

The Colored Feast

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Have you ever been dancing, and you heard the bells ring? We implore you, never stop your dancing to look for the bells... if you do, you will die.

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Chapter 0 - The Colored Feast

2

0 - The Colored Feast

The dancers moved a twirling, stepping, rhythmic walk. In the great rooms of ManOise Furrets' castle, figures moved brokenly, like puppets being jerked about or ballerinas with jammed music boxes. Occasionally one would wind down, then another would pour sweet wine into its mouth to twist its gears once more, and it would join, again, the dancing shadows.

Each tin man and glass doll was garishly dressed, contrasting colors ruffled over each other and melted together in a symphony of rainbows. Some of the public wore plumage, high on their heads, or trailing from their shoulders down their backsides. Others sported fur, looking very much like rich and tasteful animals themselves.

Those not dancing, but still with partners, enjoyed themselves in the shadows and secluded areas, their colored pelts layering each other as they feasted on flavorful lips and curves. They would laugh when caught and move to a new shadow, so that the non-dancers, in a way, seemed to be doing a dance of their own.

Among this crowd of dazzling and vain creatures moved a single dancer. She was young and crafted like porcelain, her delicate frame slipping in and out between the dancing mass. Doe eyes of chocolate reflected the world on her innocent face; small soft pink lips neither sailing up or down to show pleasure or sadness. Long waves of brown hair swam about her figurine waist as though it were a fish tail that swayed and brushed her cheeks and back.

Her dress was of no color or pattern, straightforward and white it clung to her body then flared from the waist to her knees. With this simplicity she stood out dreadfully, even hidden among the other dancers.

It was this plainness and the naive expression she held that won her the attention of what one would wish to avoid.

She twirled past people, ducked beneath arms, and floated gracefully through the crowd, content to dance alone for the remainder of the glow-partied night. As she pivoted on her toes, an eerie gong sounded and called her to stop. She turned towards the noise, facing a staircase of grandeur to search for this loud beckoning.

Aloft the staircase was a man, who seemed neither young nor old nor in between. He wore no décor as well, his clothing opposite hers with black trousers and a dark tunic. His black locks were held back by a satin bow, and his eyes gleamed oddly in the lights of many hues. He held out his hand and gestured for her to come to him. She turned to look at the other dancers, but they gave the impression that they had heard no calling ring, and so she stepped forwards and through the crowd.

She made her way towards the man, though, even as she quickened her pace, it was as though she could not reach him. He almost appeared to move without moving, sliding away from her as she neared. He held a look on his features that seemed to say 'Why do you not come?', so she walked only faster.

Immediately, when she finally managed to near him, he smiled wickedly, and she felt her heart stop as she lurched off the side of a balcony. She realized in but an instant that she had been moving all this time and had long ago left the ballroom behind her. An illusion, she concluded, had deluded her into thinking that she had never even left that magnificent room and all its dancers, and that the man had never moved before her. But, that was all there was for her to think, or all the time there was at least.

The man watched gleefully as the girls' body smacked into the concrete below—the garden beneath had been pretty with its lights and fountains, and now it was pretty with the addition of a delicate corpse. He hurried down the paved steps to the wrecked girl below, smiling again his Cheshire grin, and feasted—the only trace of his crime was the smear of red paint on the corner of his lips, and after all it was only a decoration for the colorful party, was it not?