

Prim in “A Devilish Tale”

By: Wyland

Of the many qualities the one and only (or so we can all only pray to be the case) Primphi Piltrum Stannumshard may or may not possess (the acceptance or denial of said qualities frequently depending on the mood of the bard herself), her one standout trait would be her compassion ... at least, according to her.

Take, for instance, right now at the moment of the scribing of this very Tale.

Were we to travel in our third-person perspective through the air and into a certain street, we would find our red-haired protagonist comforting a hapless being in despair – a being which happens to be three inches tall, red-skinned, and black-winged and -horned.

“Now, now,” the champion of compassion is saying, “you are most certainly a capable and competent guide!”

“I am not!” the dejected, desperate devil-being protests in an unnaturally-high yet squeakless voice. “My soul is always ignoring me!”

“I am sure she desires nothing more than to listen to your sage advice. You simply need to find a way to ...,” she trails off, places a finger to her chin, and hesitates as if seeking a solution. I can tell you, however, that this is no ordinary pause but, rather, a practiced and dangerous delay, a most mortal moment of irresolution and indecisiveness made with the care of a master mischief-maker. For as she seems to consider her companion with contemplative uncertainty, her little listener can think of nothing but what would next be presented by the now-wise-seeming gnomish nuisance.

“You just need to tie up certain opposite ends, as they say,” she finishes with a flourish of her arms, her timing perfect as ever (or so she would say).

“Opposite?” the devil repeats in a tone of obvious confusion. “I thought it was 'loose'.”

“No, no,” the gnome replies with a sparkling smile replete with matching winning wink. “You are thinking of the simple, silly saying. The true telling involves that which is the obverse.”

“I thought it was opposites attract ...” the befuddled being barely babbles.

Grinning a grin which promised perpetual prankish pandemonium, the redhead leaned close and continues, “think, as other theys say, without the box.”

The dumbfounded devil's jaw drops down to depths deemed too dangerous for mere mortals to manage as his muddled mind tries to sort out just what the bard had said.

The gnome kindly uses her pinky finger to restore her companion's chin to a more proper elevation before leaning in and whispering wickedly into the pointed red ears of her diminutive demonic associate. As she speaks, a grin forms onto his features, a galling grin which could mean terrible troubles for someone.

(Fortunately, that would pertain to neither you nor I.)

With a cackle of glee, the little devil disappears. Pleased with herself, the gnome smiles and walks onward down the street, her good deed complete.

What good deed you might ask? That would be another Tale all of itself. All you need to understand is the gnomish bard – who, by the way, right now has already been sidetracked by a butterfly – considers herself to have just aided a soul in need, solving his problems and setting the world just a little bit more right.

As any compassionate gnome would, you see.

Now, allow us to skip ahead a little, and we find our friend ... naked in a bath. Sorry about that. Perhaps we should skip ahead a bit further. Well, there she is playing poker. And losing, judging by the state of her undress. Onward we go, then, and of course now she is bathing in a tub.

Oh, well, it seems by the puff of smoke this is actually where we should be. You see it, right? Where the devil from before just appeared on the edge of the tub. Dramatic creatures, are they not?

“You were right!” he informs the gnome.

“Of course I was!” she heartily agrees, unabashed unclothed – but not unclean, at least.

“It worked like a charm! And my soul had *the* most exciting night of her life!” the devil delightedly declares as it dances dementedly.

Suddenly, a small shaft of light appears with a holy choir singing as a little lady angel of likewise appearance to our devilish friend – no, not the gnome but the devil – fearlessly floats to land on the tub mere inches from the devil.

“There you are!” she crossly cries as her blonde hair billows as if in a breeze, though none could be felt elsewhere. “Do you have any idea what you have done?”

“I do, and I'd do it again!” he rebelliously replies.

“And what are you doing showing yourself to her?” the angel asks, flinging a finger of furious indictment toward the gnome *au naturel*. “Is she the cause of all this?”

Now, you may have noticed a certain passivity from our precocious Prim in the presence of a pair of petulant pixies. You are quite right, but it likely means not what you think it does. For this troublesome trouper with a mind most conniving will observe unobtrusively while developing her devious (or delightful) designs.

“A pleasure to meet you,” our red-haired rapsallion says. “I must say, those are some magnificent rope marks you wear.” She reaches out and gently rubs marks on the angel's fair skin with a finger.

Oh, did I fail to mention the marks? My mistake. Perhaps I should also point out the simple cloth hanging from her neck. Yes, that would be a gag she pulled down. Very observant of you.

Alas, our angry angel is affronted rather than appeased by the affectionate action of our gnomish friend. Swatting her finger away, the angel sharply states, “you have caused my soul to engage in the most – ”

“ – fun,” the devil interjects.

“ – disrespectful behavior – ” the angel continues.

“Oh, I am glad she is enjoying herself,” the gnome interrupts. “From what your friend was saying, she really wanted to cut loose.”

“And you listened to what *he* said?” the angel asks, astonished and astounded.

“Well, less what he said than what he *said* said.”

The devil laughs as the angel blinks in bewilderment.

“Where is your guide?” she finally asks. “This simply cannot stand.”

With a flash of smoke and the song of a fiddle, a second angel appears beside the first. The pair inspected the newcomer with intellects rendered ineffective, for she looks as the gnome in all but the size and wings.

“Oh! I see you have arrived,” the red-haired angel (clearly *not* the one in the tub) says.

“Why do you look like your soul?” the blonde angel asks. “That's not supposed to happen! Unless the soul – ”

“We can begin the next phase!”

“Next phase?”

“Oh, yes, there is a phase still to go,” the Prim-angel reveals with relish. She holds up some tiny ropes. “It is most kind of you to come with convenient guidelines for the ropework!”

“Now, wait just a min – mmph!” The first angel finds herself grabbed by the Prim-devil which just appeared behind her.

You are alert to these little oddities which just happen around our bard friend by now, are you not? It should come as no surprise, then, the blonde angel has quickly found herself trussed and tied, the gag hanging from her neck no more but, rather, muffling her complaints.

“There we go,” devil-Prim says, dusting off her hands together.

“What do we do now?” angel-Prim asks.

“Oh, I think you know.”

Angel-Prim giggles as the red devil grabs her. Soon enough, she is tightly trussed to her angry angelic associate, spiritedly squealing into stuffing secured in her mouth by a scarlet scarf.

“Pardon us,” the Prim-devil says to the gnome.

“But we have an engagement to attend to,” the red devil says.

“Have fun,” the gnome says. “All four of you,” she adds with a meaningful wink to the angels. Angel-Prim giggles into her gag, while the blonde angel is emitting utterances which if unhindered would have likely been unbecoming of a being of her nature.

“Thank you very much!” the devils say as they pick up their counterparts and sling them over their shoulders. High-fiving each other, they disappear in puffs of smoke, the angels vanishing as well.

“And more beauty spread in the world,” the gnome says, sinking back into the tub with a satisfied smile. “There will be so much joy tonight. You did good, Prim. It was right to help that poor, lonely, lost little devil.”

I did mention her compassion, right? Right.

Back in the tub, Prim lets out a sigh. “Ah, but angels get to have all the fun...” she says.