

They spoke of a thousand battles both fought and survived.

They spoke of a strong soul and even stronger passion hidden from the world.

Duo naturally brought this figure into the collection with only a careful study of those mysterious eyes.

Not far away from this couple on the shelf sat a tall youth on a pure white stallion, his clothes from an even earlier century of European culture. An Arthurian knight on his charger if ever there was one. Dressed in his finery of silver and green rather than in armor. As if this youth was out a-Maying rather than off to War. His Charger draped in a green and silver checkered coat of arms. With a black rampant lion adorning the dais that fell from the reigns. The young knight's soft ruddy brown locks, caught in an invisible wind, blew forward and obscured half his face from view. But the other half was of a serene beauty with an emerald orb of almost uncalculating intelligence and whimsical romanticism peered softly toward the lady in green. Seeming to give his grudging approval of the match while at the same time appeared to be longing for the companionship displayed in front of him.

Handsome, melancholy, and tranquil, Duo could just imagine this tall youth reading books of poetry to his lover while lying in the cool grass of summer under the shade of a large oak tree. He "Just looked the type" and was the reason why Hilde got him as a present several years before.

Behind him, from the same era was what Duo could only describe as Morgan le Fey to Lancelot. A Beauty in black, with long blonde hair, and a full figure stood high on glaring at the knight's back. Was she spurned lover or a calculating witch? Duo wasn't sure, but once inspecting her, he'd almost been afraid not to buy her from the store. It was if she dared him to refuse her and her regal greatness and he'd be eternally sorry if once he'd offended her by putting his hands on her to leave her behind to be manhandled by another customer.

He wondered if he was going nuts, but he bought her just the same. And now she stood turning that "look" on the back of the young knight.

"I think buddy, you'd better be nice to her. She looks like she can eat a man alive and not blink twice." Duo muttered grinning looking to the next shelf.

Here was Hilde's collection of pieces that didn't seem to fit into any specific category. There was a blonde woman, twin braids hanging down to rest on her shoulders, dressed in barbaric Viking battle dress. Leather and fur and one big, mean looking sword. Which was drawn as she screamed a silent battle cry and dove toward her imaginary foe. A female berserker, that was this piece's charm, and Duo liked her and he certainly would never want to get in her way with that sword either.

Across the shelf a dragon coiled around a rocky crag, a Chinese wizard stood alone on one of the outcroppings holding up his staff high as in welcome or in challenge. Duo wasn't sure, but the face was intense and really it could have been both a welcome AND a challenge if you read the body language right. The detail on this piece was stunning, and he'd picked this up when he'd taken a business trip to Taiwan. Hilde didn't have any Asian pieces in her collection until he'd brought this beauty home.

Satisfied he'd refreshed himself adequately on the contents of his wife's collection, he grabbed his coat and scarf and braved after thanksgiving shoppers to find another special piece to add to the display cabinet to be loved by the love of his life. He envied those porcelain casts sometimes with the amount of loving energy she spent making sure they were always spotless and presented and represented with care.

Then again, he did his own fair share of admiration of them time and again. The door closed behind him with a soft click and silence fell into the room.

"He's off to crowd us again!" The dark woman hissed in annoyance.

"Oh do shut up Trixie. It's not that crowd in here. Besides, we didn't complain when Duo brought YOU home." The woman in green taunted back and the Black lady fairly fumed.

"I should think NOT at least I bring a little class with me. Apart from Trowa, the lot of you are barbarians."

"I don't think I like that compliment very much." The knight muttered dropping off his mount's back to face the lady behind him.

"But Trowa my love, you know what I mean."

"Yes, you mean to insult others by comparing them to me. And I'm not better than they are. We are all just replicas of eras past. You've no more royal blood in your veins than Wufei's dragon." Trowa grumbled before taking up fussing over his horse and ignoring a sputtering Trixie completely.

By the time Duo got back from the store, the figurines all returned to their places and once more waited for solitude to move freely again. And all of them wondering just what was inside the silver wrapped package Duo placed under the Tree.

"I bet it's another knight."

"Sssssh!"

"Probably another soldier."

"Quiet!"

"Duo honey? Did you hear something?" Hilde asked popping her head out of the kitchen to inspect the parlor.

"Nope, I'm watching the game in the den!" Came Duo's shouted answer from farther beyond.

Hilde just shrugged and went back to cooking supper.

The figures all breathed a sigh of relief and resumed being careful and not drawing attention to themselves just because they were curious.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

Christmas morning came and along with it a frenzy of ripping paper, exclamations of joy, tears of happiness, laughter and warmth. The children were indulged and "Santa went a bit nuts again this year." Hilde would mutter good naturedly and Duo would only grin and his eyes would turn to his children and a light of love and pride, and just plain old-fashioned Christmas spirit would twinkle in large violet hued eyes.

"Ah, well. I suppose the fat man just knows we have great kids." Was always his patented answer every year.

"Lets hope he used cash and not credit cards." She replied and Duo would cough and change the subject.

It was the same every year. Duo would get them into debt up to their eyeballs and take the rest of the year to pay for Christmas. Not that Hilde expected him to do anything else, but it was tradition she hassle him about it every year too.

The parlor was in complete shambles, glittery paper in tatters and shreds and strewn on just about every surface. The children had gone off with their booty to play when the last gift was pulled out from under the tree by none other than Santa himself and presented to the "Mrs."

"Merry Christmas Gorgeous." He said planting a kiss on her cheek as she began unwrapping the gift.

Across the room, next to the window, all the little figurines, who had been anxiously awaiting this moment, held their collective breath as the lid was lifted and bright blue tissue paper practically exploded from the box.

"He's really fragile. But I couldn't resist this one." Duo said as Hilde lifted the treasure from its protective cushion of tissue.

"You always say that. Oh my, Duo, he's BEAUTIFUL!" Hilde gasped as the small ornamental figure came to cradle in her hands.

"I thought so. You didn't have anything like this little guy."

"No I sure don't. Well my sleepy little minstrel... where do I put you?" Hilde asked as she stood and walked over to the cabinet.

Slowly the glass door opened and Hilde scanned the shelves and moved a few pieces around before placing the newest edition toward the front, directly in front of her beloved Knight. "Okay Sir, since our new one is asleep, I charge you to keep a watchful eye over him. I'm sure you can do that and still look dashing on your horse." Hilde chuckled and shut the glass door.

"You're goofy. Do you always talk to them like they're real?" Duo chuckled as he began picking up the paper in the room.

"They are real. At least they are to me, and that's what counts right?" Hilde grinned and turned to the kitchen. "I'm gonna get the Turkey started. You go on back to bed, you were

up all night wrapping. I'll pick up later."

Duo nodded. "I think I just might take a snooze here. Santa had a busy night." Duo said through a huge yawn that made his jaw crack and stumbling through the merry debris, disappeared down the hall.

~*~*~*~*

Trowa looked down at his stallion's feet and smiled. Curled up under a bough of holly was a young blond man, hardly more than a boy. Wrapped in a rough woolen burgundy cloak to ward against an imaginary winter chill in a pose of innocent slumber. Beside him, propped against the bush of green and red was an intricately carved lute. Golden hair, askew, with even a few strands caught on prickly leaves, Trowa thought he'd never seen anything look so innocent and so alluring all at the same time.

Everyone it seemed was waiting with baited breath for the new figure to stir from his fabricated slumber.

It didn't take long. Lean arms, clothed in doe colored cloth with teal accents unfolded from under his cloak and stretched. "Thank goodness" The figured yawned. "It was so stuffy in that box."

Another yawn and the figure sat up and finished stretching before realizing he wasn't alone. As he opened large and pale blue eyes, he looked up to meet a smiling gaze from above.

"OH! Hello." The blond youth smiled as Trowa slid down off his steed.

"Hello to you. Welcome. I'm Sir Trowa of Brittany, Knight of the Round Table. At least that's what it says on my certificate of authenticity. I prefer Trowa." He said holding out his hand to the youth to help him to his feet.

"Hi, I'm Quatre. Simple traveling bard of the late 5th Century and I prefer just Quatre too." The youth smiled and Trowa was taken aback by the brilliance of his smile. A small cough behind Quatre had him whirling around in an instant.

"I'm Lady Catherine or just plain Kate. Been called Maid Marion a few times, but that's neither here nor there. This is my lover Heero, and on occasion Robin Hood, but really, if people look they can tell he's Japanese and NOT an English rogue, but most people don't look that close." Catherine laughed holding out her hand to shake Quatre's.

"Wow, it's a pleasure. I never thought I'd end up in a place with so many people."

"Too many now if you ask me." Came a voice from behind Trowa and Quatre turned to see a beautiful yet cold woman stroll up behind Trowa, glowering at him as she slid her arm into Trowa's and latched on. "Well aren't you going to introduce me lover?" She purred, batting her eyes at Trowa.

Trowa rather violently shrugged her off. "Quatre, Trixie, Trixie, Quatre." He said with a mixture of irritation and frustration.

"It's a pleasure Trixie." Quatre began and held out his hand.

Trixie looked at it like it was a poison dagger. "That's Duchess Patricia of the court of Camelot. Bard."

"God you're a bitch." Yet another woman said seeming to come from Quatre's feet. "I can see up your skirt ya know, you ain't got nothing I don't."

"SALLY! Buwahahahahahahahahah!" Catherine began laughing as Trixie's anger made her flush a deep red as she gathered her skirts and stormed back to her pedestal.

Quatre looked down to see the shelves were all made of glass and a Viking woman was smiling up at him as a Young oriental Wizard joined her and nodded a hello.

"HI!" Quatre said waving down at them and smiling. "What an interesting place." He added as he looked up to see more warriors above pressing their faces to the glass and waving and smiling.

"It gets better at night. The rest of the house is amazing." Trowa said as they heard movement and scattered back to their positions.

Quatre cracked an eye and grinned up at Trowa who returned the smile. "Thank you for making me feel so welcome."

"It's my pleasure. Besides, the mistress bid me take care of you. As a knight it's my duty now to see to your welfare." Trowa began then smiled deeply. "Not that that's going to be such a chore to be in the position of guarding such a handsome charge."

Trowa was positive the cold blush on Quatre's cheeks grew a few shades darker before he shut his eyes to resume his feigned sleep.

A smile lightly toughing his perfect lips. Trowa tore his gaze away and waited once more for the commotion in the room to fade.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

tbc...

NOTE: This was never continued.... dead fic!

X_____X