



Kamelot

"Temples of Gold"

Karma

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On "Temples of Gold" by Kamelot

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It's as your mother always feared: heavy metal leads to promiscuity and Satanism.

- *promiscuity*: **noun**
 1. Having sexual relations with a number of partners on a casual basis;
 2. Having one's eye caught by a boy—just one: black-haired, reserved, serious about music. Lapsed Catholic. Cannot take you to any temple except that of Syrinx, probably.
- *Satanism*: **noun**
 1. The worship of Satan or the powers of evil;
 2. Anthropology classes, apparently. The university library. Everything you're beginning to love about your own mind.

Heavy metal will eventually lead to witchcraft, too, but for now you are content to revel in the small new witcheries of your body in a (black) mass of bodies, your fingers laced around with someone else's, a pair of eyes on your face when previously there has been only the unforgiving mirror. That voice through your headphones like no male vocalist you've ever heard, and the lyrics that seem like they were made for you, all Arthuriana and ache. He likes the songs with the guitar solos that are just long enough to be interesting without descending into wank, but he also likes the ballads. It must mean something, that he likes the ballads... even if it's "Abandoned" and "Don't You Cry" on repeat instead of your favorite, "Temples of Gold." All your life you've been told what it feels like when the Holy Spirit moves you: like a concert. All your life you've been waiting for love to appear, each criterion ticked off in heart's blood.

You are eighteen years old and nobody should've let you have your own bank account, because you will use that money to buy concert tickets.

(Larisa Oleynik in *10 Things I Hate About You*: Concert tickets... concert tickets...)

The concert tickets are a mistake: the next decade will be a thousand dollars' worth of concert tickets that are simultaneously the worst mistake you keep making and the most sublime experiences of your life. But in heady Florida spring they feel like freedom. This music, complex and histrionic and powerful, like freedom. This boy, who might just be at that show—who isn't, but is charmed when you bring it up afterwards, all cool, *you missed out*—who is at every show after that, until he isn't.

You have always suspected if you liked the right music, you would be cool. If there was some organic way of relating to the student body of your high school that you bought *De-loused in the Comatorium* used for \$12 and it's so great. If you could grind up the nerve to ask the girl in economics about her Crass t-shirt. College rolls around and all bets are off; you could be cool, no one is the wiser, you have always been cool, and here's the perfect opportunity, this band not even your older sister, in her infinite musical sagacity, has heard of. This band a boy likes.

You should already know better, you who wisely sees the red flags when Rolf sings to Liesl at the beginning of "Sixteen Going On Seventeen." *An empty page that men will want to write on.*

Ten years and never once will he watch *The Sound of Music* with you.

Kamelot in St. Petersburg, autumn 2006: screaming to every song, Khan at the height of his vocal prowess, a voice in your ear *they're a Tampa band, they're ours*. Long kisses on a couch afterward, picking over each detail of the set, every song you still wish they'd play live.

(They've never played "Temples of Gold" live, not in your era. They rarely did on the tour for its album. People never bring it up as a stellar example of a ballad, like Khan's voice isn't right there, heartbreaking vibrato and endless depth.)

Kamelot in Columbus, spring 2014: a very bad (road) trip. Crying beforehand in a Subway because goddamn, by now you can draw a map of northeastern Ohio in your tears. The new singer sounds so good but it's not enjoyable. It's emotion you have to drag onto your face like a mask, your heart exhausted, the vein mined out and yielding only fools' gold.

There's a new album coming, the first you will ever listen to outside the context of him. There will be more concerts, more live DVDs, more fresh music played on anachronistic media—because it might have begun with him but it didn't end with him and that, my ducks, is the meaning of love.