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THE LADY WEARS GLOVES

by

Lala Heine-Koehn

Careful of his skin, she wears gloves touching him. Not having seen the colour of her nails, he began to wonder.

Lady of my heart, flesh of my flesh,
he whispered one night, feeling the warmth of her fingers on his back let me kiss your naked fingers. Her hands began to flutter like butterflies. *Tomorrow. . .* she replied, closing her eyes.

The next night, lying beside her he turned her wrists gently, began to peel off her gloves. The room dark with moonless night, he did not see her hands slipping out. The gloves began to stroke, caress him, the smooth cloth rubbing against his skin, speaking the language he wanted to hear. That night he dreamed of clouds, dandelion fluff, soft things like that.

Lady of my heart, you made me happy last night, he said in the morning, here is a token of my love to nourish you. He placed a bowl of precious stones upon her coverlet. She picked the stones, and one by one putting them into her mouth, swallowing them whole.

What treasure I have in you, he said, enthralled, gazing into her blue, blue eyes. *Let me kiss your fingertips.*

she extended her hands to him,
may I keep the gloves for one more day?
looking down at the empty bowl.
I will wait he said, remembering last night.

By nightfall the moon came out, pale light lacing her pale hair spread like a coat around her body Taking her hands into his, he pressed their palms together, measuring their hands against each other. *My love, your hands seem to be larger than mine. Let me remove your gloves to compare them better.* He began to pull them from her fingers. *How white your skin is, how perfectly the halfmoons of your nails are shaped,* he whispered.

That was many years ago. Holding on to the fingers of her gloves he is still pulling them off. Inside the cloth, her spiraling nails stretching, slowly uncurling, taking him farther and farther from where they used to live together. Today, for the first time, he has caught a glimpse of the end of her left-hand little finger, the nail pointed and sharp as a tip of a blade.