

## **Timeless Love by Behcet Kaya**

The dream kept repeating. Night after night, the characters were the same; a man and three young women.

The man was tall, with a big belly, small fat hands, dark hair, bushy eyebrows, double chin and deep set intelligent eyes. I knew who he was; a character I was developing in a novel I was currently writing.

I recognized two of the young women. One was a secretary in Human Resources at the company where I worked. She was beautiful, tall and slender; any man's fantasy date. The other was a petite woman who lived in my apartment complex and who always left her garage door open.

I had not a clue as to the identity of the third young woman, but after so many nights of the dream repeating itself I could describe every detail about her. She was sitting on a bench looking out at me. Her eyes captivated me and I could not stop staring at her. She was a most beautiful young woman with a tiny waist and healthy bosom. Unlike young women of today who flaunt each detail of their bodies, this young woman hid hers and my imagination ran wild.

She appeared to be around twenty, with rosy cheeks, full lips and a round nose most suited to the shape of her face. I could not distinguish the color of her eyes, but they were happy eyes. She was not smiling, yet she did not appear to be sad. Her hair was pulled back into a bun on the top of her head, but several tendrils had escaped and softly framed her face. She had some kind of ribbon in her hair, but I was sure it was not a bonnet.

She wore a long white dress with delicate rows of beading sewn down the front from neckline to waist, then diverging down each side. The sleeves of the dress ended at her elbows and her slender hands rested in her lap. A wide white ribbon belt was tied around her waist, knotted on the side, the excess fabric hanging down. She wore a pearl choker around her neck and an ornate pocket watch pinned on the left shoulder of her dress. I have never seen such fashion except in the movie, "The Great Gatsby." It was definitely early twentieth century and it was if she were frozen in time.

The dreams started to bother me, but at the same time I did not want them to end. Who was this young woman? I felt as if I had known her for a very long time and sensed my growing attraction for her. I told my wife about the dreams, but left out the part about the mysterious young woman. How could I tell her? I needed to talk to someone, but the only other person I could think of was my friend in Florida and I knew he would only ridicule me. Not only that, he would tell all our other Turkish friends. Perhaps it was time to see a psychiatrist.

One afternoon I sat out on our balcony ruminating on this dream business. I could hear the big black birds cawing, smaller birds chirping. I kept remembering what the young woman had said to me in the dreams, “You are dating a part of me.” What could she possibly have meant? I wasn’t dating anyone, I was happily married!

I was searching my mind for clues when, from a distance, I began hearing the soft sounds of many violins, all playing different notes. As I listened the violin sounds seemed closer. I thought it might be coming from one of the houses across the way, perhaps someone practicing. I picked up my book and started to read.

The sounds continued to grow louder and closer. I set my book aside and looked up to see what I thought must be a mirage; a grayish mist, whirling like a tornado coming towards me. I heard a low pitched noise then the sound of chimes mixed with the violins. I didn’t know what to think. I watched with great curiosity as the mirage came over the roofs of the houses and across the high wall separating our complex, then engulfed our balcony. I couldn’t move out of the way. I knew I was wide awake, but I was unable to move a muscle.

I was scared. This was no longer funny or amusing. My wife was out shopping for groceries and I did not see anyone else around. The chimes and gentle roaring sound grew louder and louder and louder. I closed my eyes and wanted to put my hands over my ears, but I still could not move. Then the sounds faded and the mist evaporated.

When I opened my eyes I found myself riding in a buggy. In front of me sat a driver with reins in his hands, clucking to four gray horses. I could clearly hear the creaking of the wooden wheels turning on the dirt road; clumps of hard baked dirt rising from under the horses’ hooves. The driver fidgeted in his seat. Appearing agitated, he picked up the whip and tapped the backs of the horses urging them into a gallop.

We passed plowed fields, then gentle rolling hills.

“Who are you? Where are you taking me?”

The driver did not turn around, but answered loud enough to be heard above the galloping horses, “My mistress, gentle Lady Lindquist, has summoned me to take you safely to her.”

I gazed around seeing only miles of open land with mountains in the distance. “Who is Lady Lindquist?”

The driver spoke petulantly, “Sir, you will soon see her for yourself. We must hurry.” He applied the whip to the horses again, urging them on as if something or someone was chasing us.

“This is a dream. Right?”

“This is no dream, sir.”

We drove for a while longer then came to a large river. The water was so clear I could see the rainbow of colored stones lying on the bottom. My driver stopped the horses to allow them a drink. Tall grasses grew along the banks and on the other side grew a thick forest with tall, majestic pine trees standing silent and proud, as if belonging to an aristocratic family. Beyond the forest I could see a mountain rising at least three miles high, carved in two by the river. Parts of the mountain were sheer rock; other parts were shaded by more trees. I could see folks on the slopes, but they were so far away they looked like insects.

Further along the river bank I noticed a grouping of small, primitive log houses and people gathered outside. There seemed to be some sort of a party going on with music and dancing, children imitating the adults. I didn't see any musicians, but I heard the same sounds as when I was sitting on my balcony; the violins, the chimes, but with one difference. Now the sounds were not hurting my ears.

Then I saw her. The young woman in my dreams was sitting on a bench. I found myself climbing out of the buggy and approaching her.

“Thank God. It's only the dreams again.”

She looked up at me and spoke. “This is not a dream.” She moved over to make room for me to sit with her. “I have been waiting for you.”

“How can you wait for me if this is only a dream?” I asked.

She turned and looked into my eyes. “This is no dream. Here. Touch my hands. I am real. Don't you see? They are looking for you and we must not be seen here together.” She stood up to go.

“Please. Wait! Who is looking for me? Please, I need to talk to you!”

“This is no dream,” she repeated. “Look around you.” She pointed her finger off in another direction.

I looked to see soldiers firing cannons. They wore uniforms and helmets resembling those worn during World War I.

“They are training to go to war,” she said sadly.

“No. You are must be mistaken. I am sure they are filming a movie. Soldiers don't look like that!”

“If you don't hurry, they will find you, send you to war and you will be killed. I will not let that happen again. We are to be married.”

“I am quite flattered, but I am already married. And besides, soldiers use machine guns.”

“I know all about your wife and your time, but now we must hurry.” She entwined her hand in mine and pulled me up. We crossed the river, then started climbing the slopes of the mountain toward a small cave. “You will be safe here.”

Before I could think about it, I said, “I must kiss you. I think I am in love with you. To bad it is only a dream.”

“It is no dream. Please don’t make me repeat myself.” She seemed irritated with me.

I heard the music start again, grow louder and I could not move my body. “I must, at least, touch you! I feel helpless!”

“I know,” she said. “That omnipotent music that takes you octillion light years away.” She began speaking in an old Swedish language.

As the sound of the music came closer, she began fading away. Once again the woolly mist engulfed me. The sound grew louder and louder and louder until my ears hurt, then it too faded away. I opened my eyes, found myself sitting in my chair on the balcony and heard my wife knocking on the sliding door.

She opened the door and walked out onto the balcony. “I didn’t see you there when I first came in.” She looked puzzled and as she came closer to me her face took on a look of concern. “Honey, you look like you have seen a ghost.”

I realized I was breathing heavily and I felt a bit of spit on my chin.

She asked again, “What is the matter?”

“I don’t know,” I replied. “I think I may have had a stroke or something.”

She turned to go back into the apartment. “I’m going to call 911!”

“No!” I said vehemently.

“Okay, but please don’t yell at me.” I knew she was trying to appease me.

“No doctor, please. You might want to help me get up and go inside.”

She held my arm and as we stepped into the living room, I froze. My eyes fixed directly on the picture hanging above our fireplace; a portrait of my wife’s grandmother as a young woman. I wanted to say something but I could not get the words out and I did

not have the strength to stand. I collapsed on the sofa, my mouth open, my hand pointing to the picture.

I must have passed out for moment. When I opened my eyes again, I saw my wife hovering over me, gently tapping my cheeks.

“Please! Tell me what happened!”

“If I tell you, you would never believe me,” was all I could say.