

## Beauty is Strength

Please enjoy this excerpt from my novel: Enough—the book of James.

And so James saw the curve of newest dawn, sweet and supple, fresh in every way before the sleeping day, teasing open the weary eyes of sleepless day now spilt into gladness to find her. For each day is such a seduction as this, a sultry quivering of unknown places, where Life herself might gaze upon the glow, and might herself be seduced. So warm and giving is the sight, the very sight of such health, trembling, quivering, aching expectantly, arched in supple tension before each moment. It is at such a sight as this that Life finally understands herself, finally relents before such beauty and accepts, yields, and at last knows herself... at last seduced to look, the trembling bounty, the question, only now, too sweet and full, too ripe to refuse.

...And the seasons drew themselves around Carolyn and James as a cloak, ever more quietly, ever more softly spoke the whisper of their old world, and the cloak of forgetfulness closed lovingly around them, each season unfurled before them, bounty and cruelty, sun and ice, cruel and sultry is life, unthinking, exquisite and anguished are we beneath her winds, each breath unthinking and necessary, we feel and forget, while she sleeps on, forever breathing, and dreaming.

So did the moonlight stroke her hair and smudge the night with flecks of rose and amber, the scent of night and jasmine, the moonlight dripping as honey on her cheek, the day's labor of twenty heavy packs of wood and weight slip into the moonlit places so tender and guarded, now washed by the summer river... and the moonlight is bashful and teases in what of her glow she leaves to the unspoken places, alluring and hidden is her knowledge, her splendor graced in shadow and bashful shade. Strength made pure, innocent, needful of itself and needing itself, steps into the moonlight, as milk spills over laughter, she is adorned with moonlight, dripping white and pure over the outstretched sweep of her open belly, the curve of her supple breast dripping in milklight, pure clear and white, spilling itself as liquid light, touching, hovering, a delicate breath hangs silently upon her breast, arched and dripping in still moonlight. So beautiful is she, so beautiful is strength before heaven!

And as a celebration, a strength and a gratitude did they enjoin life and each other, as the true gratitude which erupts in spontaneous abandon, a giddy bubble of excess and affirmation, as the joy which must be born of strength and health, overflowing and overspilling as Life did they unknowingly repay each day in the unthinking joy that must spill over the banks of any life worthy, fertile, rich enough in pain, truth and joy that it must spill over, a current now too full to contain its truth, even the waters themselves seem to speak, to lie to us, to suggest and entice, "Even More!" Am I strong enough to imagine something better? Could something be above, over, even this? Can I afford even a daemon, am I strong enough for that, strong enough for hope?

And with the cool distance of the seasons they did grow as Life would have them, strong and beautiful, tireless and prankish, honest and weeping, living— Dreaming. So did the days pass and find them complete, shameless as aged children, laughing and wise. Their minds open and hungry, their bodies flourishing and taut as a bow string vibrating against the silver mystery of life, her challenge a perfect note, silver and bright, spent amidst forgotten sun, or cradled silently in spilled moonlight.

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