



It happened that upon a certain Homeday in the Spring of the 109th year of the reign of the Empress Zerika IV, a certain lady of the House of the Lyorn was drinking alone at the Lonegarden Inn, where the Ballad of the Horseman's Duel was composed. This lady, who went by the name Celani, was dressed simply enough in breeches of brown, a blouse of pale red that was cut low enough to hint at the form of her high, well-shaped breasts, and a light woolen cloak the color of her breeches.

As she sat, she glanced, from time to time, at the door.

Nearly at the exact moment of the first hour after noon, a young gentleman of the House of the Dzur came through the door. He was a tall and well-built gentleman, all in black, with the square jaw that indicates strength of will, the broad shoulders that signify honesty, and, as could be clearly seen beneath his hose, the strong thigh muscles that speak of sexual prowess.

He spotted Celani almost at once. By the time he had reached her table, she had already risen to her feet; she bowed to him, a salute he returned in kind.

"My lord Tullis," she said.

"My lady Celani."

"Would you care for wine, my lord?"

He frowned. "Well, if truth be known--"

"Yes?" she said. "If truth be known?"

"That is to say, if you wish me to be honest--"

"Oh, you must believe that I rate honesty among the highest of virtues."

"Ah, so then, you would wish me to share my actual feelings on the subject of wine?"

"My lord, I beg you to observe that I have been wishing for nothing else for an hour."

"Then, in fact, I am sufficiently anxious to begin the, uh..."

"The--?"

"Proceedings, that I begrudge even the length of time it would take to drink a glass of wine."

"My lord is aware of the importance of patience, and the way that anticipation can increase pleasure?"

"Oh, I do not say I am not. Only--"

"Yes?"

"Well, you asked."

"That is true, I did," said Celani, struck by the extreme justice of this observation.

"And so?"

"Very well, then, my lord; let us proceed upstairs, where the room is prepared."

This plan was no sooner suggested than acted upon.

The room to which Celani had referred was far in the back of the upper floor of the Lonegarden. It was a somewhat isolated room, dominated by large bed crafted of oak and furnished with satin sheets, silk pillows, and velvet blankets, the whole done in a sort of pale yellow,

matching the curtains that covered the windows, and that were disturbed by the soft breeze just then blowing. The room was lit by four decorative lamps, one hanging from each corner of the room.

Celani closed the door behind them, and turned to Tullis. "Well, now we are--"

These words, however, were all she had the chance to speak before Tullis, having closed the distance between them in a single step, wrapped his arms around her and brought his mouth to hers.

This kiss—-we will simplify it by calling it a kiss, although, in fact, it involved several different gestures of mutual affection, esteem, and desire: to wit, the

joining of lips, mouths and tongues which is summarized in what is normally called a kiss, and to which we have just referred in that exact term; hugging, that is, the wrapping of arms about each other; and, in some measure, fondling, that is, while the four arms were occupied in an embrace indicating no small degree of passion, at the same time, the four hands joined to these four arms involved themselves in patting, rubbing, squeezing, and caressing (as best they could through the intervening clothing) those portions of the anatomy most appealing to lovers and most accessible from their current position——this kiss, we say, was of such passion, tenderness, and duration that the historian despairs of attempting to capture it in a single sentence.

Celani, we are forced to add, although startled by the suddenness with which Tullis began the embrace, gave no indication that she was displeased by it. On the contrary, she showed every sign of returning passion for passion, desire for desire, and embrace for embrace.

When, at length, the kiss ended, Celani, who was somewhat breathless, said, "My lord!"

"Well?"

"I--"

"Is my lady displeased in some way?"

"Not displeased. Only--"

"Yes?"

"Have you noticed our clothing?"

"I have noticed that we are still wearing it."

"Exactly," she said. "I, myself, have noticed the same thing, and it seemed so important, that I wanted to be certain you were aware of it too."

"Oh, I am, I assure you."

"And then--?"

"Why, my lady Celani, I nearly think we should divest ourselves of it, and that--"

"Yes? And that?"

"As quickly as we can contrive to do so. Come, what do you think of this plan?"

"I give you my word, my lord, it is the very plan that I would have proposed, if--"

"Yes, if?"

"If you had not proposed it first."

"Then we are in agreement?"

"Entirely!"

"Then let us set about putting our plan into action, without the loss of another instant."

"My lord, you speak with the wisdom of an Athyra sage."

This plan was attempted to be put into practice, yet, in the event had little success. This is because the first step, which was the removal of Celani's blouse, was only partially accomplished before her shoulders were bared; and at this time, Tullis, with a moan of pleasure, found himself positively unable to keep himself from covering the shoulders to which we have just had the honor to allude, with soft kisses and gentle caresses, to which Cellis responded with a gasp, and a sudden, if temporary, loss of interest in continuing the disrobing operation, instead giving herself over completely to the sensations of the moment—which sensations, be it understood, were entirely pleasurable, and not unexciting.

"Oh," she said.

"You perceive," said Tullis between kisses, speaking, in fact, into her shoulders and neck as his lips moved over them, "I am unable to keep my hands off of you."

"And not only your hands," said Celani, from whose voice one could deduce she was feeling slightly faint. "But your lips as well."

"Ah, you had noticed that?"

"Nearly."

"You do not object?"

"Oh, not in the least, only--"

"Yes?"

"At this rate, well, you will never manage to remove the blouse, which, you perceive, will interfere with further caresses."

"Ah, you are right, my adorable charmer. And yet, was it not you who made the observation about patience and anticipation?"

"That is true, I did make that observation," agreed Celani, whose face was becoming quite flushed. "Only--"

"Yes?"

"I had not considered that it would apply to me."

"And now that you have considered it?"

"Well, I concede there is a certain justice in what you do me the honor to tell me."

"I am glad you do."

"And yet--"

"And yet?"

"With the way your lips are pressing themselves upon my shoulders, and my neck, and now my back—ah! Ah! Well, I am anxious to have more of my skin exposed to your caresses!"

"So then, you wish me to--"

"To continue disrobing me, my lord. I

assure you, if you do, you will have my undying gratitude."

"Well then, here. You see, the blouse has come over your head."

"Oh, it has."

"It is now on the floor."

"It is! It is!"

"And so, from the waist up--"

"Yes, from the waist up?"

"You are wearing only a thin chemise, which not only gives me a delightful view of those perfectly formed mounds which I had noticed the very first instant I saw

you--"

"Yes, not only that?"

"But also provides me yet more places to put my lips—which lips, I give you my word, want nothing more than to themselves explore that which my eyes have just devoured as they were a meal set before me, prepared by Mister Valabar himself."

"Oh, but my lord, your hands!"

"Ah, yes, it is true. My hands—intemperate things that they are—have quite outpaced my lips in seeking out the charms that both desire."

"Oh, you fill me with such feelings, my

lord!"

"And myself, I assure you. But here, you see, my hands are able to insinuate themselves under your chemise, while my lips—there--there--you see, eagerly visit from above."

"Oh, yes, that is exactly what is happening!"

"Only now, my hands, moving up in a most intemperate manner--"

"Yes? Yes?"

"Have actually removed your chemise. And so--"

"And so, nothing now lies between my

lips, and those perfectly formed breasts, and, especially--"

"Yes, especially?"

"These, here at their tips, a place, I'm assured, of special sensitivity."

"Oh, and you are right! You are right! See how they are rising in response?"

"I can hardly fail to see, madam, that they are displaying all of the gratitude to my lips and that my own manhood—you feel there, against your leg? Is feeling toward your person."

"Why, I do feel that, my lord. And I assure you, it gives me as much pleasure to be the instrument of such arousal, as do your

tongue, and lips, and teeth, and fingers which are so skillfully causing a similar arousal at those two points where they play so merrily."

At this point, it is our duty to answer the question that has, no doubt, entered the reader's mind: to wit, why it is we have taken upon ourselves the duty to describe, and in such the detail, the actions of these two personages at this time when, by the usual courtesy, they ought to be permitted the respect of privacy for the sharing of their most intimate moments.

This question can be answered in two words. Some of our brother historians (in particular, it would seem, those who are men, thus the "brother" is especially

appropriate) seem to have so little understanding of the characteristics of the aroused woman, that we are forced to wonder if they have, in fact, ever been near one. In particular, we have, to our embarrassment, too often read descriptions of the act of love in which one lover (usually a man, like the historian in question) is shown to be paying devoted attention to that tip of a woman's breast that is so often of interest to parties displaying mutual affection, which tip is then described as responding as if it were set into the flesh with a spring, which is then, by fingers or tongue, suddenly released. Indeed, all too often our brother historians even use a word to describe the action which is usually onomatopoeically associated with the *sound* of a spring

being released.

It is for this reason we have taken it upon ourselves to show that, no matter how great the passion, a description of the awakening of this particular part of a woman's anatomy not only does not require such inaccurate and, in truth, foolish explanations; but is far better served by frank, simple, and precise discussion of the way this part of the body responds in an actual human being. We assure our brother historians that, should they take a lesson from this, their readers will not but thank them.

Of course, even though we have now accomplished our goal, we will not be so cruel to our reader as to leave unfinished

the matter under discussion—that is to say, in case the reader is curious about how matters proceeded beyond the point we have reached, we feel obligated by our duty as historian to satisfy that curiosity—whether it be scholarly or prurient, it is not for us to pass judgment.

That being clearly established, let us return to Celani and Tullis, who, we assure the reader, have not been idle during our brief but necessary digression. Indeed, during this time, Celani—whom the reader may have begun to suspect of playing a more passive than active part in the engagement—has gripped the bottom of Tullis's tunic and, as he raised his arms, has pulled it over his head and tossed it aside if it were of no more value than the

leaf of a chublik tree upon the arrival of winter; and, indeed, to the two of them at this time it had no more value than this, because just as the tree discards its leaf in the expectation of preparing a new bud in the spring, so the baring of Tullis's upper body, thus matching Celani's, prepared for a certain sort of contact between the two newly freed torsos that could not but engender new excitement that we cannot refrain from comparing to the excitement of the turn of the season, as new growth sprouts all around and the whole world seems more vibrant and alive.

"Oh, oh," said Tullis. "To feel you thus pressing against me--"

"Yes, my lord?"

"It is exquisite."

"I am glad that it is. For my part--"

"Yes, my lady?"

"I find that your hands on my back, in particular, your fingers resting on that place where my spine curves just above my waist, is giving me thrill I cannot describe."

"It pleases me as well, only--"

"Yes?"

"It would please me even more if, as we touched in this way--"

"Yes, as we touched."

"We would also take this moment to kiss again."

"Oh, yes, let us do so, and without an instant's hesitation."

This decided, they at once joined their mouths together as if each were determined to draw all the breath from the other, their sighs mingling as their passion rose to yet new heights.

As the kiss continued, Tullis found himself unable to keep his hand from straying downward, and, when arriving at the place where Celani's form swelled outward behind and below the waist, he gripped it, and thus pulled her more closely into himself.

"Oh!" she cried. "Impetuous Dzur! What are you doing?"

"Do you wish me to stop, my sweet Lyorn?"

"Stop? On the contrary, I wish you to continue!"

"Then I shall obey your wishes as if you wore the signet of my prince."

"You are the soul of complaisance. Oh, but what are you doing now?"

"My lady, I am removing your breeches."

"And yet--"

"Well?"

"Before you commit this rash act--"

"Yes?"

"Ought we not to consider that I am wearing boots?"

"Oh, I had not considered this circumstance."

"And so?"

"If you will permit me to kneel before you--"

"Yes, if I will permit you to kneel?"

"Then you may rest a hand upon my shoulder for balance, while I--"

"Yes, while you?"

"While I endeavor to carefully remove that which covers your feet, and at the same time exposing to my excited view your trim and elegant ankles."

"How, you pretend my ankles are trim and elegant?"

"Having observed them on the first occasion of our meeting, when you wore different dress, I can speak on the subject with great confidence."

"You are, then, an expert in ladies ankles?"

"I do not deny that have some knowledge of them."

"Then I fully accept the compliment you do me the honor to express."

"And you are right to do so."

As this conversation was taking place, Tullis, who gave every indication of eagerness, had done just as he said; that is to say, he had removed Celani's boots, and taken the opportunity to admire her ankles. More than this, however, finding himself on his knees, and thus with his mouth at the exact height of Celani's navel, he was unable to restrain his desire to fold his arms around her waist and press his mouth into this especially sensitive place.

"Ah, my lord!" she cried. "I nearly think I feel your tongue!"

"That is likely," said Tullis.

"Oh, and those are my breeches around my ankles!"

"Yes, and to this I can only say--"

"Yes, you can only say?"

"That, unless you indicate that I should stop--"

"Yes, unless I so indicate?"

"Your bloomers are about to follow them."

"Oh! Oh!"

"Do you wish me to refrain, my adored

one?"

"No! No! Go on! Ah, you have done so, I am naked!"

"And delightfully so."

"But, what are you doing? Your lips, they are—oh! Oh! There! There! Yes, you must not stop! Only--"

"Yes, sweet one?"

"My legs."

"Such splendid legs they are! What of them?"

"They are becoming weak, so that I feel I will fall over."

"Ah, that would never do. Here, let us turn around. There, the bed is behind you."

"Oh, I collapse. Yes, yes. You are making me mad! See how I writhe? Will you not come to me?"

"You, then, wish to consummate this discussion?"

"I more than wish to! I must!"

"So much the better, for I swear to you--"

"Yes?"

"If I do not have you this instant, I shall die upon the spot."

"Then save yourself, my good Dzur! By all

means save yourself! Here, you see I am helping you remove your boots, and now your tights. Ah, what is this before me?"

"Why, madam, I am convinced you know what it is. But—oh, what are you doing? You wish me to drive me out of my senses? Yes, yes, that is it, you wish me to become a madman. Ah! Such feelings! My blood is boiling! I must explode!"

"Here, come to me now!"

"Then, you wish me to enter you fully?"

"Oh, as to that--"

"Yes?"

"I wish it with my whole being."

"Then I am about to do so."

"What? This very instant?"

"If that is your desire."

"Cracks and shards! It is an hour since I desired anything else!"

"Here then."

"Oh! This is what I have wished for."

"And I, too!"

"I am glad of that, for I should be sad to be alone in this feeling."

"Oh, you are not, my beautiful Lyorn. You feel how I push into you?"

"Yes, yes! There, now I have locked about you those ankles you did the honor to compliment."

"Such a perfect place for them. But come, I must kiss you now."

"Oh, yes. Your lips, your mouth."

"Ah, that is it!"

"I will explode!"

"Oh! Oh yes, explode, my sweet Celani, and if you do--"

"Yes, if I do?"

"I give you my word, your climax will engender my own!"

"How, are you certain?"

"There can be no doubt."

"Then let it be done! Ah! There, I flood, I overflow!"

"Oh! I dissolve into rapture, I merge with you."

"Yes, yes my beloved Dzur, we are one!"

"How I love you, my sweet Lyorn! Ah, you see how I continue even as we burst together?"

"Yes, yes, my fearless man! Ah, such bliss, such pleasure."

"And now--"

"Yes, now?"

"Now, my lady, I am spent!"

"Oh, but not forever?"

"No, but for some few minutes."

"And, after that?"

"Why, after that, if you are willing--"

"Yes, if I am willing?"

"Why, we will begin all over again!"

"My lord--"

"My lady?"

"I ask nothing better."