

Pupil 7

Love at first sight...

A drop of sea, bitter or beloved

Thomas had always been handsome.

With his curls and the dimples she wished and prayed so terribly to pass onto her children. But, standing before her here, he cut a cruel figure. His mouth twisted into a scowl. His brows furrowed. Visage blazing. And all because of her.

As she desperately tried to catch those deep blue eyes, so filled with storm clouds that promised thunder yet to come, she wondered if he could ever have come to love her as she to him.

Not that it mattered now,

but it would have nice to have those days to look back on.

Ones where he stared at her with open affection and a soft smile, ones where he stared..at her, instead of the harsh glare she was not permitted to fully see, but knew was there, marring his features.

Perhaps he would have. If she were not defective. If she had not tainted their marriage.

"You are a conniving wretch and a witch" he began, voice trembling with rage,

"Tricking me into wasting three years of my life o-on..this! While having absolutely no intention of giving me my children"

Thomas paced in uncontrolled agitation, not so much as glancing at her as he did so.

A breathe caught in her throat as she stuttered urgently to try to apologise, to make this right in whatever tiny way she could,

"I-it was never my inten-"

"-And to think I had to hear it from him. No man wants to find out his wife is less

worthless than a common whore, especially from another. And on a day where I was expecting some good news. Perhaps that you would finally fulfilling your duty by giving me an heir"

, He said with a note of disgust,

"A future I now know you are wilfully incapable of"

Tears pricked in the corners of her eyes. Dribbling down in warm droplets.

"You have not only failed me but in your prime function here on this earth. The shame you have caused me is immeasurable. What am I to say to my parents? My friends and colleagues? How can I show my face before them? Somewhere in my youth or childhood I must have done something truly wicked to deserve this!"

His beautiful face went blank as he tilted his head to the ceiling as though trying to repent.

She stood frozen in place as he finally turned to look at her. Eyes meeting, a pair narrowed, the others wide and glistening.

"No doubt you knew" He whispered, accusingly.

"W-what?" She said, a stricken look on her face.

Thomas continued with venom in his voice.

"No doubt you enjoyed stringing me along. Laughing behind my back when I pledged myself to you. Not intending to keep even one of the promises you made to me at the altar. There is no doubt in my mind that you were adulterous as well, seeing other men while I was away. You must of thought you wouldn't get caught"

Her heart was beating fast against her ribcage and she fell to her knees, clinging to her husbands leg.

"I swear I didn't, I wouldn't Thomas. I wouldn't. I love you" She spoke against his shin, her face crumpling in panic.

Thomas looked down at her with revulsion, pushing her away from him.

She could feel her heart cracking. Staring at him pleadingly though it made no difference.

"As corroded as you are I will have mercy. You are defective and less valuable than a miserable hag. I would be well within my right to kill you or sell you away but I won't"
He paused,

"I want you out. If you are not gone by the morning I will be forced to take drastic action. "

Taking one last distasteful look at her tear streaked face, he turned away and coldly walked out of the room.

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The door slammed shut with a bang that cause it to rattle in its frame. Leaving Marian alone. In the dark.

Her whole world had always rested in the palms of Thomas' hands. She had, however unknowingly, shaped it around him.

To the day she first saw him, in a cobalt suit that matched his eyes with that bewitching

*smile painted on his face, when she decided she did not mind she was his to love.
Hours, sketching him from their green parlour as he danced his fingers across the
piano in the foyer.
The weeks spent embroidering baby clothes with a besotted smile on her face.
To today.*

When it all shattered.

*The echo of his words haunt her. In a way that is impossible to describe. As though the
raw edges of her had been stomped on, leaving behind only a dark, rotted husk.
Her heart had melted the second the physician told her she could not bear
children, her dreams of a small, round cheeked little thing running in the garden, the
perfect mix of her and her love crushed almost completely. But it was not until
Thomas' rejection, til his hatred and fury that she discovered what it felt to have all
hope lost.*

She had, however naively, wished that he would come to her side.

Hold her in a firm embrace as she sobbed.

That it would not matter to him.

*Perhaps, though they could have none of their own, there would be a child. Not quite
resembling her or her husband but loved nonetheless.*

That, perhaps.

*She could have them paint with her, watercolours and oils, send them to a school and
they would come home with accolades for her to gush over. Her friends would pass
them around, cooing as she looked fondly at her husband for what they were raising
together.*

*That her dear Thomas could lift them on his lap and trace the piano keys, his over
their small pudgy hands until they were able to boast knowing Mozart and Chopin.*

*Maybe he would help her sell her paintings that they hoarded in the attic; the ones that
her late father had so admired and proudly hung about the house.*

*She could attend his meetings, sitting at his right side with their hands interlocked, her
opinion shared and trusted when she offered it.*

*Or they could simply lounge in the garden together, reading something from one of the
many vast wooden bookshelves in their home. Well his home.*

One she would be leaving.

Marian had nothing left.

*Both her parents were not long dead and even if they weren't the shame would surely
kill them again. Everything she owned was Thomas'; he may have been kind in not
simply selling her away to a brothel but she would still be out on the streets anyhow.
The only thing that clung to her now was a thick coating of despair as the tears ran
freely down her cheeks.*

*For what seemed an eternity, she shook, crying silently. The memory of his vicious
expression burned into the backs of her eyelids.*

After letting out a slow but shaky puff of air, she wiped her face roughly with the back of her hand and looked up at the shut door. It's mahogany embellishments of little cherubs staring back mockingly. There was a tranquil silence. Not even the far off sound of a stray servant roaming the halls. Good.

There is nothing left for her here.

With this repeating in her mind she stood and glanced around the room before landing on the curtains she had helped select a few months prior. They were a striking navy with a delicate lace trim, picked out with her husband in mind. Somewhat fitting. Marian's hands felt clammy so she wiped them on the sides of her dress, the same shade as the curtains (both gestures she had hoped would show the depths of her devotion to no avail), unthinking of the state of the silk. There was no need to be nervous. It would be better.

She breathed deeply to soothe her fast beating heart then pulled a stool to the window. It dragged along the ground with a harsh scraping sound. She winced and stepped on. The last rays of the day shone through the fabric, reflecting faint pools of orange along the carpet; A sweet end.

She reached out and like she had a thousand times before, making jumpers and small plush toys, created a slipknot.

Slipping it over her head like an oversized, gaudy necklace, Marian stood still.

Nicer to end here in dignity than from some disease or shame in a gutter. Better for her husband to bury her than share a mass grave.

She closed her eyes tight.

And jumped.

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