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The Queen of Night



FREDERIC M. SPOTSWOOD





THE QUEEN OF NIGHT

OR

THE POET'S DREAM

BY

FREDERIC M. SPOTSWOOD



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THE QUEEN OF NIGHT.

I.

How sweet to watch the sea at night
All quiet and serene :
With never a ripple or a sound
To mar the peaceful scene.
When the moonbeams play at hide and seek
O'er the slumbering wave :
When the hour is midnight, and the wind
Is silent as the grave.

II.

On such a night, at such an hour,
I stood upon the shore ;
And sensations came upon me
I had never felt before.
I thought of days of olden time
When nymphs and naiads fair
Assembled on that very spot
Disporting in the air.

III.

But hark ! what noise is that I hear ?
Surely not a breeze ;
Nor can it be the rustling
Of the leaves upon the trees.
Now, as I scan with eager eye
The surface of the sea,
I see afar a brilliant light
That nearer comes to me.

IV.

And now sweet music greets my ear.
Oh ! list, ye gods of night ;
It must be that of angel choir
Stayed in their heav'nly flight.
Far out upon the waters clear
A little bark I see ;
It swiftly skims the silent deep
Bearing straight to me.

V.

No mortal tongue can ever tell
The rapture that was mine,
While listening to those thrilling notes
Of music so divine :

The bark glides nearer to the shore
Deep silence reigns supreme ;
I can not move, I can not speak,
It surely is a dream.

VI.

And now a figure stands erect,
" Be still my trembling heart ;"
Such beauty never lived on earth,
Of Heav'n it is a part.
Her heavy locks of golden hair
Are trailing at her feet ;
Her brilliant eyes of deepest blue
Mine try in vain to meet.

VII.

They glow and glisten like two stars,
They shed a fiery flame ;
For so much love and tenderness
Language knows no name.
Half parted lips of coral red
Reveal the rarest pearls ;
Two dimples nestle in her cheeks
Veiled by her golden curls.

VIII.

Around her graceful form there hung
A robe of white and gold;
A poet's dream of loveliness—
(And half has not been told).
A diadem of precious stones
Of wealth and beauty rare,
Shed all around a ray of light
Like sunshine in the air.

IX.

And on that crown upon her head
These words were written plain:
“ Isabel, Queen of the Night,
And of the sea, doth reign.”
Around this queen of loveliness
Their beauty unsurpassed,
Were grouped six maidens who propelled
That bark, without a mast.

X.

A snowy arm was raised on high
And all around was still;
The Night Queen sang a song so sweet
My very soul did thrill;

It was the song that charmed me there
That night beside the sea ;
And as I think and dream of her
The words come back to me.

[*Song of the Night Queen.*]

There is some one seeking a lover,
Some one tender and true ;
Tho' kings of the sea round her hover
Some one has chosen you.

'Tis some one roaming the ocean
Some one Queen of the Night,
Who offers to you a portion
Of all her power and might.

Some one gives you a heart,
Some one lovely and bright ;
Oh say, are you ready to start,
To the home of the Queen of the Night ?

Some one is hoping and waiting,
Some one is longing for you ;
With love that knows no abating,
She watches you now with her crew.

Some one will care for you ever,
Some one will love you alone ;
And nothing shall part us, no never,
When *Isabel* once is your own.

Some one has eyes that are beaming,
Some one has cheeks like the rose ;
Some one thinks he is dreaming ;
Does he love ? Ah, somebody knows.

[*Chorus of Sea Nymphs.*]

Some one is singing so sweetly
Some one is filled with delight ;
Some one is vanquished completely
By Isabel, Queen of the Night.
Queen of the murmuring sea,
Beautiful goddess of night ;
And happy, so happy are we
Who share her love and her might.

XI.

A blissful thrill of pure delight
Suffused my trembling heart ;
And then I knew and felt the joy
Which first love can impart.

I often thought and talked of love
So full of mystery ;
But Oh ! what happiness I found
In sweet reality.

XII.

I had no will or power to think,
I cried out in despair :
“ Oh, leave me not thus, Isabel,
But take me anywhere,
For life itself away from thee
Is worse than death to me ;
My heart is thine, and thou art mine
Through all eternity.”

XIII.

“ I can have no abiding place
Save in thee alone ;
Without thee all is darkness
Since thy eyes on me have shone.
Earth's creatures are but shadows now
To thee I fondly cling,
And I could give up life itself
If but to hear thee sing.”

XIV.

Earth seemed to wane and fade away
Just how I can not tell ;
But thro' it all and every-where
I saw Queen Isabel.
A charming sense of listlessness
Pervaded all my being ;
When Heav'nly visions come, and then
Like shadows, swiftly fleeing.

XV.

Then helplessly I yielded
To some unseen fascination ;
And passively I closed my eyes
Devoid of animation.
And then I heard a low, sweet voice,
Given in command :
"Away, my maidens, out to sea,
Back to our native land."

XVI.

Now though I did not dare to move,
I opened wide my eyes ;
And what I saw around me
Filled my heart with glad surprise.

I lay on bed of roses
Of every tint and clime ;
And all I saw was wonderful
In beauty and design.

XVII.

There sat on either side of me
Three maidens clothed in white ;
There was another at my feet
She was the Queen of Night.
Each wore a wreath of rarest flowers
Whereon was written plain,
In letters made of precious stones,
Her station and her name.

XVIII.

Marguerite was tall and very fair,
Her eyes were grayish blue ;
She looked so coy, so innocent,
I thought " her heart is true."
I longed to have her for my friend,
And I decided there
That she should be my confidant
And every secret share.

XIX.

And Eleanore, whose love-lit eyes
And far-off pensive gaze,
Filled my heart with longing
And with thoughts of happy days.
Her heart seemed in the distance
And she breathed a gentle sigh ;
For *her* I felt compassion
As she watched the moon-lit sky.

XX.

Lucille was small and dainty,
And her merry laugh was heard
Above the rippling waters
Like the singing of a bird.
I said, "She's fair to look upon,
But what is that to me?
For I can never be a friend
To such frivolity."

XXI.

Viola was full of grace,
Her raven locks did hang
Over shoulders white as snow
And Oh, how sweet she sang.

A winning smile lit up her face ;
I said, "How sweet and fair,
It is not difficult to see
That modesty is there."

XXII.

Amelia, although beautiful,
Was not what I would deem
An ideal of true womanhood
Or of a poet's dream ;
Her eyes were bright and sparkling,
But with coldness and disdain ;
"A heartless flirt," I sadly sighed,
There, love can never reign.

XXIII.

Olivia, Oh, I long to tell
What words can not express ;
The love that beamed within her eye
Proclaimed her tenderness.
And Grecian pen could not portray
Such beauty and such grace ;
Her smile would shame the sun's bright ray—
She had a heavenly face.

XXIV.

Her voice was like the lullaby
Of night, so full of ease ;
It seemed to be the echo
Of a gentle summer breeze.
“ Olivia, will sing to us,
Said Isabel, the Queen ;”
And stranger, hearken to her song,
’Tis called “ A Poet’s Dream.”

[*Olivia Sings.*]

Away ye phantoms of the night
That mar my dream of love so bright ;
I will not think of broken vow,
’Tis but a vision anyhow.
For while he held my hand so fair
He said, “ By all the gods, I swear
Through life and through eternity
I will be true to thee.”

Oh, star, shine brightly from above
Upon my absent wand’ring love ;
Nor ever let him sorrow know
Nor feel the touch of cruel woe.
Always on his pathway shine
For I was his and he was mine.

And I shall never know repose
Till on his cheek I see the rose ;
Which faded as he said " farewell "—
That word which as a funeral knell
Brought grief and anguish to my heart
Which never, never shall depart.

While gazing at the pale moon's beam
Or at the star's bright silver sheen ;
My longing heart does yearn in vain
To hear his words of love again.
The gentle sigh of evening breeze
Is sweet to lovers 'neath the trees ;
But ah, what agony to me,
For it recalls what used to be !

He saw a fairer one than I,
He loved her and left me to die ;
Ah, fickle man ! Ah, cruel heart !
Do recollections never start
Of one who loved and trusted you ?
To whom you vowed you would be true ?
Yet think not I would have thee near
While others are to thee more dear.
I think of thee and sadly sigh,
And Oh, *I long for days gone by.*

XXV.

If I admired Olivia,
 Before I heard her voice ;
I now knew I could worship her
 And that she was my choice.
That voice so full of sympathy
 Brought tears into my eyes ;
Her gaze was fixed upon me
 And I heard responsive sighs.

XXVI.

Just then I looked at Isabel,
 The lovely Queen of Night ;
Her violet eyes were beaming
 With a tender, happy light.
She said, " We'll take our captive
 To a land where he shall be
The courted of our maidens,
 And the theme of minstrelsy."

XXVII.

So there he shall abide with us,
 And, if he stand the test,
Then he shall take unto himself
 The one he loves the best.

But if like others heretofore
He knows not whom to choose,
Then he returns from whence he came,
Forever a recluse.

XXVIII.

And now borne on the evening breeze
Comes music soft and clear ;
'T is lute and harp in sweet accord,
It must be very near.
The bark glides swiftly to a bank,
But once again I find
That I am helpless as at first
In body and in mind.

XXIX.

I fell into a slumber sweet,
I dreamed of Isabel ;
And then I saw Olivia
In a lonely mountain dell.
I thought I heard her whisper,
Her voice was sweet and clear ;
“ How very happy I should be
If he were always near.”

XXX.

Aroused from sleep and startled
I sprang up from the ground;
For quite a while I could not think
But wildly looked around.
Then gradually came back to me
Remembrance of the past;
And then I sighed, "It was a dream
Which was too sweet to last."

XXXI.

But doubts and fears were soon dispelled,
For as I looked around
I saw I was a captive,
And my hands were fetter bound.
Such a prison! Such a chain!
Were never seen before,
And I smiled with satisfaction
As I watched my prison door.

XXXII.

In rich profusion every-where
Were scattered rarest flowers;
And all the air seemed laden
With delicious fragrant showers.

The lilac and the locust bloom
Entwined my wrists around ;
With eager expectation
I waited for a sound.

XXXIII.

I had not very long to wait,
For soon I heard a voice ;
It brought me sweetest ecstasy
And made my heart rejoice.
“Bring the prisoner forth,” it said,
We can not long delay ;
His trial must be over
Before the dawn of day.

XXXIV.

Ere I could realize the truth
My eyes were bandaged tight ;
And I was hurriedly led out
Before the Queen of Night.
Excitement reached its highest pitch,
And yet I had no fear ;
For tho' 't was strange, I felt secure
When Isabel was near.

XXXV.

Then came in accents sweet and low
The voice I loved to hear ;
It brought me comfort, peace and hope,
'T was music to my ear.
“ Sir Poet, you are standing now
Before the Queen of Night ;
On either side are twenty maids
Who watch you with delight.”

XXXVI.

“ Now, when you are at liberty,
Look well to either side ;
And choose the one that you prefer
To be your future bride.
Not one of them will you refuse
Not even Isabel,
And if you choose *her* from your heart
She'll always love you well.”

XXXVII.

I thought my choice was surely made,
That Isabel would be
The one to light my path through life
To share my destiny.

And visions of a happy home
Where love should reign supreme,
Filled my heart with ecstasy—
Life seemed a blissful dream.

XXXVIII.

The sighing of the evening breeze
Was sweet, so sweet to me ;
Just then the veil was lifted
And again my eyes could see.
I will not now describe the sight,
I could not if I would ;
Completely charmed I looked around
As speechless there I stood.

XXXIX.

Two lines of twenty maidens each
Were standing on the green ;
Each faced the other and I knew
That I must go between.
One minute's time to each of them
In which if I should feel
That she was all my heart's desire,
To that one, I should kneel.

XL.

'T is said by some that mortal tongue
Was never made to give
Expression to the sentiment
Which in the heart doth live.
So I will not attempt it,
For time and space are brief;
And with the thought, what might have been,
Comes the deepest grief.

XLI.

I started down the narrow space
With faltering step and heart;
And then I knew that after all
Mine was no easy part.
For though my gaze was fixed upon
The lovely Queen of Night,
I felt that other eyes were there
Equally as bright.

XLII.

To Isabel, I came at last,
I could not speak with ease;
Indeed my heart was in my throat,
I fell upon my knees.

“Queen of the Night,” I murmured,
“And of the boundless sea,
Wherever I may wander
I will remember thee.”

XLIII.

“I know not why or how you bring
Such joy into my heart;
I only know that of this life
You are my better part”
“Turn to the left,” quoth Isabel,
“Your time with me expires—
One other yet remains to see,
Who all your love desires.”

XLIV.

I turned, and Oh, my heart did sink,
For beautiful and fair,
Olivia stood and looked at me
The picture of despair.
“Olivia,” I cried in grief,
“Forgive me, I am thine,
And every hope and joy in life
For thee I will resign.”

XLV.

Her dreamy eyes were bright with love ;
She shook her head and wept ;
Ah, could I break this trusting heart
For me, so fondly kept ?
And then in words of stern command
Spoke Isabel, the queen,
“ Double hearted flatterer
Your like was never seen.”

XLVI.

“ You'll never know the happiness
Which sweet contentment brings ;
For you are vain and fickle
And you wish for better things.
You talk and write of woman's love,
We thought you were sincere ;
But you prove yourself unworthy
And you must not linger here.”

XLVII.

I know that I can never speak
The anguish of my heart,
When in scorn and proud disdain
She bade me to depart.

Olivia, was lost to me,
The Queen of Night as well ;
The misery that filled my soul
No words of mine can tell.

XLVIII.

What happened next, I can not say,
All was a blank to me ;
When I awoke to consciousness
I lay beside the sea.
I gazed out at the wat'ry waste,
And fading from my sight
Was the bark that brought to me
The lovely Queen of Night.

XLIX.

And now, by the sad sea wave
I languish all alone ;
And for my pride and folly
I never can atone.
And often at the midnight hour
I watch upon the shore ;
My heart longs for Olivia,
But a voice says, "Nevermore."

L.

I see her now in visions lone
 With her dark flashing eye ;
In dreams I see her smile so sweet
 And hear her pensive sigh.
I linger yet beside the sea,
 Hoping, but in vain—
Olivia, nor Isabel,
 Will ever come again.

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