

The Beads
by
Kelli Lowry

copyright Kellu Lowry, 1999. All Right Reserved.

He looked down and saw her, remembering when he'd given the beads his blessing and hoped for even more. He'd kissed the beads and rose from the genuflected position he'd been in, hoping to find someone who would be worthy of them. Waving down at the attractive young lady he'd seen in the crowd from the float, he smiled beneath his mask. "Show for throw! Come on, show for throw."

Laughing, she'd shaken her head in a negative gesture.

He would try once more. "Show for throw!"

This time barely smiling, she refused by turning to walk away. That wasn't why she was here.

"Take them anyway." He'd yelled over the roar of the crowd and tossed them to her anyway.

She caught, then slipped them into the pocket of the light jacket she wore.

Later on that evening, she could have sworn she heard distant voices, no clear and distinctive words coming from them, but only the sounds of fear--great fear. Shaking her head, she picked up her jacket to put it away. The sounds had been closer when she'd picked up her jacket. Reaching for the beads she remembered were there, she took them and laid them on the bedside table. She'd do something with them tomorrow or the next day.

As she lay down to go to sleep, she turned off the light. The voices

became louder the longer she lay there in the darkness. Finally she sat up and turned on the light. Picking up the beads, she looked at them closely under the light. The way the light reflected from them made them look as if there were faces trapped inside. Faces with frozen forever in time with agonized fear on them.

Shrugging her shoulders, she put them back on the table. Yes, they were pretty enough for beads, but she'd never wear them, she wasn't the type for that sort of thing. Turning the light back off, she tried to allow sleep to overtake her, but again, she could hear the voices filled with terror.

Getting aggravated, she got up and threw the beads into the trash can in the corner of her room. The voices grew even louder than before. Giving up, she retrieved the beads and laid down again, holding them. "Save yourself! Please, save yourself!" They lamented over and over, sounding increasingly desperate in the darkness of the room. The more she tried to ignore it, the pleading wails became even more insistent as time progressed.

Unsure of what to do, she finally gave up. Leaning up, she slipped them around her neck. Suddenly, she felt a nothingness surround her as the world fell away into a black darkness.

The same time, the same place, the next year, he looked down and saw her, remembering when he'd given the beads his blessing and hoped for even more.

He'd kissed the beads and rose from the genuflected position he'd been in, hoping to find someone who would be worthy of them...