

The Face of the Field*

Sherilyn Connelly

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This is what happened. Elijah never trusted me. It seems like the closer a man is to his deity, the less he seems to trust women. And us "painted slatterns?" Forget it. (The way he goes on about it, you'd think the descent of man is a direct result of Lilith putting on too much eyeshadow. Look, if her eyes were anything like mine, they needed help, okay?) As far as Elijah is concerned, every bad thing done by a man within the sound of my voice was my fault.

Then there's the dog thing. Elijah has a lot of questionable ideas, but prophesizing, predicting, hoping, *fantasizing* that I'd be ripped apart by dogs? Sometimes I wonder if he didn't start with that image in his mind, then worked backwards to find a reason to justify it. By any standard, being struck dead by his Jehovah should be enough, but this isn't just punishment for perceived sins. It's a satisfaction of his own bloodlust, fueled by a fear of what I represent to him.

Ahab always hated it when I talked this way. He said it wasn't right for women to be so...intellectual, especially one like me. It didn't make sense to him that someone who looked like she should have been stoned to death as a whore would have a half a brain. Then again, he felt threatened by thoughtfulness no matter what. Never much of a thinker, my Ahab. He didn't have to be.

Everyone keep coming back to the Naboth incident. What amazes me is that anybody even cares. Yes, it was cruel and unfair. All Naboth wanted to do was hold onto his ancestral land, which had probably belonged to his family before royalty moved in next door. He wouldn't give it up, so Ahab had him killed and took the land for himself. That's extremely harsh, no question.

But is it news? The *world* is cruel and unfair, and much of it is perpetuated by the more powerful having their way with the less powerful. It's no big secret. People have been put to death for far lesser crimes than Naboth's obstinate territoriality. Ironically, it's one of the few decisive things Ahab ever did. I was actually rather proud of him for doing it entirely by himself.

Then everyone gets it into their heads that it was *my* idea, that I forged Ahab's hand to do it, and it suddenly becomes this great big despotic act of oh-so-wanton cruelty. If I hadn't been associated with it (and I think we can safely assume a certain bedraggled fortune-teller was responsible for that), then it wouldn't have been remembered beyond an additional column in the treasurer's ledger for new gardening supplies. Otherwise, it's just business as usual. If you don't have a sense of entitlement to all you survey, then there isn't much point to being a king, is there?

Naturally, it's all fine and good for men. Yes, I know there have been women who ruled with iron fists and steel-tipped boots, fearsome Queens who struck more terror into their subjects than Ahab ever could--even when he got drunk and ran around the palace waving a knife, shouting "You know what we need around this joint? More eunuchs!" (People would usually just pat him on the head and roll their eyes at me.) Those women generally weren't pagans who married into Jehovah's little clique, though. Elijah's whole hangup about my appearance was only made worse by my quote-heathen-unquote status, and the fact that I tried to convert others to Baal. Well, of course I did. He would have, too--tried to win converts to Baal, that is--if he hadn't been dropped on his head as a child so much that he started hearing voices.

I don't suppose it matters much at this point. Ahab is long since dead, felled by an extraordinarily unlikely arrow (I'm inclined to blame Ahab's bad luck more than the good luck of the archer), and his blood was allegedly licked up by dogs.

Rumor? Fact? Does it matter? Repeated enough, one will become the other.
This is Elijah getting his revenge, just the way he wanted it.

Presently, I'm stuck in this room, and outside the window is Elijah's stooge Jehu and his army, with their chariots and horses and fierce convictions. All I can hear is the barking, though. Elijah and his damned dogs. I don't get his obsession with consumption by dog, and I know I'll never get a chance to.

That door is about to open, and I'm going to have an accident involving this window.

The door's opening—

Eunuchs. It would have to be the eunuchs, wouldn't it?

* 2 Kings 9:37: and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, "This is Jezebel."



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