The Awakening

A Vignette

By Maryanne Peters

She woke to the sound of music. They had rented the “La Villa Musica” for a month just to soak up the Adriatic Coast, and simply because they could afford it. He was not lying beside her in the bedroom with the view. The windows were open and the curtains moved with the warm sea breeze. The music seemed to be coming from the lounge – from the grand piano.

She swung her legs around, admiring them. They were smooth and with a little tan. She understood that the sun was the enemy of the skin, but this color looked good on her body. She was naked. The had fallen asleep that way. But there was a silk robe on the chaise longue, so she slipped it on, tying it lovingly below her wonderful breasts.

She had to check herself in the mirror. The hair that tumbled down was her own now, with no need for the extensions. The hair line was perfect, the eyebrows too. The nose, the lips. It was a joy to look at herself. She looked younger than her years, and beautiful, but the smile on her face showed made her look the way she really wanted to look – she looked free.

She walked into the main room at a skip, and she could see Piero at the keyboard, his large frame still a little incongruous despite the scale of the instrument. She walked over and saw his huge hands falling lightly over the keys. She did not recognize the music but it sounded wonderful.

“I never knew that you could play the piano,” she said.

“I promise that you will discover something new about me every day, my Darling,” he said.

She stepped behind him and put her arms around his powerful shoulders. He kept playing, up until she kissed his neck.

“Clearly you are not a lover of Chopin,” he said. “How can I play when you distract me like this?”

“I only want to be a lover of you,” she said.

He spun around on the piano stool and pulled her into his lap. She could feel the bump of his rising flesh against her bottom through the gossamer thin robe.

“You are my lover now, not my employer?” He was teasing her.

“I ceased to be your employer when I ceased being a man, and you know that,” she said in mock indignation. He had been in charge of security. He protected her then. He protected her now, but not for money. “We have been running away together since then.” She kissed him delicately.

“Or at least we have been together in that way from when you accepted what had happened, which was a little later,” said Piero, correcting her.

“Was it my fault that I was in shock?” she said. “All I said to the plastic surgeon was that I wanted two things – firstly that I should look nothing like the guy they were all trying to kill, and secondly that I had to look good. Who would guess that she would turn me into this!”

She put a hand under her chin and gave him a view of her in profile. She knew just how good she looked like that or anyway else, and she knew how much Piero loved her. It was those two things that made her accept the unacceptable, those two things plus the fact that the FBI were only days away when the surgery was complete, and the Brooklyn mob a day or two behind them, and after them the Hartford syndicate.

She had learned fast because she had to, and the first thing that she learned was that she needed a man to complete her cover. A man to hold onto made her more of a woman, and with a man like Piero there, nobody takes much notice of the woman with the bandages on her face.

“My wife Katherine has had a few procedures,” he liked to say. He had said that the name Katherine means “pure and innocent” – the very opposite of what he had been. He would explain to people who stared – “She was perfect to me before, but you know women – they always want to improve upon nature.”

At the time it had annoyed her, but he was right – she needed to be invisible.

“She took her chances doing this to me, that plastic surgeon,” she said remaining in his lap, but wiggling her butt to grow him further. “If I was still the person I was I would have tracked her down and ended her for good.”

“But you’re not that person, thank God,” he said. With no effort at all, he picked her up and carried her back to the bedroom. “You are a woman now. You are my woman, complete in every way. And the doctor was very clear on what needed to be done. Daily dilation. So you will need to lie back and take your treatment.”

“I can’t wait,” she said. “I think I need four dilations today, if you can manage?”

“I will try,” he laughed.

“Still, she took her chances, that surgeon,” she said, as they reached the bedroom. “I was a dangerous criminal, or reputed to be. She could have herself dead.”

He took a breath. “Not really,” he said. “I told her that she would be safe.”

Her jaw dropped and she looked at him. Something else she had discovered that day, even before they had breakfast.

And as he laid her down onto the bed, smiling and her disbelieving face, she loved him all the more.

The End

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