

Start here. 'Jane! Jane! Where are you Jane? Oh, there you are. Look what I have! A note! It's got your name on it too! I knew it... my daughter... Well here, take it. Open it. I've got things to do!'

As Mama walked out the door I looked at the note in my hand. The paper felt like it weighed a tonne, and so far as I could see was my name elegantly scrawled across it. Oh dear lord. I didn't want this, or anything that came with it. Most girls in the court would love to get a note such as this from the visiting Duke, but not me. It wasn't me. It couldn't be.

'What are you going to do, Janey?' Mary asked softly. From a family of 4 girls, Mary, at 16 years of age, was the only one who understood that when I said I was unsure about wanting any of this I was serious. She was the only one I could confide in.

'I guess I'll have to go. You know as well as I do that I cannot just say no. I must journey back with him to Cornwall and pray that he realises I'm not like others. I don't want to spend

my life in a sitting room drinking tea. I like riding. I enjoyed cooking before Papa said it was inappropriate. I enjoy being outdoors and having fun. I just need a way to tell the Duke without causing a fuss. Will you come with me?' 'Let's go talk to Mama and Papa'

Looking out the window at the pouring rain, I ~~qu~~ wondered how the carriage managed to power on through this weather. Two days of rain and sitting in a small compartment with 4 other people was making me go insane. Thankfully, the coachman said we would be arriving shortly. On arrival we would be shown to our chambers where we could wash and dress into our evening gowns. At some stage throughout the night I would have to speak with the Duke, and possibly even go back to Illyria.

Having drifted off into a daze I didn't realise we had arrived, but Mary was overjoyed at such a beautiful court. Jumping up and down excitedly, she pointed out the Duke standing in the doorway.

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'Good ~~evening~~^{afternoon} ladies, I trust that you enjoyed the trip?'

Curtisying, we replied that it was fine and commented on his court.

After all the formalities were taken care of, the Duke turned to me to accompany him for a walk.

'I understand you are yet to settle in, but would you like to join me for a walk? The rain has cleared up. I would like to talk to you privately.'

'Yes, my Lord, I would love to.'

Behind the main entrance, the sight was even more beautiful. The Duke held out his arm and led me to the center of his garden where he had a lovely statue.

Turning to look at me, he bade I sit down as he had something to say.

'Jane... I... I'm unsure as to how to say this. When visiting Illyria, it was your beauty first caught me eye. At all the women of the court knew, I was there in search of a bride -'

'Please, my Lord, I have something to say'

'As do I. It instantly became apparent that you were

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Start here.

Unlike the others. You enjoyed doing different things and appreciated the help of others. Many men said that while you were beautiful, you were also quite... different. After getting to know you, I decided that it would be appropriate to invite you to see my court. What do you think?

'It's lovely, my Lord, but I would ~~be~~ very much like to intervene here if I may. While you, my Lord, have been very understanding and hospitable, I am afraid there is no other way to say it. I ~~don't~~ not feel that I am the lady you were searching for. I had heard of your magnificent court prior to your arrival in Illyria. We all heard of the elegant dinners and parties, of the roles of the Ladies of the estate, the beauty of it all. But I fear that I am not right for this part. I do not like to watch as others do my bidding. I do not enjoy being kept inside. I do not look forward to the prospect of having over four children. Most of all, I do not want to be left and commanded to do

as I do not like. forgive me for being so bold, my lord, but I felt as though this would be the only way to inform you of my... unique... personality'.

Bemused, the Duke stood up and offered his arm. Unsure as to the protocol of a situation such as this, I took it and we walked back towards the main building.

'I will escort you to your chamber where you will be able to wash and dress appropriately for this evening's welcoming ~~Ball~~ Ball. Please enjoy your stay here, and I will not approach you in regards to our previous conversation until the end of your stay, in which I will ask whether the arrangements are to your satisfaction'.

As he left me in ^{my} ~~his~~ chamber, I stood shocked wondering what had happened. Mary came skipping in and I told her of what had happened, ^{hoping} she would understand and ^{inform me.} Giggling, she stood up and backed towards the door, telling me to prepare for tonight. I looked around, confused as to what was

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happening today

I emerged from my chamber refreshed and clad in an elegant purple gown. Walking to the end of the hall, I asked the young courtier which way to go to meet the Duke at the ballroom. Looking puzzled he asked what I meant, saying that his orders were to take me to the garden.

I followed behind the young boy, trying to work out what we were doing. As we got closer to the garden, faint sounds of music could be heard.

Opening up from the rear doorway was a wall of open doors, revealing the garden made up with music playing for an outdoor ball!

I walked around in wonder, curious as to how wrong I had been so far.

Spotting the Duke, I decided to approach him quickly.

'Good evening, my Lord, what a beautiful setting'

'Ahh, Jane, how do you like the traditional Cornwall balls? Ha, every thing been to your satisfaction?'

Start here.

'Yes, my lord, I was wishing to speak with you privately in regards to our earlier talk please.'

'Ofcourse. may I start?'

After I nodded he took my hand and led me from the others.

'I, too, dislike the indoors. Most of the rooms in my court open up to the garden. I have minimal servers as I, too, dislike watching others wait on me.

What caught my eye when I saw you was that you were not the typical female. I want a life with a woman ^{who is} ~~able~~ able to overcome any social restriction, to speak her mind to me, who would rather be outside with me instead of inside gossiping. I would like a woman who ~~can~~ is willing to have 2, maybe 3, children who we can raise together without the normal prejudices. You caught my eye as you spoke your mind to me and overcame the gender barriers imposed on our society, and for that I thank you and wish for you to reconsider ~~to~~ your refusal of my offer. I stood, shocked, as every reason that set me apart from the other

Women was exactly what had given
me a ~~man~~ Duke that, too, wished
to overcome the social barriers.

Our court would be run how we liked,
with whatever conventions we liked. How
could I say no to that?

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