

“Promises”

Whisked away by a whirlwind romance,
 Living out my dream.
 Fairy tale wedding — pavlova dress and roses,
 Bridesmaids and doves; (
 Setting off in our chariot,
 Tins clanking behind,
 “Just Married” written clumsily by the best man. (1) (6) (7)
 Our GJ Gardner home,
 the white picket fence I had always dreamt of,
 a lawn sprinkled with daisies,
 The brass knocker set upon the charming red door.
 The quaint cottage; the traditional letterbox
 The friendly postman,
 one of our many delightful neighbours.
 A lush garden littered with dirt trucks and
 Barbies, pails and pans —
 playground, fantasy world and kitchen for mud pie
 brewing.
 My precious little darlings, children who bring us
 so much joy.
 Stay at home mother, walking every step with my
 babies,
 Ready for them, waiting for them when they get
 home from school.
 I’ve wanted this ever since I was a little girl
 Using Grandma’s doily collection as beautiful
 veils.
 My handsome prince would be my hero, I just
 knew it. (7)
 But he was the death of me.
 Hades.

Handsome prince? God of the Underworld?
 Don't quite go together, do they? (6)
 Oh, the naivety of it all.
 My seventeen year old self
 Was entranced, snared by his charm.
 How he did it, we will never know.

Down.
 Down, down, down.
 The gates came rising up to meet us, burning with
 a vengeance (2)
 Of eternity as our pure white Pegasus went down. (7)
 Down,down,down. (6)
 To the fiery depths of hell.
 And that’s where I have been ever since,
 Two hundred and thirty six years on.

And what do I have to show for my life?
 A shabby Bed and Breakfast for the lowlifes of the
 world above. (3)
 Men waltz on in, past Cerberus, across the Styx
 To reach their final destination.

My place.
 My mansion, my palace, my cave? (3)
 It is dank.It is damp. It is dark.
 It is, in fact, a dungeon.
 My home sweet home,
 A bloody hole in a rock. (6)

The guests saunter past, demanding this and that
 and the next thing; When
 they’ve been sent down for eternal punishment!

I can see why they’re here, anyhow. (4)

Hades sashays around like he owns the whole
 freaking place,
 Setting things on fire whenever it takes his fancy.
 Torturing damned souls with the most awful acts
 of brutality,
 And that’s on a good day.
 You should see him after a hard day at the office! (5)

And me?
 I’ve always been told that marriage is a
 partnership,
 yet you wouldn’t know that down here.
 No, normal 21st century social conventions don’t
 apply.

I am his mistress, his house keeper, his slave. (5)
 My body is not my own anymore, which is
 something I never
 In a million years
 thought could happen.

And the thing is that there is absolutely nothing I
 can do about it.
 I have tried escaping, but let’s not even go there, (9)
 That cost me twelve years of the little freedom I
 do have.

It’s not often I get girlfriends popping in for coffee, (7)
 Cake and a chinwag, no connection to the real
 world.
 I waved goodbye to the book club a long, long
 time ago,

The scoundrels my way are far from literate.
 The only dealings I down get here are with the
 souls
 Who dwell in my spare rooms; rude, ignorant
 scum
 Who treat me like it’s their God-given right
 To have a roof over their heads and rugs over
 their toes.

Empty promises.
 He was the death of me.