

A Poet's Tyranny

She slept in a sea of stars. Endless droves of gold and saffron which hurled themselves towards her dreamless eyes and serene countenance. Such marvellous colours which scattered around her. She who had once had dreamless eyes, for no longer did she meander through black skies and white thoughts. No longer did she drag herself across the world blind. It was not the first time she had dreamt of him; him with the eyes of ash and skin of buttered honey. Not the first time he had plagued her closed eyelids like a crawling phantom clawing at the heels of Charon. In such a way, he clawed at the strings between her heart and mind, rippling as if he were a jagged stone skipping along plumes of water. Or perhaps, she considered, like a wretched fly greeting a spider in its web. Droning flickers of wings which haunted her even in the wastelands of her own mind.

For tonight, he approached her with pounding strides.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thunderous as he sloshed through her watery eyes. Eyes which observed; eyes which recognised; eyes which feared. Feared the image of his talons; his monstrous paws as he mauled her face like an animal. She could still taste the pain. Taste the rage as he frenzied with such feral intensity. For her mouth had formed such a rejection and had received only his fist as reply. Such was the way of him. Such was his method, frothing as his silky words could not sway her. As violence became his only answer. As realisation had struck him as he had her and he crawled to the ground, clinging to her body with a cry, "Corinna, forgive me!"

She had pushed him down with a shaking hand. A thrust which bound itself to him with as much force as she could muster. And yet, the brute stood before her once more, as he did now, feet planted firmly in this dreamy arena. For brute is what he was; what he is. He had not quite left her yet.

He had begged her, of course. He loved her, he said. Made a mistake, as though he were a father regretful of his harsh disciplining, she a mere child under his mighty grip.

"Hit me! Please, hit me back. Corinna..." Such magnificent eyes he had, glistening with such desperation as they watched the tears caressing her purple cheeks. That had once been her favourite colour, purple. The colour of violets. Of royalty. Of sunsets in summertime as Apollo traded hands with his sister in a warm embrace of twilight. Such beauty hid behind such a colour. Such beauty he had destroyed.

"I will not hit you, Ovid," Her voice stood, even as her lips, the lips he had adored, tasted copper. Crimson stained her tears.

Horror marred his begging. Had him staring at his weapon, the blood crushed and congealed under his nails. Had him pulling her towards his body with the delicacy she had once revered. Delicacy so rare among men. Delicacy she now flinched upon.

"I'm so sorry." He whispered.

over,

and over,

and over again.

"Please, my darling, please. Forgive me."

With hands no longer so cruel and ferocious, he held her. Stroked her matted hair; the curve of her neck; the wounds sputtering across her face. Such strength she'd had. Such strength she'd failed as bubbles flew up her throat. As she melted through tears, and forgot, just for a moment, that it was not some beast who had mauled her. Such a moment repulsed her now. Repulsed her as he haunted her once again. Every night since. Every night until death, for who could forget such violence, such pain. She had feared it, feared him, so brilliantly, that like Pandora's box, she had clasped the memory shut with the force of a thousand men. Buried it deep inside her heart as it sat in her chest, bruised and bleeding, as she had been that night. Had been so many nights after. For he had never left her, not properly.

"Forgive me," He breathed, barging through her mind's defences as a knife tears through flesh.

"Leave me," She demanded. Demanded even as his faced turned. As his fist clenched, once a poet's hand, now a force of brutality. The tool of a tyrant. He approached. She trembled. Sweat beaded along her skin, shackling her to the ground with fear. Shackling her under his gaze. Imprisoning her even in sleep as her brain conjured up that hell once more.

As two armies meet upon the battlefield, they met each other. Her with blood-stained anger in her heart; him with unspeakable acts written across his features. Such anger drove her, step by step by step as she met him under the stars.

"Leave me, you brute."

And through some unknown courage, she stood before him without a flinch, as she met his fist with her own.

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