

# The Courtship of Agnes Kildred

by R.S. Courier

I sit on the gentle sloping hill idly gazing at the flowing honey golden fields of wheat flowing to and fro like the ebbing sea. She sits beside me, docile as a Hindu cow, timid as a newborn lamb. Her gown glowing with the starch white essence of gossamer's sheen.

She sees me not as myself but as one from the decade of war, Jerries, Liberty steak and Holocaust. In her soft flinting cosmic eyes, I am tall, young, and tight in an olive drab uniform speckled and splattered with ribbons flexing all spectrums of the rainbow and medals shimmering and glinting bronze to gold reflections in the dying sunlight.

Dusk comes creeping slowly. The great Sol giant in the sky resists the coming of night and its dark haunting promises of lust, love, and sin to the star-crossed duo so far below watching it fade like witnesses at an execution. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Amorously, delicately, confidently, with all the conviction of a Quasimodo in Casanova's skin, I stroke her soft silly putty chin with the faintest tips of my fingers. Her hair, silver upon silver catches the wind and flies from her tender face. Resting with her arms behind her, I see her in her former Vargus glory splashed with lead heavy pastels and a post card quote of back home inspiration across the fuselage of a doomed six-manned airborne whale hell bent on leveling great structures of the Fatherland. My sock-hopping Venus corrupted on dated jazz and tales of bootlegging days hosting contemporary outlaws loaded with hooch, tommy guns, and charisma.

"Harold?" I have long since removed the deceptive tag of my orderlies' uniform that refers to me as the unsavory 'Steven.' "Harold, when do you think the gram crackers will march? Sonny keeps saying they are waiting for the pancakes to choose a new leader. But, I don't trust the pancakes. They reproduce too fast, without any care for anyone else. They've almost pushed the waffles plum out of Wisconsin."

I slide my finger oh so gently to her razor thin lips. Shush my sweet, not another angelic word. Though her childish, mindless chatter tugs at my throbbing heart like the spinning somber verses inked by long dead Greek hands, I cannot allow the sinking yellow-orange upon red sun to go to waste. Her hand, at first glance, gnarled, twisted, and ugly, but later revealed worn, defined and as beautiful as the bark of a great oak, wraps tenderly around my silencing finger.

"Don't shush me Harold! It would do you some good to pay attention to the politics goin' on around you. My daddy always used to tell me that a man with no eye on the world was like a gopher with a pea stuck in his throat; always ready to fly but carrying too much sand in his shoes."

The graceful expression of childlike innocence on her face, contrasted by the lines of age, brings heart-crushing tears to my eyes. I curse the gods above and below for donning such a tragic, earth shattering love upon my unrighteous heart. Oh what cruelty to cast such an ill-fated hopeless calamity at two lovers such as us, in a world where none can see the beauty of our souls connecting. What unwarranted torture is this? What sins

of my former lives damn me with this tragic hell?

"Now don't you be crying, Harold. Don't you feel bad for those men you killed back there. I know your sensitivity, and it ain't nothing to be ashamed of. But remember, they was Nazis, and you had to get me out before they turned me into a goat like poor ol' Mr. Peterson."

Oh such love! Oh such understanding! Like Athena consoling my questionable deeds with the reassurance of righteousness. One sweet kiss I must have. Oh to taste just one glance of those pale inviting lips would be like a stolen sip of sweet ambrosia. I lunge forward, all care to be damned, and steal my kiss. The fluttering of my heart jumps and skips to where I feel as if my death is at hand. A thousand lives I would take, a million miles across scorched earth I would tread, over the farthest reaching peaks I would climb, to place my lips so heavenly upon hers again.

With confident, firm hands, she gently pushes me from her. Every inch of separation cuts at my soul like jagged daggers, but I must not harm her fragility. Thus, I obey. Flashing a sly smile, she reaches down with the grace of a Gomorran seductress, pulls ever so slowly at the hem of her gown. Up and up, over her ankles, knees, thighs laced with blue atlas like like veins until her waist and below is completely exposed to me.

"Now, you know you can't have me until we're married. But, I don't mind if you look at me while you diddle yourself. My shining knight deserves as much."

Hastily I fumble at my trousers, ever so willing to accept her voyeuristic gift with the greatest of graciousness. But fate, oh cruel fate will not even grant us such a moment as innocent as this. Iridescent lights, flashing the telltale blue and red glow of authority come racing to us with breakneck urgency fueled by misplaced desperation and purpose.

Oh cruel gods, you will not steal our love from us! Since life offers no chance for hearts such as ours, then death shall be our salvation. I stand with the determination of a gladiator. I will not be cheated! To my left lies a rotted pole of a fence long forgotten and moved by the changing lines of a map in a government office. This pole shall be our vessel. I take it up and hold it out gloriously for all the powers to see, My love looks into my eyes, deep with understanding and willingness.

"Goodbye, sweet Agnes." I whisper tenderly before driving the aged, dirt ridden wooden mace into her skull.