Where Love Reigns, Where Peace Reigns

by LadyOneiroi

Summary

She would have traded anything to feel him close to her again.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

There was something about him that was different. Maybe it was the way he smiled at her just for the sake of smiling. Perhaps it was the way he could still smile even with his black eye and his busted nose and cut lip. It probably wasn’t his smile at all, because the first thing she noticed about the boy with the bad posture is his striking eyes, black as a gutter.

He spoke to her like she was a human being and not the sex toy other boys made her out to be. He shook her hand and looked her in the eyes — God, but his eyes were beautiful — and he said his name was Johnny Cade. He asked what hers was.

He made her feel human for the first time in a long time. She felt like she mattered whenever he stopped to talk to her in the hallways at school, and he didn’t care what people said when he sat with her at the Dingo if she happened to be alone. She kept waiting for him to break the illusion, to be as lusty and one-track minded as every other boy in her life, but he never did.

Sometimes they sat together in the empty lot, looking at the stars and pretending for as long as possible that the world makes sense. The lay down with their heads side-by-side, and he points upward and tells her what his best friend taught him about the stars. He speaks of Sirius, the dog-star, and of the dippers, and of a goat in the sky. Angela doesn’t think she’s ever met anyone half as smart in her life, even if all he says is hearsay. She watches him when he talks, but he doesn’t notice, too busy talking to someone that will actually listen.
She shows up with a cut on her hand and a curse on her lips. He’s startled by that, he honestly thought she was a nice girl, and she laughs at him until she feels sick. Gradually, she trusts him enough to speak of the yelling and the fighting in the Shepard house. Johnny doesn’t say a word, but he looks at her and his dark eyes are understanding. For the first time in her life, Angela trusts a man outside the family.

When he appears as a nervous wreck with a long scar winding down his temple, he seems determined to escort her as she goes about her days. She keeps expecting him to cry, but Johnny is made stronger than that. Angela thinks he follows her like a lost puppy, not wanting to be alone when the rest of the gang is not around to support him. Late one night, she lies in her bed and realizes that he’s her guard dog. He wants to ensure what happened to him doesn’t happen to her.

He’s different, and she likes that. He’s different, and so one night she grabs him by the collar of his denim jacket and tells him he’s worth more than he realizes. She tells him not to let people hurt him anymore. Angela presses close to Johnny, and she tells him to be more confident. Then she kisses him, a sweet, lingering thing, full of first love and burning hormones and mild irritation that she had to make the first move. Johnny smiles into the kiss like an idiot, and Angela’s cheeks are hot in the first time in a long time. She curses Tim for calling out to her as he is determined to walk her home, his truck sitting with all the tires flattened courtesy of that asshole Johnny calls a pal.

It is two days before anyone tells her what happened, why her meeting place with Johnny has been empty for two straight nights. She told him to be confident, damn it, not to kill people. The world spins, and she cannot imagine her protector, her other half, would ever sully his hands. She screams at Tim that he is wrong and gets popped in the mouth for back talking him. For the next three days, she sits in her room, alternating between being delirious about events and being depressed. She almost believes her drama.

Finally, Tim enters her fortress of solitude, and for the first time since they were kids, he seems almost gentle with her. He sits on her bed and his usually smooth voice is surprisingly soft. He says they found Johnny, and her heart sings, as if she has been raised from the tomb. His next words steal the breath from her lungs, and Angela suddenly realizes she may face a world without Johnny. She cries out as if she was the one burnt.

That night, Curly comes stomping in, hollering and carrying on that Dallas Winston was dead. The catches Angela off guard, and she looks up from a show she wasn’t watching to ask for details. Boys like Dallas were born to die young and dumb, but the whys and the hows always interested the morbid teenager. She hears the Cade boy — The Cade boy, Curly calls him, as if he does not know his name or anything about the onyx in his eyes — drove him to it, and she just knows. Tim follows not much later with the same news, that Dallas is dead, and Angela shrieks and curses at her brother. Why should anyone care that some dumb Yankee hood died? Johnny is dead.

She tries to fuck him out of her memory over the next year. She can’t escape his black eyes and his sweet smile, though. Mother, in a rare moment of sobriety, tries to tell her that it wouldn’t have worked, that first loves never do, but Angela is having none of it. She keeps trying to find a boy that laughs recklessly at her reputation, one that can name every star in Heaven, the kind of kid that pulls her curls and then apologizes.

It takes a year, but she finds the ghost of a ghost.

His eyes are grey. His skin is pale. His hair is almost red. He is not her Johnny (nobody will ever be her Johnny again, she’s realized) but he taught the boy to name the stars and for that she thinks she can forgive him his grey eyes.
Still transferring from tumblr. Someday, I will post actually new things on here, but it is not this day.

Ah, Angela, how I adore shipping you with literally everyone that is not Pony. How sweet it is to see you happy with someone. Then I ship you with Johnny and Soda and watch you fall to pieces. I'm sorry. The title comes from a Chaliapin translation of the Ukrainian song 'Dark Eyes', which could really work for any Johnny shipping. Huh, there's an idea, maybe a series of Johnny ships all tying in to a verse...

As always, reviews are appreciated, and thank you for reading!

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