

The Kitchen Maid In The Emmaus Inn



Kitchen Maid With the Supper At Emmaus - Original painting by Diego Velazquez

My name is Hannah and I am a kitchen maid at the local Inn in a small town outside Jerusalem called Emmaus.

This evening three men came to the Inn and I was to serve their supper.

After they had eaten and I had cleared the dishes, I was about to serve them more wine when I could hear them talking. I'm not supposed to listen to the guests' conversations, but the voice of one of them captured my spirit and I couldn't help myself. I edged closer to the open window space and, still holding the jug, I sat on the stool and listened.

My hand held the table to steady myself, but also to enable me to look busy if my master came in and caught me eavesdropping on our guests. I couldn't hear all the conversation, only words here and there, "body... given for you". I heard the bread crust break in his hand and the gasp of his travelling companions. It was his voice that captured me; gentle, loving, strong.

How I would love to listen to his voice all day long. I hoped he might come into the kitchen so I could see his face again. He had smiled at me when I let them into the dining room and his gentle look of appreciation as I served the food caused my heart to throb so deeply that I thought I would drop the serving dish. His companions didn't notice me they were so wrapped up in their attention to him.

Who is he I wondered? His words - "my body, given for you" - did he mean me? Would someone give up their body for me a mere kitchen maid?

I could see he was breaking the bread with his two friends and I longed to be there too. wonder if my longing was like that of my namesake Hannah who waited in the Temple to see the Messiah.

I picked up my water jug and went into the dining room? The two men were there but he was gone!

They were buzzing with excitement and joy and began to gather their things as if to leave and not stay the night as I had thought .

I looked at the crumbs on the table and the goblets of wine unfinished . Where was he ? Why had he gone so suddenly and why oh why did I feel this gaping hole in my heart?

I picked up the bread crumbs from the table and without thinking put them into my mouth . Could I but share in this breaking of bread!

And then I saw him in the doorway smiling at me and I was filled with a joy so deep and pure it reached down to my toes.

I am an old woman now and when I think back on my life I remember the night when I was a kitchen maid at Emmaus and how one stranger who broke bread changed my life .

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