

Another Season Comes

By Anna Von Reitz



The winter has ended and spring has come in just these last few days. Uriah has once again come through with a cup of morning coffee for me. The young British men who form the early morning crew have just left the premises, Justin Knight among them. Bathsheba and I are left alone in the main salon, bathed by the clear morning light, lazy and warm for once. The odd "English chill", a unique combination of cold and wet, that you must either learn to love or hate, is vanquished for the moment.

I watched the queue of men departing and I spoke without turning my head toward Bathsheba: "Young lesser gentry being able to marry for love --- whose idea was that, yours or David's?"

"Mine," Bathsheba admitted, "and then-Prince Charles."

We let a long pause settle on that one, thinking about love and how unaccountable it is, how you can love two people at once, and how no love is ever the same.

"I hope you will bring a Guest to the wedding," Bathsheba finally offered.

"I don't think there's anyone out there for me," I replied honestly. "I was lucky enough to get a good one the first time around."

"James was very special, but then, he'd have to be. You wouldn't marry for title or fortune."

"That was only fair, as I had neither."

"Remember when the fairy godmothers tried to set you up with Tom Harriman?"

"Because we were both short and both liked to knit?" I quipped.

"Because he was terribly rich and you were terribly poor," Bathsheba corrected.

"Poverty has its merits. You learn that you can survive without being rich, and so don't fear poverty anymore. It sets you free in its own strange way."

"Do you ever think of him? Tom?"

"Of course," I shifted my weight and glanced at her. "The ironies of age aren't lost on me. What if we'd taken a different course? Right now, we could be sitting on opposite ends of a long fireplace, knitting sweaters for unicorns."

She smiled in spite of herself.

"With your genetics, you could last another forty years and be like the Queen Mother." Bathsheba observed--- but then, Bathsheba has always been practical to a fault.

I knew what she meant. Feisty and full of it to the end. That's the expectation for someone from my peculiar Scottish lineage: naturally auburn hair, "eyes of an uncertain color, flecked with gold", pale but very durable skin.... And yes, I could face all those forty years alone.

It's a daunting thought, but Bathsheba has sense enough to know that she can never gauge my heart. I was built on a different scale than her, meant for different purposes. She couldn't imagine forty years alone without a man to comfort and guide her.

"I know you miss him terribly," she said softly. "Is there no one else?"

"No, no one," I replied and I know I looked very earnest when I said it, because I was trying to make her understand something foreign to her own nature. "I was lucky enough to find one among the millions, and anyway, I have always been a wild colt, out running beneath the stars, content without a rider."

This brought us both back to a night when we were on the Night Train to Glasgow and saw a young horse racing the train in a pasture we were passing by, a leggy grey Hunter running for the sheer joy of running beneath the moon and stars.

She nodded, for the moment discouraged.

"Just because you can have your cake and eat it, too," I said gently enough, "Not everyone is as lucky as you. Some of us don't get second chances."

Sometimes, that's just the way it is, and we both knew it.

"I'm happy for you and Uriah," I added. "Your storybook ending may have to be enough late-in-life satisfaction for me."

"I started drinking the peppermint tea and taking the milk thistle and other herbs this morning," she confided.

The herbs will dry up her milk, gradually, painlessly. She will lose a cup size, maybe two, but not as much as you might think. She will still be large enough up top to get more than glances, but Uriah remains adamant and promised Mrs. Pam in front of God and everyone: "No knife will touch her breast, if I am alive and have anything to say about it."

Coming from a veteran MI6, we all considered that to be a permanent settlement of the breast reduction surgery issue.

"It's really not so easy to break a person's neck," Uriah once assured me. "Not like in the movies at all. That's why hanging isn't such a good method of execution. Most people end up strangling."

"Jim much preferred a good strike to the Vagus nerve complex," I replied.

Uriah gave me a knowing look and nodded.

Strange things we know and strange things we've had to understand, I thought at the time. How is it that mankind has developed a hundred thousand ways to kill each other, and not nearly as many ways to save a life?

Chalk it up to the patriarchy again.

Uriah drove me to the airport himself and lugged my one suitcase up the metal stairs from the tarmac. He wasn't winded and didn't tilt over sideways the way you might expect from a man his age. He has retained his muscle mass and balance.

As if to make a total break with the past, he hugged me again, very close and said, "You'll have to keep in better touch, now that you're officially my Best Man."

I had a brief vision of myself in a formal suit, standing between the two of them at the altar, but it was too silly to contemplate.

If anyone had any cause to wonder if my love for the British people is sincere, the words I have recorded here should give them no cause to doubt. It's always been an odd and yet understanding love affair, lived on opposite sides of a fence, but in full view of the other.

My objections and anger have instead been posed against the reckless elements of the deceitful and largely unaccountable British Government complex, the barking mad aspects of a "planned society" that placed political expediency and commercial advantage above common sense and honor.

I suppose in the end, my life's work has been a battle cry against the unbridled patriarchy, running roughshod in its own blind self-interest.

I settled back in my seat inwardly clucking about the cost of private jet service, but very grateful for its comforts.

My thoughts paused briefly on young Justin Knight and his whole cadre of middlemen being prepared to carry on the fight for humanity. Unavoidably, I had to think about King David, without whom none of this would be happening.

In my mind's eye, I could easily remember his handsome face and the fast-moving kaleidoscope of emotions that passed over it almost as quickly as his thoughts. Like a Chess Master, he triangulated the patriarchy's every move, their Death Cult, his Life Cult.

The rest of us didn't even know we had to choose a side.

Granna

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