

The Yeen Princess

Hazel closed her book and sighed contentedly. "God, what a good story!" She glanced over to her girlfriend and smiled. "You HAVE to give this a read after I finish!"

"What's it about?" April inquired, stifling a yawn as she stretched out across the bed. "Is this the same fantasy book you've been plugging away at all week or a new one?"

"Same book." Hazel grinned. "It's only getting better the further in I get! I think you'd really love it!"

"Well you have always had good taste." April sighed and reached out a hand. "Pass it over, I'll give the back a read."

"I can just read it to you?" Hazel offered, but extended her the book. "It's pretty-"

Whatever Hazel had intended to say next was lost as soon as April's fingertips touched the cover, an electric jolt shot across the glossy paper, flashing between the women's fingers! The two yelped in pain and tried to drop the paperback, but their hands felt glued to the novel as all about them the world winked out of existence, leaving them floating in an inky void. Then with another zap, Hazel felt the book vanish along with April, stranding her in utter darkness.

Hazel took in a deep breath, grateful on a subconscious level for the presence of air within the emptiness and let out a high pitched scream as all around her the world, or at least, a world rematerialized with a sound like thunder!

Hazel's scream echoed out across a barren landscape as she felt herself falling forward, her eyes widening as she became aware of the great height she was now suddenly looking down! Reflexively she threw out her hands and felt them connect with cold stone, halting her fall, though not stopping a pair of great weights which strained mightily against an unfamiliar dress which she now realized she was wearing.

Tearing her eyes away from the barren expanse below her, Hazel turned her gaze down first to the dark stone balcony which she was perched upon and then further down to a pair of huge, pale fur covered breasts which heaved distractingly against a frilly red dress which hugged her body. She raised a tentative hand and saw that her pale fingers had also been replaced by thicker, pawed digits, each tipped now with a sharp, black claw.

“Oh my!” Hazel gasped, turning to get a better look at herself and spotting a short, fluffy tail and a pattern of dark, grayish brown spots running across her now far fuzzier body. “Have I become my own hyena?” She raised a hand to her throat, feeling strange at the sound of her airy, higher pitched voice. “And why, pray tell, can I not think to form words without phrasing them in so unnatural a way?”

The new hyena’s pondering was interrupted by a sudden, terrible cry from below and she once again turned to face the threatening expanse of barren land which had first greeted her. Now however, the once empty terrain had been filled with a sight most terrible! There, far below, a black scaled behemoth rose from a craggy outcropping of rock, spreading great and terrible wings before flapping them and taking to the air with an unholy screech!

“A dragon!?” Hazel gasped, quivering as the beast landed heavily upon the ground before the tower where she stood. “What manner of world have I found myself in that could give rise to a fantastical menace such as this!?”

For a moment Hazel feared the terrible beast might turn its hungry green eyes up towards her, yet its attention seemed fixed upon the horizon. Following its gaze, Hazel squinted as a small shape, growing larger appeared over a cresting ashy hill. “Could it be...?” She wondered aloud. “If... I am a damsel trapped in a tower, guarded by a dragon then surely...” Her heart raced as the indistinct shape solidified into a clearly humanoid form, one mounted upon a mighty steed who looked to be enormous, dwarfing the steelclad rider. “A heroic knight, come to rescue me!”

A rush of relief filled Hazel’s heart, but no sooner had it come, then it was doused by an unpleasant revelation. “Oh dear...” She breathed. “If he rescues me, he will

surely be deeply disappointed to learn I am both promised to another... And also simply *extraordinarily* gay!"

Unaware of his folly, the knight rode ever closer, drawing from his side a shining blade and from his back a shield decorated with a crimson fish upon a violet field. Noting the extreme size of the shield, Hazel lifted a hand to shield her eyes and squinted at her would be rescuer, realizing with some concern that her initial impression had been wrong. The knight was not mounted upon a giant horse, but rather a fairly average sized pony, their diminutive stature having merely made the small equine appear far larger by comparison.

"Oh my!" Hazel gasped as the dragon roared and rose up to face the tiny knight. "My poor misguided savior! Surely he shall be roasted alive!" She threw her hand over her eyes and turned away from the balcony. "I cannot watch! My heart grows faint to even think of it!"

Hazel rushed through the room beyond the balcony, headless of the myriad niceties it contained, tossing herself onto the lavish bed at its center and began to weep. "What terrible curse has befallen me!?" She cried into her pillow. "To sweep me along into this world of adventure and dragons, only to leave me so faint of heart that I cannot even watch a little knight fight a dragon without feeling as if I will die of fright?" She gasped, raising her tear streaked face to the heavens. "It's not fair! I'd wager, even if it is one-sided, that it is still a tremendously exciting combat!"

A sudden terrible roar arose from the battle and Hazel jumped. "What was that!?" She rubbed her eyes and looked to the balcony. "It couldn't be... The dragon in pain? Has my hero truly managed to lay a blade to its scaly hide?" She bit her lip. "Perhaps... A small peek would not so jangle my nerves as to render me inconsolable?" She pushed herself from her bed and slowly began to creep back towards the balcony. "A glance only, then I shall return to my sobbing for the loss of so valiant a knight."

She took a deep breath and then stepped out of the tower room and once again peered down at the ongoing battle. "By god..." Hazel breathed, awe and chagrin churning within her breast. "Is he... Dodge rolling?"

Sure enough, the tiny knight clanked and clattered as he gamely hurled himself about the ground before the dragon's feet, kicking up dust clouds as the enraged drak blasted goutts of sizzling acid at its nimble adversary. Occasionally the diminutive warrior sprung back to his feet when nearer the dragon and slashed at the beast with his sword, but just as quickly as he rose, he would once again fling his body away, just in time to avoid a slash by one of the dragon's razor claws.

"I don't know if I should be impressed or underwhelmed..." Hazel admitted to herself as the black dragon began to retreat, its face a mask of rage and frustration. "Yet, it does appear to be working."

At last the dragon screamed again and with a flap of its massive wings, took to the sky and whirled away, soaring away from the battlefield and the irritating adversary who had managed to wound it in so humiliating a fashion. Hazel cheered as the monster retreated, but felt her face flush as her exaltation drew the attention of the knight who raised a hand to wave a greeting towards her.

"Oh dear..." Hazel sighed as the little knight began to make his way into the tower. "The poor man has accomplished so great a task... How ever shall I let him down gently!?"

She would not have long to ponder this as soon enough the heavy steps of the knight could be heard ascending the stairs to her chamber door. Hazel, finding her heart fluttering and her thoughts racing, fell back on her royal instinct and rushed to make herself presentable. Should she have to turn down her rescuer's advances, she had at least best look suitably dignified first after all.

A faint scraping told Hazel that a heavy bolt which had clearly been keeping the door securely fastened was being removed and not more than a heartbeat later, it began to slowly open.

"Wait!" Hazel cried, feeling suddenly apprehensive. "Pray, good sir knight! Do not enter a ladies' quarters without first knocking!"

The door stopped and then quickly closed again. A second later a light knock came upon her chamber door. "Doth the lady desire time to prepare?" A voice, echoey and muffled, called through the wooden barrier.

Hazel sighed. "No, good sir knight, I am decent and prepared for company."

The door once again opened and as it did, a figure not half her height strode inside. Hazel reflexively stepped back as the knight lightly brushed away a fleck of sizzling acid from their armor, the once flawlessly shiny steel now deeply marked and burnt. Within the armor's grooves, dirt and dust had collected, giving the noble warrior a most unkempt and common appearance.

"Apologies, your grace." The knight began, their voice, while echoey and muffled still, now more clearly taking on a feminin lilt. "I fear I have been made most egregiously unpresentable from my rough entrance." They set their sword and shield down by the door and then, with some small difficulty, curtsied. "Pray, forgive me for my frightful state."

"Rise, good lady!" Hazel blushed. "You have faced great hardship to come before me and I would not be so uncharitable as to critique you for a lack of courtly niceties! We are not at court besides, and you need not address me with such formality."

The knight lowered her head. "Forgive me, your grace, but I cannot help but feel that be you in a grand court or a humble hovel, your radiance and grace would prevent me from ever treating you with naught but the highest of deference."

Hazel felt her blush deepen and she raised a hand to cover her growing smile. "Good lady, you do me too much honor! I am no queen..." She paused, thinking, but instinct told her this was the truth. "I am a mere woman, same as you, and would speak with my savior as an equal." She reached out a hand. "Pray, remove your helmet so I may look upon your face!"

The knight took a step back and raised one of her own hands, warding Hazel off before she could touch her armor. "Please, stay your hand, your grace! Though I am loath to deny you even the smallest boon, I fear my helmet still burns with the dragon's acid and I would not see your delicate hands burnt on my account." She touched the side of her helmet. "I have warded my skin with potions for this conflict, but even so, it will be best to let it dry a little longer before I rid myself of this steel shell."

Hazel pulled her hand back to her chest and placed it over her breast. She did not wish to admit it, but the way her heart had begun to flutter was making it harder and harder to follow through on her determined plan of turning this mysterious suitor down. "Good lady knight," She spoke slowly. "Your heroism on this day will never be forgotten by me, but..." She hesitated. "Why did you risk so much to rescue me? Has my mother set a price for my safe return?" She swallowed and tightened her hand into a fist. "Has she offered... My hand to the one who saves me?"

The knight looked up at her and for a moment said nothing. Then, voice still echoing faintly from within the helmet she spoke, "Your mother did indeed offer many grand and glorious gifts to the one who safely returned you to her." She hesitated then lowered her head. "But I did not come for that which she offered. No, I came to fulfill a far more selfish and greedy desire."

Hazel's heart leapt into her throat and she took a hesitant step back. "And what, dare I ask, was that?"

The knight sighed deeply and turned her head up to stare directly at Hazel. "Merely so that I may have the chance to look upon the most beautiful maiden in all the lands. To have a chance, even briefly, to bask in her light, more nourishing than the morning and tender than the moon. I came not for gold, land, title or even to ask for you to be mine, but simply so that I could speak with you and have your lovely words etched upon my soul." She sighed again, a long and content exhalation. "You have granted me this boon and for it, I shall forever be indebted to you, my fair and perfect princess. I am now in your service and shall do as you ask from now until my final breath."

Tears began to form in Hazel's eyes and she blinked them away as best she could. "My darling knight..." She whispered. "Oh, but that I could return the devoted love you have shown me... I... I must confess..." She swallowed. "I have promised my heart to another - and, though it pains me greatly to say this, I cannot show you the kindness you have given me. I... I cannot accept one into my service whose love is so strong and so one-sided for it would break my heart daily to know how you suffered." She dropped her head. "Please, if you would

swear me an oath, make it this. That you will not make me take so much from you when I cannot give back in kind?"

The knight dropped her head and sighed. "I understand. I would not stand in the way of your happiness, my princess." She swallowed. "Then, may I be so bold as to ask for one other boon from you?"

"Anything!" Hazel agreed quickly. "Name your prize and I shall give it willingly!"

"A single kiss." The knight stated. "Grant me one kiss so that I may have, but a taste of the love of the most wonderful woman I have ever known." She reached up and placed both hands on either side of her helmet.

Hazel's heart sank and she bit her lip. "Oh good lady knight, I..." Her words failed her as the helmet was lifted and a green face greeted her with a broad, sharp toothed smile. The skin, the yellow eyes, the pointed nose, it was all new and yet in an instant Hazel recognized-

"APRIL!?"

"Hello, my lady." April winked and let the helmet fall to the floor. "I was hoping to sweep you off your feet, but if you already have someone you are seeing..."

"You- You- You!" Hazel stammered, then rushed forward, sweeping the goblin off her feet and pulling her into a deep kiss. "YOU LITTLE GREMLIN! Whyever did you decide to play such a horrid prank on me!?"

"Because what fun would it be to merely tell you of my true identity?" April grinned, leaning in to kiss Hazel once again. "Besides, you're adorable when you're flustered, princess."

"I should have you tossed in the dungeons for being such a pest!" Hazel fumed between yet more kisses. "I can do that, you know? I'm a princess here!"

“You were a princess before.” April beamed. “This just made it official.” She pulled herself in close and hugged Hazel tightly. “Besides, don’t threaten me with a good time...”

“You perverted little imp...” Hazel returned the embrace, tears rolling down her face. “I was worried I might have ended up in this land all alone...”

“You’re never alone, my love.” April whispered. “Because I will always be with you. Wherever you go, however far it may be, I’ll always find a way to follow you.”

Hazel sniffed and squeezed her girlfriend tight to her. “Well for now, I am not going anywhere...” She glanced about the room and smiled as she saw the bed. “Well, except for there.”

April followed her gaze and grinned. “Well well well... I suppose this fantasy epic can handle a few little fades to black...” She glanced back at Hazel. “How does this story end, by the way?”

“And they both lived happily ever after.” Hazel whispered as she carried April to the bed.

“Good.” April whispered back. “I love a happy ending.”

“And I love you.” Hazel leaned down and kissed April one more time.

The End