

Me and the French Revolution

By Holly Lisle

So. I'm wearing these ludicrous shoes. Pink, satin-bow-bedecked. I think of them as dancing slippers, but they have a heel, and they're about the most impractical shoes I've ever seen. And this dress that is no doubt gorgeous, and expensive. Silk and tucks and bows, long full skirt, all sorts of underpinnings. I'm eighteen years old. Maybe nineteen.

And I'm scared. I'm running like hell, and trying not to fall off those ridiculous shoes. There are other young women with me – all about my age, all equally impractically dressed, but I am in the lead because we are in "my father's house." This is a very clear thought in my mind. This is my father's house, and I know a safe place.

There's screaming behind me, at a distance, and the sound of things crashing, and smoke in the air. But I know a safe place, and this gaggle of butterflies and I are hauling ass to get there.

Two big doors to one side of a large corridor, doorknobs like a man's handlebar moustache, and inside, a study. Paneled walls, bookshelves. This is my father's study.

I go to one of the panels that looks like every other panel and push it open, and there's a little room. All of us cram into it, I close the panel behind us.

And outside the panel, a little dog starts to bark. White, fluffy, the word in my head is Bichon, and I don't know if this is that dog's name or breed. Could be either one. It is my dog, and it wants in. I want it to go away, but open the panel, praying no one is out there, and drag it in with us. Quiet it, get it calm.

The noise gets closer, is right outside the door, things being smashed, men shouting rough words; none of us inside the hidden room dare to breathe. And then that damned dog starts to bark.

What happens next you want to wake up for, and I do, and lie there in the bed for about fifteen minutes trying to shake it off.

So, here I am, fresh from being on the wrong side of the French Revolution, off to face the cannibals again.

Start count for the day 78,717. Goal for the day: 81,717 or better.

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