

THE LAST ROMANTIC

By

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Our second date, was there a diminutive feasibility that today would be as enchanting and delightful as that magical day before? But there was nothing in the laws of physics that denied me repeated *marvelty*, for I have always believed the same laws which keep the planets in their orb are not dissimilar to those which govern and swivel our hearts.

I waited anxiously for her call, akin to a boy just before Christmas

“A few minutes now,” I muttered to myself, as I starred at the clock on the wall, which took its precious time to arrive at 4p.m, procrastinating to reach there as if 4 was its fearsome foe... my eyes alternated between my mobile and that clock on the wall. My hair was

tremendously combed and my breath was fresh. She had told me she would call, and I believed she would call.

Only in dreams do those creepy arms of the clock not reach 4, but this, although it felt much like one; was no dream. It was 4p.m; finally, I would see that rare beauty that only lives in a handful.

But my mother always warned me how too much excitement always ended in rivers of tears, how could I have forgotten this; my basic teachings? Those creepy hands on the clock ticked and tocked, ticked and tocked and the sun went down.

I stared at the falling sun by the window in my lonesome dark flat, *perhaps something had happened* I thought to myself, but worse still; perhaps nothing happened.

Strange was how I felt, but stranger than this was the mere fact that I had only seen and known her for two days, but I was certain of it, just as I am certain that there lies beauty in the world, that I was madly and undeniably in love with her.

My theory was, when we were being conceived, God was creating her lips, so sugary so pleasant with mine in mind... just perfect for these lips of mine, so when we kissed even stones would cry.

This theory that he was fashioning her heart with mine in mind, so when we met to touch... our hearts would beat and make music as flute.

It was evening now, still she had not called... my senseless ego and Manish pride prohibited me from calling her, but I owed it to myself and the one that beats

within me, to have the courage to my own romantic convictions.

I hanged up a few times before I ultimately gained the strength and valor to let it ring.

Her silky voice answered at the other end.

“I wanted to call, I so desperately did” she said

“Then why didn’t you?” I questioned her

“You-” she breathed heavily “you wouldn’t understand,”

“Then make me understand, Fiona... what’s going on?”

She paused for awhile, than proceeded to say

“It was all a dream... a beautiful dream, but a dream nonetheless.” She was crying when she said this, I’m sure of it, there is something about a cry which you cannot miss.

Before I could speak, I heard a voice of another, than the call was abruptly ended.

I had hopes that calling would provide me with the answers I so desperately seek, in order to grasp and comprehend this elusive matter of the heart, but all calling provided, was a stream of questions which bombarded my already troubled head.

These questions took me back to the first time I ever set eyes on her, a few days back.

The day began like any other day when something spectacular transpires – as if nothing would ensue – I was sitting by the Arcadia park observing the world, a writers curse, the wind swayed from east to west, east to

west... and than she came. Blind men must have seen her that day for a sight of an angel walking on earth was exceptionally hard to miss, an angel which walked and breathed like us.

She was slender tall, like August fall. Her hair was dark and long and her race was mixed.

If only I alone possessed the gift to see angels, but everyone around me was as enchanted and captivated as I was. As she walked in her high heels she had that nameless feeling which leads men to flaunt as peacocks and make fool of themselves. She sat a few feet away from me; on that opposite swing.

She would, swing, swing and listen to music. Swing, swing and look at blue sky.

I admired how liberated and free she was. The flaunting peacocks came one after the other. Those who thought were smooth-talkers, went back clumsy. Smooth-walkers went back staggering like old man. Man after man came with smiles on their faces but sadness, when they left.

When finally I glanced at her, I found her staring at me. Sideways I looked, there was no-one there. She smiled. Roses instantly bloomed that day.

I hesitated, to *conversate*, as I knew she burnt more than raging flames... I wished not to stagger like old man.

But, if my ears would not have heard the sound of her voice that day, irrespective of their nature, I would have regretted it for all time coming, I knew this.

Like a brave little soldier going to war, I stood up and slowly walked towards her. I reached, she stopped... smiled again, violets followed to bloom.

"How are you, my dear" I asked, as she took off her headphones

"I am well" she said in a welcoming tone

"Do you have time?" while looking deep in her sea blue eyes, when she glanced at her watch, I interrupted

"Well Ms. I meant do you have a lil time... to spend with me?"

She blushed, I sat next to her. We *conversated* for hours, as if I knew her for years, but feeling as if not, a second had passed.

When it finally came time for her to leave, I asked her

"Can I see you once more... this coming Saturday" It was a Thursday that day

"What are you doing tomorrow" she asked "Cos I would love to see you tomorrow and Saturday" She stood up and left... but then she turned and smiled once more. All flowers bloomed.

The day which followed, till this day I cannot possibly put in words. I was a dying breed; here in the capital of South Africa, the numbers of my kind had dwindled, like water on desert sand, perhaps the very last of my kind – the last true romantic. But even for a writer, a romantic, not even in my dreams have I dreamed that such a day would exist. I kissed her beneath the stars, she held me

tight and refused to let go, beneath the stars. Ask the stars they will tell; love happened beneath their eyes.

Now here I was in the night, after the day... with those stars who were so kind so bright that yester day... so dark this day. For I asked and asked what did she mean? What did she refer? How could a dream turn so quickly into a nightmare? But a man's pride is a man's pride... and I would not subject myself to such torture from another being, even if that being caused my heart to beat like drum. So I did my best to put her off my mind.

A few months had now passed, since my hopeless affections... I had convinced myself that she was just another page in my life's book, neither that graceful beginning nor that violent end.

The life of the arcadia flats was not for the weak and sensitive at heart, for here men exchanged concealed gifts which they called 'cloud powder': it took you to the clouds. The majority of women wore tight clothes and worked at night. But it was an appropriate dwelling for a writer.

Tired of the sound of my typewriter, although at other times it was heavenly music to my ears. I strolled to the local supermarket which neighbored my apartment, halfway there the earth stood still. As I gazed upon eyes which I never thought I would catch a glimpse of again... still as enchanting as if she lived in the sky.

But there was something peculiarly different in the subject of her; her make up was overly redundant. She wore too little, her hair color was too much. Her company was worse, as they looked as if they went there

and back again. She was too loud, how could she have changed in so little a time? The moment she saw me, her laugh evaporated like water, as she was struck by a lightning of awe. The glass bottle she carried met with the floor; the acquaintance shattered the other into a thousand pieces of glass. We both froze like we were in a freezer, as the earth stood still for us. She was a working girl I was sure of it. Her company shook and woke her up. Without a word I left, without a word... she left.

Back in my lonesome flat, those rivers of questions and I rallied once more. But unlike the time before the time. There existed an evident disparity. This time I had responses to the questions. As everything became lucid and clear as day. She sold her body for money; we both knew a relationship was impossible and immoral.

As days turned into cold nights, and nights turned into colder days... I yearned for the sound of her voice, the feeling of her touch... it became worse and worse, as I thought spoke and dreamed of her. What was I to do? It would be a sin to my reverends eyes, a shame and insult to my families eyes. But I knew that if my ears did not hear her gentle voice once more they would have went deaf, if my eyes did not see her once more, I would have gone blind, so I found her and accepted her past, embraced her present and told her she was my future.

Our relationship was of the strange kind. But we both did not mind. Her folks had passed on. Two people she could call family, was her brother Vincent and now me. She paid the mortgage and all his fees at the University of Pretoria... with the cold money she earned. He knew

little of what her sister did for a living and we kept it that way for all future times.

She was as kind as a butterfly, but every time she worked in those wintry streets, her essence her soul was slowly departing.

At all times I kept her sane and showed her north. She came back scared and bruised at times; it broke my heart each time. The challenges we faced were more than the leaves in the forest. But we kept strong like a rooted tree in the middle of that forest and our love beat the odds against us; at least momentarily.

Weeks went away, months followed... together we found the joy of Eden, before the sins of men. Together we found bliss. This strange day, I recall like no other... as it hurt like no other. Tears were filling her sea blue eyes, she told me her love for me was killing me. This could not be true, how could she say this? The reason I touch is to touch for her. Reason I live, I live for her. My love was leaving and I could tell her mind was made.

“Me being with you kills your dreams... You deserve more than this, you deserve more than me” She said

“Promise me that you will meet someone normal, and fall in-love, grow old and have kids,” I had never seen her cry as much, she continued to speak

“Promise me, that you will not wait for me or try to find me but to always keep me in your dreams, as I will always keep you in my heart” placing my hand so gingerly on her chest. Although at the time I did not wish to admit it, she was as right as day... I promised her a promise; I kept for forever and a day.

Today, just like all days following her miserable departure, I received a call, the person kept silent... but I knew it was her on the other end, missing me as I do her. I have little knowledge of her whereabouts, but wherever she may be I hope she found peace... at least she left me with her astounding memories, I needed something of hers to keep me company.