

Morning of Mourning

Monday, 16 January 2006

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He lay in state, unconsciously clinging to the last vestiges of life. The Chichurgeons had attended him, as had Lady Gandolfyn. The Sisters of the Golden Virgin arrived and began to attend to him, bathing him completely abed, placing cone shaped devices to his chest and grinding up powders and herbs.

One of the sisters reached into a small bag and brought forth a device attached to a small hose. The device was made of polished bone and ended with a long needle. A few adjustments and the needle was inserted into a vein in his hand. It was attached to a bladder of warm liquid, equally unknown. Whatever was in the bladder was allowed to merge into his blood.

A piece of leather bound wood was placed between his teeth to prevent him from swallowing or biting his tongue it was explained.

Mother Magdalena conferred with the Prophetess and it was difficult to tell who was in charge of the care for the Marquis. The Prophetess appeared shocked at what was told her, but left the room and returned within the hour with all manner of elfin powders and things.

The Ascoyne women sat at one end of the room. AndreaLyn consoled her mother, as did Cobina and the floor was wet from their tears. Other women arrived and were allowed entry into the room. Cobina saw a maid servant removing the Black Drapes and bellowed out "He has not died!! Put that accursed color away!!" The servant dropped the cloth and ran from the room with Cobina in pursuit,

The youngest daughter returned ten minutes later saying she had spoken to the young servant and had forgiven her the error.

The deathwatch continued and at the end of the 16th hour, Cobina walked to the foot of her fathers bed and said quietly. "Papa, stop fooling around and wake up"

He did not respond and she gave one cry and walked away.

A voice so faint as scarcely heard from those not close to the bed whispered "If it please you, my daughter."

Cobina turned to face her father and she advanced to his side. He was wet with perspiration, his eyes rimmed with detris of dust and sweat. His mouth slightly open.

His eyes moved under closed lids. Cobina said nothing but took a cloth and wet it, gently wiping his eyes and when they opened they were the deepest green she had ever seen. If he smiled it was with his eyes only. She wet a towel and put it between his lips where he sucked out the cold water. She was smiling.

Sister Magdalena announced he was awake, and that no one was to approach unless he asked for them. He acknowledged his wife and other daughter and stayed awake for near 90 minutes.

Ignoring instructions not to speak, he gave orders to his steward, sheriff and seneschal that his plans were to be carried out. He spoke lovingly to his wife and daughters, to the Sister and Mother Magdalena and to Lady Gandolfyn who could not bring herself to look into his eyes.

“I failed thee mother Lord.” She was crying greatly, without sobs or wails. “I failed thee whom I love more than my own mind did not hear thy cries for help.”

“He asked her to please stop fretting and look at him and she could not.” Slowly he extended his hand and grasped hers so gently. “She still shook her head.” When he spoke his voice was not full timbre and sounded older than the Iranna Mountains.

“I have been blessed with a good wife who hath born me two daughters and to these human females I owe my heart for they have captured it from the very start.”

“The Prophetess winced in agony as these words were whispered.” He gave her hand a gentle squeeze. “Yet for all my life one female has been confidant and mother and friend and a much more to this old warrior and that has been you Donda Bromeliad Gandolfyn.” He paused to gather his breath and she slowly turned her head to look at him.

“My love for thee Lady Gandolfyn is not cluttered by licentious thoughts or improper lusts.” “I never thought I could say I would say this to another female but my love in some ways is greater than the love I have for my family.”

“She understood and slowly leaned forward and lay her head on his chest, closing her eyes in the moment and listened to the beat of his heart.” She pressed her body softly against him and the covenant between them was made stronger.

“A few moments passed and she sat up quite refreshed.” “What she said next was improper and made him laugh.” “Get better, you old fart.” “Your wife misses you greatly.” She left the room in that gliding walk of hers. “She met the family and explained he was much better and the combination of magic, medicine and skills had restored the Marquis good health, but he must make haste slowly as his recovery would last until summer’s end.”

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