Cotton flower

by imera

Summary

One year anniversary, and they are still in love.

Notes

A reward for kaige68 as she finished the weekend challenge :D

*unbetaed*

The sun peeked through the lace curtains, casting shadows of flowers across the room. Sunshine wasn’t an uncommon thing in the northern city, but mixed with the smoke and dirt found in Milton, it didn’t have the same effect as in Helsone. Margaret curled into a ball, pulling the covers closer, wanting to return to the pleasant dream she awoke from. It was a nice dream, where she found herself in a strange country she read in a book Mr Bell so kindly sent for her birthday.

A bird interrupted her attempt to return to her dream, making her feel lazy, even though she was tired. “Go away,” she told the bird, covering her head under the pillow, trying to drown out all the sounds.

Slowly she felt her mind drift, preparing her for another ride in the hot Amazon jungle, when someone decided it was the perfect time to enter her room. He tried to be quiet, she knew it based on their careful walk, but the faint creaking of the floorboards as her husband --she knew it was him as no other person would bother her as she slept-- walked over to the bed, pulling her back to the real world.
“I’m awake,” she muttered, certain he didn’t hear him as her head was covered with a pillow. He apologised. “I don’t like to sleep this long, my body isn’t used to it,” she said as she removed the pillow, opening her eyes to look at her husband. He smiled as he carefully placed the tray he was holding on the nightstand next to her. She caught a glimpse of fresh fruit, toast, and a book, which meant he planned on making her lie there longer than she would wish for.

“You need all the energy you can get, the doctor said it, as did my mother.”

“If everyone I met told me I needed rest I would still complain, as I don’t like doing nothing all day.” He smiled and sat down next to her, his hand caressing her cheek before he leaned down and kissed her softly, until her mind and body melted beneath him.

“Happy anniversary,” he said as the kiss ended.

“Is that today?” she asked surprised, certain she had at least a week left. She was suddenly overwhelmed by emotions as she was aware of her mistake. “I don’t have your present.” They talked about it, and while neither one needed gifts, they wanted to share something for their special day, something which they agreed should represent their feelings for each other, and how they saw the other, which was why she wanted to buy a book she was certain he would enjoy, or at least discuss.

He smiled as he looked at her lovingly, then reached for something on the tray. It was hidden behind the large plate, so Margaret hadn’t seen it at first. It turned out to be a simple cotton flower, with a green ribbon tied around the stem. The cotton balls on top forming a soft white flower, reminding Margaret about their first meeting as cotton floated in the air like the softest snow, and then it reminded her of everything which happened between them since that day. Margaret didn’t need a big bouquet to feel loved, as the cotton flower had its own beauty, and compared to the ordinary flowers with pretty colours, it would last longer. “It’s beautiful,” she managed to say before tears rolled down her face, remembering certain moments, both good and bad, from the day they met up until their first anniversary.

“Don’t worry about giving me a gift, you’ve already given me the best gift I could have asked for.” She smiled as he caressed her large belly. “And as long as I have you, and your love, I’ll be the happiest man in this world.”

She smiled even broader, trying to wipe the tears from her face. “Come, lie with me, I want to hold you,” she requested, moving slightly to give him enough space. He undid the top buttons of his shirt, removed his shoes, and lied down next to her, his arm wrapped around her waist. “I feel so big,” she said, the belly making it impossible for her to lie as close to him as she liked.

“You’re perfect,” he replied, placing a soft and loving kiss on her forehead as his hand caressed her aching back. “And it won’t be long now, a few more months.”

When she was alone, resting in order to gain enough to do simple daily chores, a few months felt like forever, but as he lay next to her, telling her it wouldn’t be long, she believed him. “I love you,” she said, snuggling closer against his chest. “Happy anniversary.” He replied with the same words, then continued to comfort her until she was slowly drifting off into another dream.