

Hating Him

[Millicent]

I hate him.

Right now, there isn't a single part of my body that doesn't hate him.

What was he thinking, bringing those horrible men into this keep? Every single one of them represents a handful of memories that I'd rather forget, parts of my life that I had to endure. Seeing them like that, having him demand that I tell him how each should die, sent me right back to those moments to live once again. I know that he sees me as insignificant, I am only a human, and the lowest of them, and he is a dragon prince. He has no reason to see me with any kind of regard.

But what he did tonight, every moment, was layers upon layers of cruelty.

I didn't wait for those unusual maids to show me the way back to my room. Running through these halls, I wish for a moment that I had claws so that I could shred the walls around me as I run, to eviscerate them with my anger, shred them like he did my heart in that room. Tearing the net from my hair, I threw it down behind me. The dress comes next, fighting me at first with its heavy layers, but I pull it off with a resounding rip as it falls in a heap around me, decorating the crystal corridor like a discarded string of gems.

Unable to get the corset or petticoats without assistance, I hike up my skirts and continue my flight from the room, burning bright enough with anger that with the power of my emotion I might grow wings and burn everything. Instead, I weep with embarrassment about everything that just happened from the moment I entered that hall. A thousand small jabs, a thousand small reasons that I am insignificant and beneath his consideration.

My appearance isn't good enough for him.

My name isn't good enough for him.

And my pain seems to give him pleasure.

As I make my way back to my room, my eyes are gummed together from rubbing the sticky and colorful paint on my face that had been applied so carefully by the maids. My vision blurred, I can barely make out the shape of the hallway. Unable to see, I run into the door to my room with my body, hitting the ground with a hard thump, my ridiculously decorated petticoats cushioning my fall.

It is from that position that I see his last jab.

Carved into the door, highlighted with gold and decorated with orange gems is a word.

"Ca....arr...neee.." I didn't even need to finish sounding it out.

Carnelia.

The name he had decided was "better suited" than the other one I was given.

Screaming at the name, at the remembered pain of this evening, I place my hand roughly on the wall and open the door to my room.

I trip as I step inside, my skirts clinging around my legs now drenched in sweat. Part of it gets caught in the door and I pull, feeling it tear. Puffing my cheeks, I'm about to scream again when I hear a small tapping at the door.

"Miss, we are here to help you..."

"GO AWAY!!!" Screaming I grab the nearest thing I can find, my dinner, and throw it at the wall. As the metal plate hits the wall it dents with the force, clanging to the ground as the food falls around it.

Well, at least there is no food left on the plate.

The rapping at the door starts again. "Miss, we are required to serve your needs."

"Right now, I require that you LEAVE ME ALONE!" I weep through the wall.

After a few more minutes, the rapping stops.

Emotionally spent, all the energy flees my body as my tears continue to fall. Picking up the plate, and the food, I carefully place it on the table. The plate has been irreparably damaged, dented from hitting the wall. Gold. It is made of gold. The price of this plate alone could feed a family in Crimson for half a year. Ashamed of my behavior, I lean down, pick up a piece of the wasted food, and take a bite of the meat that had been on the plate.

"Heavens," I moan, taking another bite. Even covered in dust and flecks of other things from the ground, it is more delicious than anything I have ever eaten. It is hard not to lean over in pleasure at every bite. Ravenous, I eat every scrap, not feeling even the slightest bit of shame at having eaten off the floor. It is not like it was the first time I had ever needed to do such, and this floor is cleaner than most.

When I am finished I stand again. Dirty and stumbling, body and ego bruised from ill-treatment, some of which was self-inflicted, I barely made it around the firepit and empty bathtub to fall over onto the bed on the other side of the room. It was so soft I could feel my weight sinking into it. The mattress is made from something light. It did not have the feel or smell of straw. What could it be? Sheep's wool? Feathers? I've never slept on a bed of feathers...

It is lying here, my body growing heavier, my mind curious about the contents of my bed, that sleep claims me.
