

I Saw Love

by kamichi jackson

I saw Love in the window of a quaint shop at the end of a road I'd often passed but had never ventured down before. Its beauty was breathtaking and I found myself staring at it in amazement, mesmerized, unable to turn away. I wondered how it felt to the touch. I wondered why I'd never been this close to it before. I wondered if I could make it mine.

I had to try, and I had to do so immediately, for surely such a rare and precious gem would be snatched up quickly. Heart pounding and pulse racing, I hurried inside, tightly clutching my handbag, but fully aware that nothing inside of it held enough value to purchase this particular item. For Love would not be bought with mere coins or printed paper. It was worth far, far more.

"Can I help you?" asked the shopkeeper as I entered and I stepped forward eagerly but the voice that responded was not my own. It came from somewhere behind me and I knew before even turning that I was too late...again.

"I'll take that item. The one in the window there," said a woman standing off in the corner. I hadn't seen her when I'd entered.

"Shall I wrap it?" asked the shopkeeper, but he'd barely come from behind the counter before the woman had snatched Love from out of the display window and tossed it into a worn, tattered shopping bag. I watched with grief as it settled at the bottom, buried beneath items of far less value and far less beauty.

“No,” she replied shortly, stepping past me and dropping the bag to the floor with a crash as she stood to face the shopkeeper who, with clear disgust at her indelicate treatment of Love, returned to his place behind the counter to complete their transaction.

She was gone a moment later, swinging the bag with such force that its contents shifted. The shopkeeper turned sympathetic eyes to me as I watched her go.

“Can I help you?” he asked gently, but he already knew he could not. “Miss,” he said as I turned to leave. His hands disappeared beneath the counter, then quickly reappeared holding a white gift box wrapped in lavender ribbon.

“Can I offer you Hope?” he asked, setting the box at the edge of the counter.

With tears in my eyes, I shook my head and reached out to touch his hand.

“Thank you,” I said with the widest smile I could manage, “but I had that once and I’ve since given it up.”

The air seemed cooler and the sky darker as I stepped outside of the quaint shop at the end of the road I’d often passed but had never ventured down before. I took one last look around me and sighed, knowing I’d never make the trip again.