

A VISITOR IN TIME

By
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I stand in the castle courtyard and look at the crumbling walls and the plants that have invaded this place now people no longer live here. It is sad how this wonderful old place has been left to rot. I shiver with the cold as the clouds have shaded out the sun. As I look up I am blinded as the sun breaks free from them and is pouring its golden light on to the earth and surrounding it with its brilliance. I smile as I soak up the heat and then I hear voices but I am sure I have this place to myself.

Intrigued I look away from the sun and take a second or two to regain my vision before looking around me for the source of those voices. As I do I am surprised to find that although I am in the same courtyard it is no longer unkempt or overgrown. The walls are made of a lovely honey coloured stone and the Castle is undamaged and inhabitant.

“Oh my!” I exclaim as I look around it with great interest.

This must be how the castle looked when it was occupied a couple of hundred years ago but I am seeing it now. But how can that be? I don't have any more time to ponder on this now as I hear the approach of what sounds like two women. I move to a shady area so they might not see me just before they step out into the courtyard chattering away in a language I don't understand, although I believe it is English, just not how we speak it today. I wait with heart pounding for them to discover me but they don't see me and they walk straight past, carrying their baskets, and go into a garden area beyond. I watch them go with a huge sigh of relief and once their voices begin to fade away I venture out the few steps to the door they came out of and see a long stone flagged passageway with another door at the end. Should I risk going down

it and taking a look around? I glance about me and see no one else so I decide to do it and step quickly inside and walk up to the other door. Opening it just a little I see it opens out on to a huge medieval hall with a high beamed roof and a massive fireplace on one wall. Down the end of the hall furthest away from me I see a raised platform and on this are two throne like chairs. Running down the centre in two rows are large long tables with benches for people to sit on. A young girl is sprinkling sweet smelling herbs on to the freshly laid rush floor and the mix of cut reeds and herbs is light and fragrant which I find very pleasing. A large wolf like hound spots me and I see his hackles begin to rise and a low growl rumbles towards me. I don't want him giving me away so I get down on to his level and speak softly and gently to him. I have always had a way with dogs and although he looks a little surprised at my actions he stops growling as I whisper sweet nothings to him. He moves towards me and now his tail is moving slowly and I feel his need for some attention rather than any urge to bite me.

“Hello old fellow,” I whisper as I rub his long course haired ears and let him sniff me.

I have no idea what breed he might be but he is no different than most dogs when it comes to having someone to rub their ears and pet them. Now he has sniffed me and got some loving he is happy to accept me and it is safe for me to enter the hall which I do with my new friend at my heels. I set off down the side of the hall past another woman who is laying out wooden platters on to the tables in readiness for guests. Neither of the women seems to notice me so I keep going until I reach the door at the end which I open slowly and carefully. The smells of cooking meat hits me like a sledgehammer and as a vegetarian I find it turns my stomach so I quickly close the door again and decide to try my luck at the only other one I so far haven't tried. I head

to my left and open it to find this one leads out onto a small courtyard with a gate inset in the walls. I move towards it when I hear the whispered voices of a man and a woman. They appear to be arguing and as I listen I am surprised that I understand what they are saying.

“No Robert we can’t go on, it’s impossible.”

“But why?” says the young good looking man who is dressed in the most beautiful clothes.

“Because you are a Prince and I am just a Merchant’s daughter. Don’t you see, we can never marry, not here, not now?”

“We could leave?” he says, not too convincingly.

“Leave! And go where?” she asks him, ever practical.

There is a long pause before she sighs.

“I know you love me and I love you too but we can’t see each other again. You know that Robert. Your bride is about to arrive and I can’t bear to be here to see her.”

He nods sadly and then pulls a gold locket out of his pocket and holds it out to her.

“Will you take this to remember me by?” he asks her.

She looks at it then up at his face.

“I will always remember you, in here,” she tells him as she places her hand on her heart.

“I will too,” he says and then he sighs. “I know you are right although I don’t want you to be.”

She smiles sadly and touches his cheek.

“I know I wish we could be together but you have to do what is best for the kingdom and that is to marry her and not me.”

He looks down at her hand and gently curls her fingers around the locket.

“One day things will be different,” he says softly.

“Yes but not in time for us,” she says and he nods.

“No my love, not for us.”

He leans forward and they exchange a gentle loving kiss so romantic I feel embarrassed witnessing it. I look away and wait for them to part. The woman then runs passed me and disappear back into the Great Hall and the young man stares after her, a look of grief and sadness in his deep brown eyes. It is only then that I realise that I know him....well not him exactly, not the Prince, more the soul that inhabits him and my reason for being here becomes apparent. The scene fades and I open my eyes to be confronted by the same soul that I had just seen in the castle garden so many years ago.

The young woman sitting expectantly on my sofa looks at me her eyes a little fearful. I smile.

“Well that was interesting,” I say and then tell her all I have seen.

“So you think that we have been together before?” she asks.

“Yes I do and more than that I believe your souls made a pact to one day try to be together again.”

“Like now?”

I smile.

“Yes like now.” I pause then add “It was impossible then but even though it’s far from easy now, with you living here and Stephen living in America, you still can work something out. You have the choice to fight for your relationship or give up. You didn’t have these freedoms last time you were together.”

“No I guess not,” she says quietly.

“Well that’s all I can tell you. The rest is up to you.”

She nods and gets to her feet.

“Thank you for your help it’s been...”

“Illuminating?” I offer and she smiles.

“In more ways than one.”

“I’m glad I could help,” I tell her as I see her out.

What they will do with this insight I have no idea as I am just a visitor in time helping those who ask to know where and when they lived before and why they have problems now. I don’t know why I have been given this gift but I love using it and if it helps others then my little time trips are well worth it. The nice thing is I don’t have to pack or go to an airport which has got to be a bonus.