

Colours - A Vincent Vignette

by Flint and Feather

Vincent Wells set aside his quilted tunic as he prepared to settle down to a lone interval of confiding in the silent companion within his chamber. He folded back the loose sleeves of his white cotton shirt to bare his hard-muscled forearms, then lit candles along the side perimeters of his writing space. Lying between them on the table was a worn journal, the patient vessel for the outpourings of his heart, mind and soul, committed to its pages with caring diligence.

He opened the journal but hesitated to take up his pen, instead pausing to consider the contrast of the lettered left page to its blank pristine partner on the right. The claw tips of his golden furred fingers brushed lightly over the pages. Black ink brought into relief the whiteness of the paper where he'd preserved a past event, woven through another day's scripted dream. Sinking into his chair, he leaned his chin into his hand and stared into the flickering flame of the nearest candle, his turn of thought giving rise to a further-reaching tangent.

Seeking perspective beyond the tiny illumination into the relative shadow of his surroundings, he imagined them flooded with the Above's daytime ambient light, and knew that could never be. The brass and glass objects shelved around him captured the minuscule gleams of candlelight, appearing as paired live orbs peering back through the stillness.

His poet's soul welcomed the drift of coalescing imagery, and he surrendered himself to a flight of inspiration. As his eyelids veiled low, the structure of his hand on the book reminded him of nature's design in the perfection of most of its creatures.

Though cruel genetic interference had conferred mutations upon his own man's form, it had endowed him with an extraordinary measure of physical prowess. Whatever the manipulator had been attempting to achieve, he hadn't managed to erase the refinement of Vincent's emotional capacity.

Living as a singular blended being, he belonged neither to the world of this metropolis, nor would he ever see another home such as the African veldt. The ancestor originating from there, had fated him to wear skin bearing a light coat of smooth wheaten fur. He possessed too, the fangs and claws of that deadly hunter, and the striking mane of a pride king.

But as he again observed how the candle flames reflected from the smooth globes beyond, he knew through experiment that his own eyes, their orbits shaped in a decidedly leonine tilt, had never betrayed him by shining in the dark. It was certain that no free and wild king had ever been born with his crystal blue gaze within whose depths, true humanity resided.

He too, was of necessity obligated to hide in shadow, for there were no golden thickets of tall grasses to camouflage and blend with the colour of his fur. He was in no way that ambush predator, though its formidable strength and agility belonged to him. The unbridled cunning of its free ferocity, he tightly repressed beneath the gentle self which he presented to his limited world.

For the safety of all around him, he had long assumed the responsibility of understanding the full potential of his unique dual heritage. He steered now to the wisdom of one aspect of wild nature's survival strategy.

The largest of living things were generally clothed in neutral tones, like the gray of the whale and elephant, the dun olive of the crocodile, and the fair tan of the lion. But prey creatures were far from helpless; the vivid stripes of the zebra and mottled patterns of the giraffe serving to confuse the vision of the carnivore.

Musing on, he knew it was intended that healthy ground of environments the world over, should be rich and blanketed in varieties of brilliant greens. If free of interference, to give life to plants and every species of tree crowned with lush, sun-seeking foliage. And by the same reasoning, many of the smallest of beings – birds and flowers – paraded as bright jewels for the attraction of mates and pollinators.

The sky, the changeable mantle over all, he had seen in glorious tints of blue, shades of troubled gray and star-strewn velvet black. And like the yellow candle flame that had sent him on his mind's journey, the sunset too, was gilt fire, painting its nightly farewell across the firmament.

With tests of comparison over time, Vincent had discovered that he could discern each and every tint and shade, and had rejoiced in that fully human ability. He craved to know all beauty, so regenerative to his spirit, and refused to sorrow that he could behold most only while concealed behind soulless man-made blocks and steel.

His mind's wandering returned from a distant continent and from Central Park, to the dim calm of his chamber where his journal lay still awaiting. Vincent decided to let it be, and pinched the flame from each candle wick. All that remained was to snatch up his cloak on his way out.

He had once heard someone speak the term, 'a beige life', to describe a colourless state of existence. It had held little meaning to him then, but in this moment of

connection, he determined that it need never apply to him. He was well able to bring himself into the presence of beauty.

It wouldn't be long until the true colours of his heart appeared resplendent before him, in the fair golden brown of Catherine's shining hair, the loving, lively green of her eyes, and the blush rose of her smiling lips.