the Fates. The Fates, the mystical and all-knowing weavers of each man's life. If they so choose to cut your life short: snip. Your life ended and woven in as a way to keep it all together. They knew the patterns involved in each life they began and ended.

No, she was not tempting them. She was invoking them. She was reminding us that we had been gifted the knowledge of the Fates. The Fates did not weave boring tapestries, boring lives. Just as we would not knit boring scarves, hats, sweaters, or even small squares. We would no longer look at any knitted goods the same. We would see the time, counted in rows, it took to create the work of art. We now had the eye of the Fates to see the story, the love, and the life knitted in each piece.

Thread was the way women could tell their story and history. It is the way I tell mine.



## Patience

Sherry Scamardo