



The Martyr

The love that pays its bill out of your own pocket

What the mandala shows

A hooded figure kneels before an ornate gothic stone altar at the center of the page. On the altar rests a symbolic heart. Her hood is pulled forward; her hands are raised in offering. A wolf stands at her right, an owl at her left on the altar's corner. A deer watches from the middle distance. Moonlight enters as outlined rays. Moss-covered stones circle the altar. Wildflowers grow at the edges. She has been here a long time. No one has asked her to be.

What this shadow is

The Martyr is the one who gives from the self that should have been kept to live on. You take on the shift no one else will. You stay up with the sick child when someone else could have. You pay for the dinner. You cancel your own thing for theirs. You don't feel good afterward. You feel wronged. And you don't say so, because saying it would contaminate the offering. You learned early that love looks like disappearing for others. But you cannot give away what you have not given yourself first. Sacrifice that was never asked for isn't generosity. It's a bill you'll quietly, resentfully send later.

You may recognize The Martyr when:

- You keep a running internal ledger of what you have done for others
- You feel resentful toward people who did not ask for what you gave
- You do not take help even when it is offered clearly
- You say it's fine while clearly not fine, and wait for someone to notice
- You cry in the shower about things you will not mention at dinner

Where it lives in the body

A heaviness across the shoulders as if carrying weight that is not yours. A tiredness at the jaw from swallowing what you wanted to say. Eyes that sting just before sleep.

What the coloring does

Color the wolf and the owl first, before the altar. They did not come here to watch you sacrifice. They came as witnesses of a different kind of giving — the kind that notices who is actually in front of you and what they actually asked for. Then color the heart last. Put it down on the altar if you want to. Or take it back. Both are allowed.

After coloring, take five minutes:

1. **Breathe.** Three slow breaths, feel the shoulders.
2. **Color.** The wolf first. The owl second. The heart last.
3. **Notice.** Who is owed something that was never actually asked of you?
4. **Write.** One sentence: "Something I have been giving that no one asked me for is ____"

You cannot pour from the well you forgot to fill for yourself.