

Correspondence between Christoper and Yennifer

by

Thijs Wester

Darling Yena —

I find Myself now at the Residence of Madame Corsique at her Study in London.

The Ride here was treacherous, my Carriage was assaulted by Winds that turned my Beard inside out, as well as Sunlight strong enough to bleach a Camel into a Horse. I have nevertheless arrived and find Myself both saddened by my Distance from You, and excited to work on this most interesting Commission.

While the rough Outline of my Work has not changed from the assignment Letter I read to You, the Details — which I was enlightened of Today by Madame Corsique's Maid — both frighten and intrigue me. As You no-Doubt remember, Madame Corsique is one of the leading Experts in the Translation, Interpretation and Transliteration of Works in Arabic and Syriac. For this Reason, I expected to be dictated a Work in either of the abovementioned Languages, the Transcription of which would be unproblematic on Account of my Studies under Doctor Zayd. The Maid however declared to Me — after an Inquiry into my Knowledge of various Languages — that the Work would be dictated to Me in Greek.

If our Holiday to Crete is Anything to go by, I surmise that this Task will be more challenging than I initially expected.

Our first Session will be Tomorrow at 5 in the Morning, in Light of which I hope You will forgive the briefness of my Letter today. I shall write to You again on Friday.

Best of Health to You and the Baby,

Christopher

The first transcription Session with Madame Corsique was a peculiar One, as was the noble Lady Herself. While It might have been fair to call Her an “odd Bird” —She certainly would be r eferred to as such back Home — here, such Pronunciations go against Etiquette and friendly Euphemisms are used instead. Thus, when the Maid described the Madame as “Esoteric”, I did not expect to be presented with such a downright queer Person.

The Room in which She was waiting to receive Me looked sterile and the numerous Windows are blown open. Finding Myself in the freezing-, and empty-Room, I moved to close the Window closest to Myself when a Shriek stopped Me in my Tracks.

Madame Corsique has been standing by one of the larger Windows, wearing a Dress of Fabric so Transparent that it could not have given much Comfort in the chilling Winds. She instructed Me to leave the Window open and proceeded to walk — or rather to glide — over to the Desk perched in the Centre of the Room.

I informed her of the Rheumatism in my Hands, in light of which I would not be able to work with the Windows open unless a hefty Fire was constructed in the Hearth. While I mean the Comment of the Hearth as a Joke — something of an Icebreaker in for the heat-forsaken Room — Madame Corsique chose to take my Comment at face Value and instructed the Maid to produce a Fire and even to ready me a Jug of boiling Water as to allow me to work in the early morning Chill.

After this Business concluded, another Maid was called to bring forth Utensils whith which I was to write.

The Paper was clearly expensive, and as White as our beautiful Lyra the day She was born. The Ink — though it looked a strange shade of Red and smelled of the Spices brought to England by the East India Company — was an absolute Delight to write with, and seemed to be immune to staining.

After Madame Corsique had dictated roughly a Paragraph of Text — in Greek I remind You — She suddenly stopped and asked if I understood what She had just dictated to Me. I explained to Her that it had been some Time since I have dusted off my Copy of Homer, but that I nevertheless understood quite well what She was saying. My Answer must have dissatisfied Her because she chose to move to French for the following Paragraph.

This Process repeated a number of Times until We arrived at Hungarian which — I had to admit to Her — I had understood Nothing of. After looking over my Work, She simply stated “That will do”, and continued the remainder of our Session in the Eastern Language.

I have spoken to You before about taxing Clients, but None compare to Madame Corsique. Even after just one Day I am entirely Spent. She has thoroughly drained my Ability both to listen and to think. While the Hungarian Spelling is none too complicated, and Madame Corsique speaks softly and slowly, transcribing a Language which One does not speak, is by far the most complicated Task a Member of my Profession may be given.

I must rest now, let my Mind Wonder and Dream of Home, of You, and of Lyra. It will not be long before I am called on again, as Madame Corsique insisted we move tomorrow’s Session yet an hour earlier.

All the Best for You and the Baby,

Christopher

