

A Subtle Art

by Owlbait

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Beads of sweat ran down Minerva's back beneath her cotton dress as she slipped out of the Majorcan sun, through the door Rolanda held for her, and into the cool shade of the odd little coffee shop.

Rolanda ordered the coffee while Minerva fanned herself gratefully. She didn't really want anything hot, but it was their last day of holiday and their last chance to experience the coffee which had been described as absolutely not-to-be-missed.

She looked doubtfully into her black coffee—the server had insisted it was best appreciated this way—and took a careful tiny sip. Noting the temperature was ideal to release the volatile flavors without burning, she dared a larger taste and dropped her eyelids to focus on inward sensations.

The dark, smoky, bitter flavor rolled over her tongue, and her first impression was one of regret. In the moment before swallowing, the coffee reached the back of her palate, and its subtler agencies took effect. Fragile aromas rose up the back of her throat to meld with the tendrils of steam entering her nose. Now, she thought of the hidden forest places where wood and stone shelter minute flowers and fruits.

The contrast between the immediate flavor and the subtle ensnaring of her senses which followed struck her suddenly, bringing to mind a friend long departed. If he had brewed coffee instead of potions, he would have made this. Opening her eyes, she discovered the same reminiscence in her lover's face and recognized her shared hope.

AN: With thanks to my charming, unnamed beta reader.

Prompt: A determined search for the perfect cup of coffee leads to an even more satisfying discovery.