

Rituals

by Ruby

There was heat still, between her legs, and now there was his seed in her belly. She brushed the dirt off her thighs and quickly pulled her jeans back up and closed her jacket over her ruined shirt. He lay still on the ground. His clothes in tatters, no one would notice the extra disarray.

She pressed her lips together. She wanted to cry and scream, and she wanted him again. Wanted to feel the lashings of his hips against hers as he had her pressed against the rock. Making her his woman with every grunting thrust. Making her his mate. He'd mated with her. She felt dizzy with the shame she knew he'd feel when he remembered. And another wave of desire curled up her core.

No. Now she must get him help. When her legs felt steady enough she walked to the entrance of the cave and signaled to the others for help. They came in and carried his body to the infirmary. She followed a few steps behind and stayed at the entrance to the chamber as they tended him.

She left him late that evening and returned to her apartment. She resigned the next day from her job and returned Below. He awoke three days later remembering it all. Had he any strength to run he would have.

He wept, "Forgive me."

She just looked at him with a tenderness and love he could feel. He could feel how much she had wanted him, wanted him so much she'd let him take her like an animal. Like the desperate men he'd seen take the women who walked the streets at night. Pushing each other into a corner or grove of trees they thought was unoccupied and he would be standing there, melted into the shadows, as they grunted and came wet slick he could smell. Like metal and blood.

He knew there were other ways, there were beds with lilacs. And he tried not to let his sensitive ears pick up the sounds of softly creaking bed frames and soft moans. But there were times they drove him to walk most of the night Above. He remembered the night he found her. He'd been walking because he had walked in on Nora and Jason.

They had forgotten to leave an unlit lantern outside their chamber and he walked in to find them. They did not see him, they only saw each other, as Nora gently rode her man. Her man. Jason holding her hips like carrying something sacred and making her gasp in delight with every flex of his pelvis. They were making love.

He had felt his erection start and fled on silent feet. Shame pulling him toward the surface and discomfort in every step, until he had found his woman at the end of a bank of fog. And all thoughts save her survival vanished.

He hadn't made love to her in that place. He'd grabbed her once he realized she was kissing him and pushed her against the wall of the cave like a whore with a red wound lipstick mouth. He remembered her eyes shining, bright with fear and desire. Oh her desire, as without a word he shredded her shirt to feel her breasts. Her fingers fumbled at the zipper of her jeans and his erection was harder than the rock and then he was inside. Inside. And he didn't make love to her then either. He took her.

He took and took until he shot starfire into her and strangled a roar in her hair. And she had loved him still.

She spoke then. "In the worst of your madness you did not harm me. You did not do anything to me I did not want. I want you Vincent. As your wife, as your mate, as a woman you press against the walls of this place and take like a drowning man. I'm only sorry I'm not pregnant."

She let the weight of those last words wash over him. Like an obliterating wave that destroys what's no longer needed and leaves everything clean in its wake.

She was gentle with him. "We will go with care as we always do, but I will have your child. When the walls between the worlds have grown thin again, we will spend the night together in the city as we do. But we will return to my threshold at midnight and you will give me a child."

He could no longer deny her. "I will." He could feel his erection pressing against his thigh. He drew her towards him and they made love right there on his cot. And he held her hips like carrying something sacred.

And when the walls grew thin, she greeted him at the door to her apartment for it was one day safe for him to be seen Above. They went to parties and concerts, staying only for a little while. And the air around them was snap cold and warm with laughter. And she could feel her blood sing as the hour grew later.

So let us leave them now, this mated pair. As beautiful as a painting that may one day be made, or already has. Let us leave the woman in a column of light, bathed silver by it. And let us leave the man in shadow, but not of them, as he caresses and lifts her. Lifts her further into the light with the power of their merging bodies. Let their cries shatter and become a thousand fairies dancing away into the night. Let their lovemaking make everyone in this forever city dream of love. Let their child be something that has never been.

- *From a diary found in the floorboards of an abandoned asylum, the only clue to its owner is the name "Kristopher" on the inside cover. The date of this entry is October 31, 1928*