

IN HER EYES

by Katrina Relf

A soft breath, a slight movement in the night, and the sudden realization that I was not alone, awoke me from dreams of Catherine. It was Lena. She had come to my bed to ask for love, to offer love, to give me all that was hers to give – and I refused her.

I wanted to hold her, to comfort her, to take away her pain, her loneliness, but I knew that, for Lena, there was only one way to give love, or to receive love. The streets were her teachers, and the men who had used her and abused her all her life. I wanted to show her that there is a love beyond that – a love that has always been denied her – but is hers now – in abundance – here in the Tunnels.

She took my hands in hers and offered me all that she was, all that she had, and, just for a moment, something inside me responded, and I wondered how it would feel to be held closely in another's arms, to be touched by other hands, to be someone else's possibility.

But it was only a moment. I knew she had to leave, but there was no kind way to refuse the love she offered – her need was too great; and, even as I sent her away, I felt a sadness, a pull. This child of the streets had somehow touched places within me that I thought were Catherine's alone.

But as quickly as they arose, those thoughts were dismissed. And yet, somehow, still, her sadness, her aloneness haunt me, and the memory of those moments that we shared – brief as they were – still weigh heavily upon my heart.

For, in her eyes, I saw so much love, so much pain, and I knew that I was the cause of that pain. For, in her eyes, I saw – me.

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