

A Wife's Tears

Contributed by The Marquis d'Ascoyne
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It is said that 'Parting is such sweet sorrow' and there is truth to that whether it be for the first time or the 20th time or the last time.

A Wife's Tears

She had discovered the rumor of War in Araby a full day ahead of her husband for such is the way of woman. While her husband busied himself with the operations of the Military School she stole away to pray to the Lady of the Lake.

In chapel she was devout, lighting incense and praying with an open heart and when she was done she went to the Tapestry which depicted the Lady of the Lake meeting Giles the Uniter. She drew back the corner of the tapestry and made a deep scratch on the wall, beside many others. She counted them and there were now 28. Her deed done, she withdrew from the tapestry.

And there watching her, was Lady Gandolfyn. Embarrassed, Lady Dianne started to speak, but the Prophetess raised her hand. "Do not apologize for marking times of devotion."

Lady Dianne confessed her motives were selfish for she asked that her husband be protected and returned to her safe and sound. Lady Gandolfyn responded that meant 28 times the Lady answered prayer and that was a monument to faith and grace.

Lady Dianne bowed and left the chapel. Lady Gandolfyn watched her leave and then studied the tapestry. "In need of cleaning" she said, and made a note to have that done.

When the Rumor of War in Araby broke, the Marquis immediately began to make plans and cloistered himself for 36 hours in the War room. When he emerged after meeting with the tent merchants, he sought out his wife and found her in the large garden next to the chapel, seated on a stone dais. Her wet cheek the only sign of her tears.

He approached her solemnly, quietly.

"Milord I will speak from my heart." She was aware of his presence. There are many things I can endure. I am blessed with a great capacity for tolerance." She did not yet turn to him. He stopped and sat by her side.

"Know you that I am aware of my rivals, including that candymaker from Estalia, those dancing girls of Araby and the like. Your comrades in arms I have welcomed into my home for they are your friends, but I cannot compete with Bretonnia!"

He put his arm around his wife to draw her close, but she would not budge. Curious, he slid beside her.

"Friends, females, your whimsical manner of communications all I can accept but an entire nation?" She finally turned to look into his eyes. "You are in thrall to this land, m'Lord and I cannot break its hold o'er you. Yesterday was the 28th time I have prayed for you in chapel for the thoughts of losing you terrify me."

He drew her close to him and for a few moments they just held each other. He noted the warmth of her body and that she held him close with a strength which surprised him. He rested his chin just above her ear and whispered "Many a Bretonnian wife utters those self same words in time of War." He gave her a long, gentle hug. "Noble or Peasant or Merchant are affected by War."

She had heard all the arguments and wasted no time to re-address them.

"Well don't get killed or maimed while in Araby, then" and she stood up from the dais. She kissed him atop the head and turned to leave but was called up short by the Marquis question.

"What meant you by my 'whimsical manner of communications?' "

He had struck home! The woman turned and there was malevolent delight in her eyes. This made him even more curious and he repeated the question.

She sat down as if prepared to read an itinerary. "Hercule when we first met I noted that whenever you try to fathom a problem you look to the left. A personal problem and you look to the right."

He wrinkled his brow in question.

"And that!" she grinned, "The furrowed brow of deep thought, I love it!"

He looked to the right.

She continued, "When you are bored, you talk of termites in the closet and when you are not amused you speak of your love of rutabagas, which I know you despise"

"Rutabagas are marvelous." He said.

She went on listing the ways he communicated whimsically and with each listing she was getting bolder until she began to list the ways he signaled his desire for her.

He looked to the left, acknowledging her with an occasional nod.

"I do not like it when you smack your lips loudly when we are abed. I am no cupcake to be consumed as a snack."

No, he thought to himself, thee are a full meal indeed. He wrinkled his brow and returned looking off to the left.

"Then there are all those 'riding' allusions. I know thee art a knight, but I am no destrier, sirrah!"

He thought a moment. Neigh....Neigh...I say the neigh thee are not a horse. And he chuckled out loud for these thoughts.

"We women have feelings as well. When we fall in love we use all our wiles and willingness to capture that which we love." She was speaking confidently. After we have obtained our love, we gravitate to more domestic behaviors and when heirs are produced we become Mothers to All."

Threwas a silence following this epiphany. A silence that lengthened each second. After a minute and a half the Marquis spoke as he stood up. He strode dramatically to an open area in the Garden

"There I was in Parravon, attending to my grandfather's wishes when I first saw thee, gawking out your balcony at the rude masses below. I was young and unfettered and innocent." He gestured as if addressing the Round Table. I was speaking to your father and mentioned I had to find shelter and he offered me his roof and shelter therein and I said yes." He began to orate and she took notice of this.

brow with her forearm, palm open. "...and you corrupted me with sweet words and diverse exercises and seductive ways."

"I enjoyed a meal with him, but could help not notice you spying on me from the stairwell. I was aware of your entrance into the room and, frankly, had to restrain my eyes from the cut of your gown."

Although her memories were a bit different, that gown clung to her like second skin and, frankly, that is why she wore it.

As I was stiff and sore from riding you father, venerated saint of a man, offered me time to rest up and you said you could ease my suffering through rubbing my muscles. You called it a massage, a laying on of hands.

She sighed a weary sigh on following this pathway of deceit. She had asked him if he wanted a rubbing and he said yes.

"So there I am laying face down on a table in my room, a young, innocent man of 23-" here he paused and stifled an anguished cry- "A virgin knight A VIRGIN!!"

She yawned. Politely of course.

The Marquis entered into melodrama at this point. "Then you came in wearing nothing but a long chemise so sheer I could see thy form from the afternoon sun shining through the open window.' He turned about as if addressing a jury of his peers.

"You then applied warm oils to my aching back and commenced to manifest sorcery upon my flesh!!"

She was wearing a light chemise, but the afternoon was hot and so was I, she thought. She was only helping a man in pain. And she sniffled a bit in disgust.

"Who knows what mischief you would have wrought upon me had not the maid arrived!" He trembled dramatically for effect. "Yet I was enthralled by thy beauty and couldst not escape thy magic spell of loooooove"

He shielded his eyes with his forearm,turned about and stalked away, back to the Castle.

She remained on the dais for a few minutes. Twas not the way she remembered it. She should have had the maid discharged. Watching him walk away she framed his body between forefinger and thumb of her left hand and squeezed them together.

"Like a bug on my arm" she said to no one in particular.