

More Than Love

“Which would you prefer?” I queried my lover happily. “The river view or an alcove caressed in candlelight?” I wanted you to express a choice that warm summer evening, a simple discrimination of course, but still a specific act, the giving of opinion that always joined us in our affection so well.

But you suddenly surprised me and said, “Neither.” Both were equal in boredom, you announced, not so subtly implying that this favorite spot where we so often met was now just a bland and unemotional geographic spot like all others were.

“Indeed,” as you then offered your opinion a bit too pointedly, “I tire quickly of people and places.”

You seemed too eager to leave, and I realized that my bit of small talk had strangely rung rude and tart on your ears. *Why?* I wondered silently. Small talk was so much a part of us, the unusual couple we were, joined in love despite society’s queries, bizarre stares, and the inevitably sad and bigoted criticisms we always received about our unusual coupling. Ours was one of different ages and beliefs, natures and lifestyles, but secure I’d always thought. Until tonight.

“I needn’t associate with any of this,” you expounded, waving your hand grandly side to side as though trying to brush aside what we had once both accepted, namely, real and honest truth, not the sad expected traditional truth we often saw exhibited in others and so often also demanded of others in our society. Something had changed, and I knew it wouldn’t be long until a dark blank absence of such truth overwhelmed my life again.

Only a few errands and appointments, as always systematically crossed off in your ubiquitous red ink, and I knew you'd be gone, seeking a safe and acceptable grandeur in a distant and different venue that would better fit your new choice of the more acceptable life, not the one you had loved here with me. You craved acceptance more than you did love I now realized. You'd remember me of course and keep in touch, maybe even return one day to visit briefly, although never to stay. You'd just visit, and only then if you could confidently say you felt comfortable being near me again. What was comfortable anyway? I smiled, but I dared not voice that frightening thought. I knew I shouldn't, not this evening, which was perhaps our very last together in this place, this moment, and this remarkable time of our lives.

Nodding, I agreed to your silly plan, but I still had to venture shyly, "You'll stay in spirit? Stay in touch?" *How could you not!* Then I reminded myself that you always tired quickly of people and places and ideas that were different, contradictory, or confrontational. Those choices required greater strength, more commitment of self. Those views had been yours too once upon a time. Like mine. But not this night sadly.

So now, as on those many once wonderful former evenings, I still choose this place, but only to recall who we were then. Sometimes I choose the alcove and its welcomed secluded privacy, or at other times, I take a seat by the familiar river view we loved so passionately. There I sit quietly and gaze out at the same boats as they move smoothly

downstream, still filled with laughter and light, and I ponder the candle sitting on my quiet dark table in the alcove, as it slowly burns down to only ashes.

I sit there patiently, waiting for you to tire of all the others you now desire to please and follow so foolishly. I sit and wait for your return, so we can redeem the finer grandeur that was once ours together. I made a difficult life commitment to you. How much new strength will it take for you to make that same choice for me once again, see the strength in yourself that you once did and I saw as well? I do hope you will find that strength again and soon. Love takes more than love I've learned. It takes strength, and so I wait. Passionately and with more than love. Belief.