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Summary of “Stalking the Intruder: The Beginning Initiation”

Chapter 2 of "Women Who Run with the Wolves" by Clarissa Pinkola Estés is titled "Stalking the Intruder: The Beginning Initiation." In this chapter, Estés explores the concept of the "intruder" or the "wild predator" that often enters a woman's life in various forms, disrupting her sense of self and safety. This intruder could be a person, a circumstance, or even an internal force that threatens her autonomy and creativity.

The chapter delves into the symbolism of fairy tales and myths, drawing upon stories like Bluebeard and The Handless Maiden, to illustrate how women have been historically warned about dangers and intrusions, often at the hands of a controlling or oppressive figure. These tales emphasize the importance of recognizing the signs of an intruder and learning to confront and deal with the threat.

Estés introduces the idea of the "Wild Woman," an innate and instinctual aspect of a woman's psyche that holds the wisdom and strength to face and overcome these intruders. This Wild Woman is connected to the ancient archetype of the "Wild Feminine," representing a primal and untamed part of a woman's identity.

The chapter also touches upon the concept of initiation, highlighting that confronting the intruder is a fundamental step in a woman's initiation into her full power and potential. This initiation process involves facing fears, embracing the unknown, and learning to trust one's instincts and intuition.

Estés emphasizes the significance of the initial stages of this initiation, drawing parallels between the initiation process and the transformation of caterpillars into butterflies. Just as the caterpillar must break free from its cocoon to transform, women must break free from the constraints and limitations imposed by intruders to fully realize their wild and authentic selves.

This chapter provides a foundation for reclaiming one's innate wildness, facing challenges, and embracing the inherent strength that comes from acknowledging and addressing the intruders that threaten a woman's sense of self.

Summary Of The Story: Bluebeard

The story of Bluebeard is a dark and cautionary fairy tale that has been passed down through generations. It typically involves a wealthy and sinister man named Bluebeard who has had multiple wives, all of whom have mysteriously disappeared. He gives his new wife the keys to all the rooms in his grand mansion but forbids her from entering one particular room. Curiosity gets the better of her, and she eventually unlocks the forbidden room, discovering the gruesome truth: the room is filled with the remains of his previous wives.

Bluebeard catches her in the act and threatens to kill her as well. She is saved at the last moment by her brothers or another male figure who arrives in the nick of time. The story ends with Bluebeard's downfall and the wife's escape from the clutches of the murderous and controlling husband.

The tale of Bluebeard serves as a cautionary metaphor, warning against curiosity, disobedience, and the dangers of marrying or trusting someone without knowing their true nature. It also highlights the themes of female empowerment, the importance of breaking free from oppressive relationships, and the consequences of blindly accepting the roles society assigns to women. The story has been retold and adapted in various forms, including literature, theater, and film, with each version adding its own layers of interpretation and meaning.

Optional Reflection Questions For Further Explorations

In your own life, what might the metaphorical "intruders" represent? Are there external circumstances, people, or internal struggles that disrupt your sense of self and well-being?

How do you typically react when faced with challenges or intrusions? Do you confront them head-on or tend to avoid them?

Estés talks about the concept of the "Wild Woman" as an innate and instinctual aspect of a woman's psyche. How do you interpret this idea? What might your own "Wild Woman" represent?

What are some examples of times when you've felt a connection to your own wild and instinctual nature? How did it impact your decisions or actions?

The chapter compares a woman's initiation to the transformation of caterpillars into butterflies. What might this transformation symbolize for you personally? What "cocoon" do you feel you need to break free from?

How can women tap into their intuition and instincts to navigate challenges and intruders? Can you recall instances where your intuition guided you in making important decisions?

How can women support each other in their initiation journeys and in confronting the intruders in their lives?

Remember to approach these journal questions with openness and honesty. Allow your reflections to guide you in exploring your own journey of reclaiming your wildness and embracing your authentic, empowered self.

Stay Wild You Beautiful Soul,

 *Lilian*