

Balcony

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By Cindy Rae



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"Her world... a world apart from mine..."

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It has been months since I last saw her. Months. Months, since April. Months, since I carried her Below, in my arms. Months, she healed in my bed. Months, since I fed her soup, read Dickens to her, brought her tea, nursed her, cared for her...

Months, since I ... since she... embraced me, as we parted.

I must forget the dream of being a part of you... I must. What other choice do I have?

I've never been back there. Never been back to that parting place; never back to the place where the wall is half-gone but the light comes down like a soft God's blessing. Never... stood near that light, again.

What would be the point? She isn't coming back. Ever. She isn't going to decide to. Why would she? What ... what reason would she possibly have?

She swore to keep the secret of my World, and so she is. It was a promise she gave, and she will keep it. I knew that before she gave the oath. I told her as much. She will not jeopardize us. Jeopardize me.

And I can't reach her.

I live beneath her, yes. But I cannot reach her that way. I cannot climb the ladder, creep through the sub-basement, ascend her elevator, knock on her door – what an image that would be - I can't reach her any other "normal" way; the way any normal man would use. I can't.

And it's fair enough to say I shouldn't. But also... I simply... can't.

Well... not that way, at least.

She has a balcony. Such an unusual thing to have.

It's an outdoor space, yet one attached to a solid wall. A room that isn't a room, a way to capture an "outdoor" space by confining it. It's in a space that is both part of her apartment, and yet not a part of it.

Just as I am not a part of it; a part of her world.

I know who she is. I know where she lives. She knows I know. But she doesn't know all of it. Even I don't understand... all of it.

I can... feel her, somehow. A sensation I barely acknowledged at first, has done nothing but increase, after. I know where she is. I know how she is. I know when she's happy, or sad, frustrated, or tired.

And I know when she's lonely. Or perhaps that feeling is just my own?

How dangerous that is, for me – to feel my own aloneness and sense it as a thing she feels, as well.

Is that what I'm doing? I do not know.

I feel her heartbeat, sometimes.

What an incredible thing to feel. I feel her heartbeat. I feel her excitement, her concern, her hopes. She's trying to be brave. I feel that, too. I feel ... more.

Are you lonely, Catherine? Are you?

I don't see how you could be. And then again... I don't see how you could not be. Your life is changing. You are changing. That can be such a lonely thing, yes?

She has a balcony.

A door I wouldn't have to knock on, and a floor I could step but lightly upon. I could do it. I could go there. I could try.

I could... I could see how she's doing. My eyes could confirm what my mind is trying to tell me. I could find out if all that I wonder about is coming to pass. Is she doing well? Is she healed? Is she... is she fulfilled, in these changes? There's so much strength in her. I can feel it. Is she a part of something? Of someone? Is she happy?

Try to find someone, Catherine. Someone to be a part of.

Is she happy?

I'm not.

I'm not happy.

But... neither am I sad.

It is a strange feeling, this "in between feeling." This feeling that is neither happiness nor sorrow, rest nor fatigue, anticipation nor fulfillment, yet is somehow a mixture of all of them. I don't have a word for this feeling. Perhaps it doesn't have one.

What to do when no one word will express how I feel, yet a thousand of them would also be lacking? What to do? What to... wish for? For her? For myself?

I don't know.

I'm caught, caught between. Caught between her thoughts and my own, her changes and mine, and this strange bond that even now, is forming, between us.

I'm changing, too. I can feel it. And I embrace it, and welcome it, even as part of it terrifies me. I am no fool. There is no place for me in her world.

Yet... she has a balcony...

I'm part of something, yet not. Held fast, yet free. Heavy, yet airy. I exist between worlds. Like a...

Like a balcony.

I am caught, and suspended, and stable, yet floating. I am there, yet not complete. I am hovering, waiting... waiting.

Waiting for what, I do not know.

I am on the edge of something, and am being held there. Something important, perhaps. Heartbreak, more likely than not.

She has a balcony. Just a small space. Just a spare rectangle of concrete and steel, attached to a greater one of those. An afterthought, of architecture. It's so high up. She is so high up. In more ways than one.

It's such a small space, in her world. And yet... there is room for me there. I know there is. I could pass across it, unknown to her. I could do that.

I could. I could go. I could go there. I could... leave her something?

Yes. Yes, I could leave her something. A visitor must bring a gift. A gift from me. Something so... something so she knows, she knows it was me, and she isn't afraid.

But what could I bring this... this amazing woman who has everyth--?

Ah. But of course I know. I know the thing I shall leave her with. A parting gift for a reluctant, second good-bye. Be well, Catherine. I'll never forget you. Even if I should. Perhaps only Dickens can truly have Great Expectations. Well, Dickens... and you.

I'll leave it on her balcony. I know she'll find it there.

Do you know how the story ends, Catherine? Do you? You will.

"No shadow of another parting from her."

The night is clear. There will be no rain. It's a good night for travel. It's a good night to make sure you are well, to leave you a gift, to be near to where you are, even if it's only for a moment. Or two.

A good night to make my way to your balcony...



*No matter where you are in your own fairy tale, I wish you love ~
Cindy*

