

The Funeral

by Jack Ales-Oruam

Over the years, Morgana had grown. She was so much more than what Xavier remembered. So much different.

She had an astute, almost shrewd air about her. She didn't seem nearly as fragile as he had left her. No, she had an eye out for herself now.

He had hurt her and they both knew it. She remembered how that calm summer day had turned her world upside down. When he had called Morgana from *her* house. Morgana could still hear *her* voice in the background, laughing softly. She had heard Xavier's voice caressing *her* so smoothly. And then Xavier had dared to address her with the news...that he had moved on.

Well, *she* had passed away from cancer. It was all that Morgana could do to hold back the slight pleasure that had rushed through her when she had heard the news. But even the astute new Morgana hadn't expected to see a Xavier so shattered.

Surprisingly, the backstabbing lover she had once known had managed to stay loyal to his suffering beloved. From what he had told her just now, Morgana knew that he had grown too. He seemed more fragile, but more mature. His pallor and his sagging eyes belied the youth of his 22-year old frame.

To think that all of that had been two years ago. And now, here they stood. One hardened to protect her heart from the damage that had been done twenty-four months before. The other clearly weaker, clearly still suffering from his loss. The loss of his...his.... Fiancée.

Morgana choked at the word. It just didn't seem right. He had all of a sudden loved and found something in this girl that she herself had not possessed.

She shook her head slightly.

He looked up at her, staring with those big sad grey eyes. They immediately evoked her pity, but she fought it off. No, she would be harder this time. He would not win her over, broken or not.

"I know that I hurt you, Morgana," he stated frankly, his frankness breaking the glassy indifference that she tried to maintain in her eyes. "She was your best friend and we betrayed you. But, during your time together, you must have realized that there was a treasure in her heart larger than life itself. It's that treasure that I've called you to bury today."

