

# A Carriage and Thee...

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*“What hath night to do with sleep?”*

*~ John Milton*

{An October 31<sup>st</sup> essay about enduring love}

*Halloween...*the very name truly conjures up images of ghosts and goblins, things that often go bump in the night. The fine hairs on your arms and neck rise with trepidation and anticipation.

*What if...?* A shiver passes down your spine. Do you dare to believe?

Perhaps, on this one night, you may glimpse intriguing visitors out of the corner of your eye. Visitors who vanish the moment you turn your head.

Do you look twice to convince yourself you are not dreaming? Do you hold your breath in the hope that they may reappear if you are very, very quiet...? Are you left wondering where they disappear to after this night is no more?

Anything is truly possible and nothing is as it seems. Please, settle back into your easy chair and relax. Close your eyes for a moment, and allow yourself to dream...

In your mind's eye you are walking through Central Park. The night is full of mystery and promise. Cold, but clear and overhead the moon and stars are impossibly bright in a velvet sky. *A night meant for lovers...*

*There...* do you see the heavily-cloaked man in the lion mask and the slim, young woman, walking arm in arm through the night-shrouded trees? As if the night, and the whole world, belongs only to them...

You did not see them a moment ago. It seems they have recently risen from the very ground beneath your feet. But there is nothing here to fear, surely?

They cannot see you standing there. They appear unconcerned about the darkness and its inherent perils, wrapped up in each other as they seem to be.

*Lovers deeply committed, one to the other, you might guess by the way she looks up at him, and he down to her. Seeming to only have eyes for each other.*

Beneath his mask he is smiling and she is laughing at something he said, or perhaps nothing. They clearly display their joy of being together, alone in the dark. Perhaps they have recently escaped a hectic domestic scene for the peace of the night. Maybe the grandparents are in charge of any small ones our couple have made together. After all, this is 1992 and truly anything is possible...

*Pause then and rewind for a moment to another time and place...*

There is that intriguing conversation in the episode of *Masques* about the origins and meaning of All Hallows Eve. And all it entails for those who believe in true magic...

***BRIGIT***

*The night has a special magic to it, don't you think?*

*This night, especially.*

***VINCENT***

*Halloween.*

## **BRIGIT**

*In the old religion they call it Samhain.*

*It's a night when the walls between the worlds grow thin and spirits of the underworld walk the earth. A night of masks and bonfires when anything is possible and nothing is quite as it seems...*

Now, if you will, look again at the picture of the carriage, at the beginning of our time together. Has our mysterious couple, he of the lion's face mask and his beautiful young companion, decided to take a carriage ride through the park?

The moment I saw the image I have enlarged below I was intrigued. It certainly looks as if our couple are inside the carriage. He is on the left and heavily cloaked, his lion-faced mask now hidden beneath the up-drawn hood. The slender woman is seated on the right, shrouded in a carriage blanket supplied by her thoughtful companion.

Their mutual communication is voiced by their eyes, and the occasional touch of an outstretched hand as they speed through the park. *They seem to have a bond stronger than friendship or love...*



Just for a moment, let's turn our attention to the carriage driver. I saw him and immediately speculated. I am sure I glimpsed unruly blond hair and a cheeky smile beneath that disreputable hat, before he turned away and mounted the carriage box to gather the reins. As if he too was in on some great and carefully guarded secret he is not about to share.

Perhaps the carriage has been *\*borrowed\** for the night by our couple's highly inventive friend...*okay good, okay fine*...which allows them to enjoy the night and the city without inciting too much comment in their travels.



Because while the lion-masked man is unknown, the woman is a well-known socialite and highly regarded lawyer in New York City. Walking arm in arm through the streets in the plain sight of the Halloween crowds, they would have excited unwanted speculation and conjecture about her curious companion.

*And if they chanced upon someone they knew...*

After all, it is a fact that Catherine Wells, the former Ms Chandler, possesses three adorable children by a mysterious husband who is never seen, and about whom nothing is known. His name does not appear on any of the children's birth certificates. A feast for the ever-present media if the truth was uncovered, and her companion was indeed the deeply elusive father of Catherine's children.

To the discerning eye, he is too tall and broad to be Elliot Burch. So who then, could he be? Of course Ms Wells always declines to confirm or deny...she too has secrets she is sworn to keep.

Are you following all this from the comfort of your armchair and smiling? I truly hope so, because this is for you. It truly is a wonderful dream. *Baelfires and masks abound... hold fast to your belief in true love and happy endings...*

Maybe, after a long companionable ride through the park, the lion-masked man will ask the driver to stop so he may buy ice cream from a nearby cart, before returning to the carriage to share it with his lovely companion. *Perhaps no one would look twice, but why take the chance?*

After all, there will be other Halloween nights. There is all the time in the world, now. They have made a commitment, one to the other, and it is an unbreakable bond.

For this is the night for lovers, and new beginnings. And for those with an enduring belief in the eternal possibility of true magic...

~ FIN ~



*“Though nobody can go back and make a new beginning... Anyone can start over and make a new ending.”*

*~ Chico Xavier*

*The future belongs to those  
who believe in the beauty  
of their dreams.*

- Eleanor Roosevelt