

The Visitor

A Short Story by Kara Kreter

She dreamed of a golden tree, leaves made beautiful by death. A young man sat beneath with a frown on his face, his guitar perched on his lap, starting and stopping in the choppy rhythm of creativity.

He had tightly curled black hair and hazel eyes, a smattering of freckles lending his caramel-colored face a boyish air. Not that his outside appearance was very interesting or useful to her.

But his soul, ah there it was, a translucent veil rippling around an ovoid sphere of light. It was a bit turbulent and the light was more flickery than she preferred, but all in all a workable selection for the piece she had in mind.

Slowly, softly she began her work, crafting an idea into a framework. Spiraling curls and bold lines took form before her, solidifying into a seven dimensional shape that would allow the song to exist on every level of the multiverse.

When the scaffolding was solid, she began the real work, layering sound and essence of feeling into an intricate pattern. Each gradient of emotion was assigned a collection of sound ideas and she was mindful to align them as precisely as possible. It would be up to the subject how each of the materials she provided was implemented, but there were certain principles that should generally be upheld and she always tried to make it as simple as possible for her subject to do so.

Care must always be taken not to overwhelm the recipient into misunderstanding the ebb and flow of the content. Forming the delicate filter through which the sounds arrived at the lower dimension in which he existed could be quite tricky. Too much control and the essence was distilled to the point of loss; too little and the frail human mind would crumple into a wad of confusion and petulant aggravation.

Slowly, delicately, she began to spin her artwork, condensing it into a rope of sound thin enough to feed through the filter. Her recipient sat up, his eyes lighting with effervescent delight and she smiled. Contact.

He was working frantically now, strumming on his guitar then pausing to write, translating essence to notes and words. Ah, he was a lyricist as well. She smiled at the idea of hearing a rough draft of their collaborative work; sometimes her part of the work was completed long before the ideas coalesced into anything resembling output.

"Felt your wind around me
The one that sends the leaves to fall at your feet
Just like me..."

His head slumped forward, and the music stopped.

She frowned and sighed softly, she should have expected this, she supposed. Another lovesick artist, a powder keg of raw emotion and vivid, attention-sucking memories. She considered the glowing strand paused in transit, growing turbid with the delay. With exacting vigilance, she slowly wove a golden stream into the swirl and pushed it to the front.

She held her breath, attempting to tighten and smooth the stream as best she could while she waited. "Come on darling, you just need to get something on paper. You'll work through the rest later."

If he gave up now the whole construct would unravel--she couldn't count the number of times her beautiful, eternal work had been utterly wasted by the temporary vagaries of human feeling. And yet, without those same feelings, even the most potent idea was a pretty, dead thing. The perpetual conundrum of inspiration.

After a long, tense wait he sighed and sat up, wiping discreetly at his eyes. He began again, his silk-covered gravel voice ringing softly yet decisively through the crisp air.

"But this song ain't about you
It's about what's left,
Not about what your breath tore down
But what's standing here instead."

Hope, her most powerful ingredient, had done it again. The song was still clumsy, but she could see a tiny fragile thread glinting through the note paper next to him, the faint sparks that fizzed around his fingers as he played, and just the faintest glimmer lighting up the air as he exhaled. She knew that with time and care, his song just might be one of the few that held a light all its own.

She smiled as he began working on the chorus, gently feeding strands of inspiration to her chosen outlet. Not terribly uncooperative, this one: not overly given to insecurity or self-indulgence. Perhaps, sometime, she might visit him again.

