

THRIVING AMONGST CONTRADICTION

Rachel Jordan

He stood there before them, motionless. With tightened fists he glanced towards the dreary sky, cursing softly as time seemed to spill through his fingers like sand.

What have I done to deserve this...? Look at them and tell me...how are they any different?

Gradually his chin lowered, allowing his lifeless gaze to wash over the silent crowd. It was then that the deepest voice rang out from nearby, stripping the man of his peace.

"Today signifies a most grave moment in possibly our lifetime. A man, who we once loved and admired, has chosen to return such kindness with the murder of our beloved Miss Mallory, my niece, and *their* unborn child..." The mayor was very tall, and was recognized for both his withering frame and profound voice. His eyes, faintly red with illness, were narrowed and solemn-looking as they glared at the people who gathered around the scaffold.

The convicted man drifted about the faces of his commoners. Each harbored the same pallid and emotionless features, responding only with a cough or sigh - and so he froze the moment his eyes unexpectedly rested upon her.

Mallory remained there innocently, her golden head peering out from the sea of dull beings. Her grey eyes glistened magnificently while she offered the man a warm smile, and in her arms rested a sleeping child.

The mayor shot a chilling glance at the man and pointed. "By written law," he

shouted, "such an act shall be penalized by death!"

A deafening roar broke free from the crowd. The man turned towards the mayor and watched as he advanced, taking notice of Mallory as she followed behind.

"Have you any last words, boy?" The mayor muttered with a darkening smirk, rope coiled in his bony hands.

"Yes," he began quietly, "go ahead and take me away from this place.

But we both know that more than one innocent life will have been stolen." Tears flooded the man's eyes, and he watched as his Mallory tightened a noose around his neck.

"Then may God be with you!" The mayor howled.

He could hear the bellowing of the crowd echo throughout the perimeter as her lips pressed against his, and in the darkness he felt himself falling, until all was finally still and at peace once more.

**Do you any
words, boy?"**

