

Dreamspinner Press Presents

DAYDREAMS



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THE tavern was rowdy, the roaring fire casting huge, sinister shadows on the stone walls, the heat and the drink bringing a flush to many a pasty face. At a table in the corner nearest the bar, sat Master James of St. George, architect to the king, nursing a flagon of ale.

On the other side of the convivial establishment, a group of men were laughing loudly, drunkenly banging cups on the table, some singing, others braying for more drink. On the knees of one sat a serving wench, pretty as a picture and buxom with it, her charms barely contained by her gown, her pale blue eyes flashing with anger as the rough man groped her while remarking that the tavern peddled the finest wares in all of Conwy.

James was irritated by the noise and the heat. He had hoped to drown his sorrows in a quiet, unpopulated watering hole and instead found himself mixing with some of the locals, whose strange dialect was somewhat foreign to him.

As it was, he'd been unsure when King Edward asked him to come to this cold, forbidding land full of savages who spoke a mixture of languages and were always at war with each other. However, the chance to have full rein, to design a multitude of castles all over Wales and to be paid the princely sum of two shillings a day soon swayed him. That and his feelings for the king.

The two had met some years before Edward I had been crowned monarch. The king was impressed with his work on the castle of Saint-Georges d'Espéranche and had sent emissaries to seek him out.

James would never forget his first meeting with Edward. He could not forget how being in the king's company made him feel, and since he had come here six years ago, those feelings had intensified.

James's yearnings for the other man confused him and filled him with shame. He had a wife, and so did the king. The monarch would likely have him executed if he knew; his position as Edward's master mason would be no protection against such a crime.

The more time he spent with Edward, the more he desired him and the more he despised himself for his need. As spring moved into summer and Wales flourished into green, the sun shining, the days long, James was like a drowning man, losing control of himself, his thoughts filled from morning until night with the king and only the king.

Tonight he'd had as much as he could stand. He wanted to drink himself into a stupor that would numb him for hours. He wanted to find companionship for the evening: anything to lose the thoughts, the dreams, and the illicit desire.

He glanced up as a shadow fell across his table and saw the serving wench who had been sitting across the room. She was smiling coyly at him, attracted no doubt by James's dark hair, intense blue eyes, and fine skin. He received more

than his share of attention from the fairer sex and had used it to his advantage in the past, but things had changed.

“Your thoughts weigh heavily on your mind, sir,” the girl remarked, standing close to give him a fine view of her cleavage.

James nodded curtly, never a man of words under the best of circumstances and not in the mood for conversation now.

The woman was undeterred. “Perhaps something to ease your troubles?” she asked as she held his gaze steadily, her smile fixed in place.

For a moment, James stared at her as he considered. It would be easy to accept, and she was comely enough, but he was too preoccupied for such a common diversion. “You don’t have what I need,” he said quietly.

She cocked her head to one side, raising an eyebrow quizzically. “And what might that be?” she asked.

James kept his mouth closed as she searched his face as though she would see the truth written there. And maybe she did. “Someone more like you, perhaps?” Her smile widened, her eyes knowing.

James lowered his gaze, flushing slightly. “I don’t know what you mean to imply,” he said stiffly, his French accent wrapping exotically around his English words, “but please leave me alone. I wish to drink unmolested.”

“A shame,” the wench replied. “I thought for a moment I might know just the person to provide for your needs.”

James's head snapped up. His eyes scanned hers for trickery, for mockery, but found only hope at striking a bargain, which clearly had something in it for her.

When he didn't speak, she continued. "So you do not wish to meet with him?"

James's mouth opened a little in shock. Him? She was speaking of a man?

Her smile stayed in place, becoming almost tender at his surprise, embarrassment, and shame. "He is pleasing to the eye and most obliging," she encouraged him, her voice low.

Still James could not reply. His gaze slid shiftily around the room. "If we are seen—" he began anxiously.

"I assure discretion, sir," the woman told him. "Permit me to get my cloak, and then I will take you to him." She moved away from the table and disappeared into the back of the tavern while James waited nervously.

She was only a moment, coming back with her cloak around her shoulders, motioning to him to follow. James stood up, eyeing the men in the corner who winked at him, presuming he was taking the wench somewhere for a quick tumble. The man who'd had no luck with her glowered at James as though he wished him bodily harm.

James drained the last mouthful of his ale and followed the serving girl out of the tavern. The night was chilly: clouds swallowing the moon, the streets pitch black, lit barely at intervals by torches. The woman, hood pulled over her head, led him down steep, cobbled streets towards the quay, her

shoes tapping on the stones. It was late and decent folk were abed, the houses dark, a dog barking in the distance.

What was he doing? James asked himself. She might be leading him into a trap so her accomplices could rob and kill him. Maybe she was luring him into committing a lustful act with a man so she could report him to the king, who would have him executed. James found this ironic as he would only be using his bedmate as a substitute for Edward.

Mist rolled in from the sea and over the docks, cloaking the ships bobbing quietly on the dark water, the king's own private fleet at one end, under constant guard. James had sailed on one of the cogs with Edward, the king using the time on the sea to discuss his plans for Wales, James making sketches as they spoke. James's hand had become clammy when Edward leaned down over his shoulder, breath warm against James's ear as he spoke his approval of James's talents.

James was too nervous to be aroused as he was led down an alleyway and to the back entrance of a neat little house a stone's throw from the burgeoning town walls designed by his own hand. His guide opened the door, and he followed her through a kitchen and up a flight of stairs. In the top room, a fire was the only means of illumination, and James was startled as a dark shape rose gracefully from the bed as he and the tavern wench entered.

James was taken aback by the man's height. The stranger was tall, taller than James and well built, broad across the shoulders and narrow of hip. He wore a cloak with the hood up, casting his face in shadow, and James

was glad when the woman moved past him to light a candle at the bedside. A moment later, more cozy light filled the room.

The man stepped toward James, letting his hood fall back, and the architect gasped. James's eyes darted to the wench who watched his reaction curiously. James swallowed, bit his lip, and said nothing.

The man was extraordinarily handsome, dark-eyed and raven-haired, his skin swarthy, his features fine and regular. His mouth, sensual and pink, held no smile, and he merely regarded James expressionlessly.

"This is Thomas," James's guide told him. "He is at your service for the sum of a shilling."

This was expensive, but James didn't argue. He was too busy staring and being stirred by the man's deep brown eyes boring into his.

"Thank you," Thomas said in the ensuing silence, his voice deep and educated, with an evident lisp. "You may go, Alice."

The woman nodded. She gave James a blatant smirk as she left the room and closed the door behind her.

James opened his mouth to speak, but the tall man put a finger to his lips. "Say nothing," he told James authoritatively. "Not yet."

James swallowed again, the lump in his throat growing larger, to where he was unable to speak even if he wanted to.

Thomas regarded James a moment, and then he moved backward to sit on the edge of the bed. He let his fur-lined cloak fall behind him and unfastened the ornamental girdle he wore beneath, before stripping off the finely woven tunic.

James watched avidly as the smooth flesh was revealed, his eyes traveling over the ridged muscles of the man's abdomen, hard pectorals, and large biceps. Truly, he was stunning, and James's breeches were tightening painfully.

Naked to the waist, Thomas lifted a hand and summoned James with a crook of his finger. Afraid, excited, and desperately aroused, James did as he was bidden. Thomas lifted his hands and reached for the fastenings on James's breeches, long fingers deliberately rubbing his hardness through the material as he pulled the garment open, exposing James's arousal.

James stifled a gasp as the man tugged the breeches down to his knees and took his cock in his hand, encircling it firmly, bringing it to him and lowering his head. Opening his mouth wide, he swallowed as much of the length as he could manage.

James's head fell back, and he whimpered softly in shock and pleasure. His hand hovered over his partner's head, wanting to grasp him by the hair but afraid to as Thomas laved him with talented tongue, raked him lightly with sharp teeth, and then drew back to suck on his balls, all the while kneading his buttocks with large hands.

It was all James could do to remain upright. The pleasure radiated from his groin in waves, that hot, wet mouth setting flames of desire in every part of his body. Still

sucking, Thomas reached up with both hands and divested James of his girdle. A hand slid up James's tunic and twisted one nipple lightly between thumb and forefinger. James jerked under the touch and finally made a grab at that hair, finding it silky, plunging his fingers into it, urging the other on, the ravenous mouth moving ever swifter.

He looked down and found his partner staring up at him from beneath thick lashes, eyes black with lust, burrowing right into James's guilty soul.

God, but he wanted this man. He would take him any way he could get him, he who had never touched another man in his life.

Thomas drew back abruptly just as James felt his climax imminent, and he lay back on the bed. As James watched, Thomas pulled off his boots and slid his breeches down his narrow hips. When he was naked, he watched James silently, his skin dappled by shadows from the candle, his long, thick erection nudging his belly.

James tossed aside his cloak and ripped off his tunic. He unlaced his brightly colored boots, yanked them off, and then fumbled impatiently with his stockings before rolling them off his legs.

Finally, he removed his breeches, and on trembling legs, climbed onto the bed. As he did so, Thomas let his legs fall wantonly apart, gripping James by the hips and pulling him down between them.

James fell onto Thomas, and their mouths met fiercely in an epic kiss. His would-be lover tasted of wine, his mouth

moist and sweet, his tongue wrapping around James's as he ground his pelvis so their erections slid together with agonizing sensuality.

James gasped a little into the kiss, holding himself on his arms, pushing down against Thomas, feeling the hardness against his own, feeling the heat and the muscle of the body under him. James thought he might lose his mind. He had never experienced this depth of desire in his life. He was blind with it and wild. Abruptly, he gripped Thomas roughly and all but threw him face down on the bed. His lover evidently appreciated the careless handling because he groaned, raising himself on hands and knees, presenting his backside and looking back over his shoulder with black and lustful eyes.

James licked his lips as he ran a hand over the pert, muscular swell of Thomas's buttocks. He felt the other man shiver as he put two fingers into his mouth and sucked on them. Thomas watched James with mouth open in barely concealed excitement, and then his head fell forward, moaning loudly as James spread him open and eased a finger into him.

James panted as he watched the tight entrance open and accept his digit. He was quick to push in a second finger, moving them back and forth, listening to the way the other groaned, feeling how Thomas squirmed with arousal.

He couldn't wait any longer, and even as he withdrew his fingers, Thomas looked over his shoulder and uttered one word. "Please," he begged in the neediest tone James had ever heard.

James spat on his hand, smearing the saliva on the head of his cock before he guided himself to his partner, gripping firm buttocks hard as he thrust.

Thomas grunted in shock, but he immediately pushed back, impaling himself fully, gasping as James filled him to the hilt. His head was thrown back, and the long curve of his spine glistened with sweat.

God, he is beautiful, James thought in adoration. *Like an angel made flesh, the answer to all my hopes and dreams.* He hooked an arm around his partner's torso and started to move urgently into him, gasps for breath spilling from his mouth with every thrust at the feel of the tight heat surrounding him.

Thomas clawed at the bed covers, sliding forward with every movement of James's hips, groaning loudly in unadulterated bliss. James held him harder, pulling him back onto his cock, lowering his face to kiss and lick at the sweat on his back.

Thomas had a hand around himself, drawing his erection roughly through his fist. James reached around him, batting the hand away and enclosing Thomas's length in his own, jerking him hard, listening to Thomas's excited moans, feeling how he trembled beneath him. Thomas's cock oozed liquid, and James used his thumb to spread it around the head, teasing the slit with the pad of his finger, savoring the sound of the other man catching his breath.

James moved faster, harder, looking down, watching himself moving in and out, entranced and aroused beyond reason at the sight of his hard flesh disappearing into

Thomas's body. He felt the ecstasy singing in his veins, felt it start to thrum through every cell, felt a tidal wave beginning at his center, spreading up from his thighs, a white-hot wave of pleasure the like of which he had never experienced before. He worked Thomas's cock swiftly, drawing curses and cries from him now. Thomas's head hung low, his breath ragged and desperate as James started to thrust jerkily as he came.

In the midst of his orgasm, he felt warmth on his hand, felt the muscles around him spasm, drawing every drop from him so that he groaned in delight as he was uncontrollably milked, thrusting over and over until he was done.

He dropped onto Thomas's back, and he and Thomas fell ungracefully to the bed in a tangled heap of limbs, chests heaving for air, James's heart beating hard against Thomas's back.

James kept his eyes shut for long moments as he willed himself back to some semblance of normality, collecting his scattered wits and encouraging his body to move. When he had done so, he abruptly slid off the bed and prostrated himself naked on the cold stones, his forehead pressed to the floor.

"Your Majesty," he said fervently, fearfully. "I beg your forgiveness for my transgressions."

"Get up off the ground, James," came the lazy, amused reply. James lifted his head and looked up at the other man hopefully. His lover, smiling affectionately, held out his hand. "Come here."

James was swift to scramble back onto the bed and into strong arms. The bigger man sighed as he guided James's head to his chest and held it there, stroking his short hair gently.

"Sire—" James began anxiously.

"James," the other man said. "When we are together from now on, my name is Edward. Do you understand?"

James lifted his head and looked at the king. He bit his lip, his eyes welling with emotion. "I love you," he whispered.

Edward stroked James's cheek tenderly. "I know you do, and I love you in turn," he replied, dark eyes soft with feeling. "I have loved you many a long year, James of St. George."

James swallowed. "This is not safe," he murmured, tracing the graceful outline of the king's clavicle with a reverent forefinger. "I don't wish for you to be... compromised."

Edward shook his head as he leaned down and pressed a kiss to James's mouth. "I want you, and I shall have you," he said quietly, but firmly. "I have waited long enough for you. No man shall keep us apart; do you understand me?"

With hope blossoming in his heart, James nodded mutely. Edward smiled in satisfaction at the bargain sealed, one hand scooping through James's dark locks.

"Now there is something you can do for your king," Edward informed James, trailing a hand down his back and

making James shiver with renewed desire. “You can lie back and think of England.”

James stifled a groan as he rolled onto his back and accepted the weight of the king.

SCARLET BLACKWELL has loved books all her life. She would love to own a second-hand book shop and sit behind the counter reading her wares and writing her own all day.

She has been writing since age thirteen and her stories always feature two soulmates finding the other. She loves cats, rock music, and American TV shows. She lives in the United Kingdom.



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