

Twirling Dervishes Twisting in Circles

by

Morgana Feldstone

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The only way to describe her escort was with words like dashing, exciting, mysterious, and cool, but even a man the likes of him paled in comparison to the beauty on his arm. All eyes turned towards the stairs as she made her descent into the tavern's common room. Her long hair, shapely body, and lovely limbs immediately filled the stairway and all who saw her with joy. Each riser sighed with delight at the touch of her bare feet, while the walls merrily echoed the jingles from her bells and chains... of the finest gold, which covered her body... as if it were the greatest honor in all the universe merely adorn her body.

Beyond the jewels, she wore little else, a well placed gem and a few elegant, if insignificant, lengths of silk... but a beauty like hers you cannot hide. The crowd parted at her passing as her companion led her to the stage. The taste of their love was still fresh on their lips and they each breathed a quiet mournful breath of sorrow as she went alone before the crowd to start her dance, sway her hips, and mesmerize the crowd with her hypnotic gyrations.

She danced for hours, but it was like a mere moment. The crowd stood still, held its breath, and gazed longingly at her every motion. Her movements were like a gift from above to warm their hearts and as her performance came to a close, it was as if every soul in the crowd had been brought up to the very gates of heaven itself, that the vision dancing before them was the angel of mercy, and all they must do was ask and they would be allowed into this ultimate place of grace.

When she was done, she gave a slight bow and released the crowd from her spell. Instantly the hall erupted in wild applause as

the men clapped their hands, stomped their feet, and whistled as loud as they could. In the midst of this storm of approval, a flower landed on the stage, and then another. They were soon followed by a torrent of gold, silver, gems, and jewels as each member of the audience sought to outdo the next and in this way hope to win some small favor in the dancer's heart... but she took no notice of the men in the crowd. The gift, the true reward that awaited her at the end of her performance was the touch of her man, and the safety of his arms.

She joined him backstage and from where the bar wench looked on from the sawdust strewn floor, she could only watch longingly as the dark cloaked man led the dancer away to her reward and his love.

"She's so beautiful... so lovely... so lucky," the wench's voice trailed off as she gave the wizard his ale. He looked better than he had in times past. He looked like he would actually be able to pay tonight. Dare she hope? Might he even leave her a tip.

For his part the wizard fancied the barmaid and regarded her well. When times were rough, cold, and hard, she had snuck him a pint or two on the side and the occasional crust of bread. It wasn't much, but it was more than the rest.

As the ragamuffins and stagehands collected the gold, the wizard flashed a handful of gems at the pure hearted lass. "I've been working on a new spell," he explained as he handed the buxomous wench a scrap of paper to read. "Why don't we go up to your room and work out the details?"

As the fair maiden scanned the magical words, it did not take her long to make up her mind. Moments later, the pair of them eagerly rushed up the stairs. There was another show in an hour. They didn't have much time. They needed to get the wording just right... and then there were the other matters that made the story, the tale, and the spell, complete.

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