

Lady Rose

Lady Rose waited before stepping cautiously into the street. She twisted the golden wedding ring off of her left finger; she preferred to hide her wealth and status when she was around the townsfolk. Presently, she strode into the street, the smell of fresh bread wafting towards her as well as other marketplace smells. The day was fresh and dew still shone on the leaves of the flowers outside the shops. The sun had risen partway into the clear sky and promised slightly warmer temperatures; all in all it was a beautiful autumn day. As the Lady wandered through the bustle of busy shoppers, something caught her eye in the display window of a nearby shop. The small egg shaped ornament was sweet, it had about it an aura of secrecy and fragility. Simply unable to resist it, Lady Rose strode in and purchased the little egg. She was so entranced in the delicacy of her newest item that she walked right into the side of a gentleman admiring the hand woven tapestries of an old farm woman, and almost dropped it. Surprised by the head-on collision, the man turned to Rose. He was tall and handsome; with a clean shaven face and eyes darker than the night sky. Extending a hand, his gaze ran over her and she could have sworn she saw a glint of smug pride in the dark eyes; it was gone before she could be sure and was replaced by a look of intrigue.

“Madam, are you alright?” His voice was gentle, soothing.

“Oh yes; thank you, sir, I am so terribly sorry! I only hope you were not much disturbed by my lack of coordination.” responded Lady Rose with flushed cheeks, for she found this man rather too handsome.

“Not at all.” smiled the gentleman. “My name is Sir Orland, may I ask yours?” He extended his hand and took hers, brushing his lips across her knuckles.

“Lady Rose.” She answered, fiddling with her hat.

“You are not married?” inquired Sir Orland, seeing her empty left hand. “I must admit my surprise.” Astonishingly, Rose found herself lying.

“No I’m afraid not.” She smiled charmingly up at him. “I do so love to betray people’s expectations.”

Sir Orland admired her; she could tell from the look on his face and the way his body was positioned.

“Perhaps, my lady, you would come and enjoy a cup of tea with me on this fine morning?” he questioned.

“I’m afraid I should be going, but thank you for the offer” replied Rose.

He looked intrigued. “Then may we say tomorrow? I’ll send you my card.”

“I look forward to it.” replied Lady Rose charmingly.

Walking back along the streets towards the bus stop, Rose again scrutinized her china egg. She felt a little discomfort in the lies she had told, and decided she needed to confide in something her fears. Checking around to see if anyone was looking, Lady Rose whispered her thoughts to the ornament. Surely there was no harm in having coffee with a handsome man only once, and besides this man was merely an acquaintance, someone whom she had met by walking right into him. Upon realizing the direction of her thoughts, Rose felt a seed of guilt; of course she loved her husband and she would not jeopardize her marriage by letting this be found out. What he didn’t know wouldn’t hurt him. She tucked her ring back on.

Rose flounced up the snowy stairs to her home. Resting one hand on the shiny varnished wood, she turned the brass handle with the other to let herself in. Warm air washed over her and she embraced it as she stepped into the house. Immediately, her personal butler shuffled over. Taking her coat and hat, he scuttled away to put them away before heading to make tea. Lady Rose stretched and proceeded to head up the sweeping staircase to her personal chamber. Once inside, she locked the door behind her. Dropping onto the bed, she slipped into a shallow nap. A few hours later, she awoke and sat up. Running her fingers through her waist-long hair, she went to the window and peered out into the front garden. The sun was just setting over the hill, making the sky glow a pinkish red; she thought it must be late afternoon. Turning her back on the window, she advanced towards her dresser and dug through the piles of old papers until she found what she was looking for. A small wooden box, pale in colour, with intricate golden designs over the lid. From the box, she pulled out something wrapped in a silk handkerchief, it was the egg. It had been three months since her first meeting with Sir James Orland and since that day she had met with him constantly every week, sometimes twice. They would go for walks along the forest paths, enjoy the quietness of the park or go for coffees at the Rendezvous Café. Rose had fallen for the man, and it was no shallow fancy. Every night she dreamed of him, and wished she could be with him. Her husband had not found out and Sir Orland still had no knowledge of Rose’s

husband. Each day after her meetings, she would confess her infidelities to the china ornament in the privacy of her chamber, hidden away in her thoughts. She wished to keep her secrets far from the reach of her husband and lover, for as long as she possibly could. Wrapping up the china egg, she placed it back in the box and hid it once more under the stack of papers. Then Lady Rose walked to the door, unlocked it and swept out into the corridor.