



The Two Lovers and a Mistaken Identity

A story written by Mark Worth, for *All the Street's a Stage*, 2019

In a beautiful Italian city, two castles stood side by side. The families who owned the castles had been at war for many years. Nobody alive, could remember why they were at war or even when their feud had begun, the only thing they knew, was that they hated each other.

Separating the two castles was a large old stone wall, that had been built by the many warring generations that had come before. As time had gone by the mortar that had once held so strong had become old and had started to crumble to reveal a chink, that allowed not only light to shine through but also forbidden conversation.

Two star crossed lovers... The Prince in one castle and a Princess in the other fell in love after many months of communicating through the chink. Secrets and feelings were shared between the two young loves as they whispered many nights away, all the time keeping it a secret from their parents.

Unable to keep up the pretence of hating his neighbours, the Prince sought advice from a wise local wizard, called Prospero.

"Prospero, I am in desperate need of your help and if you do not help me, I do not know what I will do" exclaimed the Prince to the wise old man. "I need to find a way of visiting my dearest princess, through the wall. I wish to marry her but alas it must be in secret, for if our parents should discover our love we will both be in trouble."

Prospero had been in this position before, for the beautiful Italian city that he found himself living in often created forgotten loves and misplaced passions. "Young Prince, what you ask for is not easy, but if you take this small vile of potion it will give you the shrinks until you are small enough to fit through the chink and visit your Princess, at which point, you will return to your normal size."

"You are too kind Prospero! How can I ever repay you?"

Prospero sat back in his chair thinking. Eventually he nodded. "Indeed, this is a great task and will require a large payment."

"Of course Prospero, my family have riches".

"I ask for only one thing in payment" Prospero whispered. "Your eyesight."

The foolish Prince, overcome with excitement and the passions young love bring quickly replied. "My eyesight is but a small price to pay to be in the arms of my true love."

Transaction complete, the Prince, armed with the small magical potion, blindly made his way home, feeling his way through the streets and into the garden where he and his one true love would whisper to each other through the wall. Downing the potion in one, the Prince felt for the hole in the wall and he slowly began to shrink.

Without his eyesight, the loving Prince scabbled through the chink in the wall, relying solely on his sense of touch alone. Once on the other side of the wall he returned to his normal size but as he did so, he neared his true love in the arms of another man. His heart sank, tears welled in his sightless eyes. Outraged and full of hurt the young Prince pulled his sword and ran towards the entwined couple shouting his disdain. Despite his blindness, his blade swished, swooshed and sliced leaving the two lovers dead on the floor.

Panting, exhausted both physically and mentally the young Prince collapsed, lamenting his true love's infidelity. However as he did so, he heard the voice of his love call out.

"Dear Prince, what have you done?"

Unable to work out what was happening and fearing for any repercussions, the Prince reached for his sword once more.

"Dear love" the Princess said "Please tell me you did not do this. Please tell me you did not strike down my mother and father!"

"But dearest Love, I thought it was you with another man..." the Prince said apologetically.

A wail unlike any you have heard erupted from the Princess as she grieved her parents' death. Unable to contain his pain and guilt, the Prince held his sword up high.

"I am Fortune's Fool!"

With that he pulled the sword down towards his chest but in seeing what the Prince was about to do, his love, the princess, tried to stop him by placing herself between him and the sword's tip. As the sword came down the blinded prince impaled both himself and the princess, leaving them both on the floor dead.