

A lady is waiting

Wednesday, 08 February 2006

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Be careful of the new maid, sirrah and always treat her as a Lady-

The sunrise that morning had been inspiring, the dark of night slowly giving way to the glow coming over the mountains and the first fingers of light searching out ahead of the diminishing shadows. The stillness of the dawn broken by the song of the Carcassonne Chickadees chirping their wake up call to the slumbering world.

“By the Lady, I hate charades,” AndreaLyn du Bois Guilbert said out loud. She pushed herself away from the window and walked gracefully across the floor of her apartment. She was wearing her favorite house gown with the morning coat and she left her apartment for the comfort of the kitchen.

Once there she ate some wonderful pastries with dried fruit, some tea to drink and a cold pint of apple juice. The kitchen staff were very surprised when she cleaned up after herself.

“Tis our duty m’lady to attend to such things” offered the morning cook. Andrea smiled and affected a rural speech when she answered “Me mum taught us to clean up our mess at all times.”

The cook would not be put off “With all respect due, young un, yer clothes speak loudly that yer not as common as yer make out!”

AndreaLyn laughed at the response. She wondered if the cook was any relation to Mrs. Muggins at the Sentinel. She also realized the truth in the cook’s words and sought out a servant more to her size.

Within the hour she was dressed as a commoner and one servant was rewarded with a livery finer than she had ever known and the writ proving she got it fairly!

AndreaLyn re-entered the kitchen to find one of the village oafs perusing the female help. She asked quietly if she now looked acceptable and the cook laughed and nodded. Andrea began cleaning pots.

For it was a labor she had loved since childhood, the cleaning of the kitchen and de Rochefort’s floor was well laid with slate and small troughs to take the spilled water away. She put a large pot on the stove and filled it with water, about 16 gallons. She noted the Oaf had left.

The Morning meals were served and the scullery maids busy at work. Each one worked independently, not like the chain of workers at the Sentinel; three scouring, three washing, two rinsing, Three drying and returning the clean things to storage. Here were 16 maids all cleaning pots and pans and utensils. And apparently from three days past.

She did not make a suggestion, but cleaned pots and pans and enjoyed the conversations when the oaf and two squires re-entered the kitchen.

She braced herself to repel any and all mischief.

Now the Marquis de Rochefort arises early and today was no exception. After breaking his nightly fast, he inquired as to the Lady recently arrived from Brionne and no one could tell where she was. Alarmed by this he moved quicker in his search of the Manor, arriving at the kitchen just in time to see the Oaf approach Lady du Bois Guilbert from behind.

He reached for a very clean large skillet held by a maid and asked “May I?”, he took it and in one move swung it forward striking the Oaf in the back of the head, laying him out like a leg of mutton. The ringing tone hung in the air for a moment.

Pleased with the musical effect he handed back the skillet to the maid, stepped over the inert form of the Oaf and approached AndreaLyn.

You there!” he commanded, “the new girl - they need you above floors.” AndreaLyn lowered her head and ran out of the room “and don’t have your fanciers come into the Manor!” He instructed the squire to drag the oaf out of the kitchen.

AndreaLyn made it to the top of the stairwell before collapsing with laughter. Etienne de Rochfort had followed her and found her laughing into a tall curtain. “You are definitely your father’s daughter”, he said.

Andrea composed herself as the Marquis de Rochefort waited. “This afternoon I will tell what we know about Kemmler.” He looked at her and bade her to walk with him a while. “Kemmler is evil and a threat to all that bleed. He has spies everywhere and knowing this I’ve kept you to quarters, but that will end soon enough.”

He turned to AndreaLyn. "œl will have need of thy steel, both in weapon and in spirit before this week plays out."

The game was afoot.