

THE AWAKENING PART ONE (QUIET DESPERATION CAME CALLING)

My predictable life, so safe, so uniform sheltered behind whitewashed walls of stone. Treasures lined the walls, past exploits framed for unseeing eyes. Catching the morning bus to work I never gave my conventional life a second thought. The morning news made me frown at the grey houses in the swirling mist, their lights cast a pale glow into the fading gloom. Muted conversation and silent contemplation were my only companions in the creeping dawn as the bus carried its victims ever closer to their daily doom.

That was the day before we met, a day much like any other day, a hazy waking sleep both humdrum yet necessary, for what is life if not routine?

My desk beckoned, stretching itself out before me. The sacrificial table knew no boundaries or horizons, with letters to be answered, emails to be read and phone calls to be made. My only companions evident in the muted cacophony of conversation that ebbed and flowed unceasingly all morning.

The day before we met I had lunch, the usual fare, fast food quickly cooked and shoved into paper bags with the faintest of smiles. Pigeons fought for dominance over crumbs, scattering feathers in their fight for survival. The wounded sun cast her faint rays upon a lonely shopfront manikin in blue satin blouse and billowing silk slacks, unbridled elegance and sensual style forever frozen in time like my inmost desires. I held them in check, eyes down, staying anonymous and keeping the exit sign ever in sight.

The day before we met I had chicken korma to go, and huddled tight against the driving snow, my slow lumbering footsteps crunched through white crusts, snow melt gurgled in slushy pools as I made my way home. The nightly news, unceasing kitchen sink dramas replayed over and over to mindless automatons, a letter from my aunt and a wedding invitation from someone I'd just met. Bills stacked in two neat piles, paid and unpaid, the second pile higher than the first, the credit crunch biting deeply. I drifted off to sleep to the silent whisper of falling snow.

The day before we met, I awoke suddenly and found myself staring at a blanket of white with a gnawing emptiness deep within. Was I the only one who felt this way or did others share my silent desperation?

Your voice called on the lonely winds and I shed a tear for unrequited love.

THE AWAKENING PART TWO (AND FOUND FERTILE SOIL)

The day we met I awoke to the rising fright, scrambling for grip on the slippery slopes between waking and sleeping. Half whispered dreams and fantasies reached for me as I opened my eyes to yet another day. The day we met seemed much as any other day, I showered, ate and smoked, but the food seemed tasteless, mundane and colourless. My mind still caught in half remembered dreams, your voice still drifted on the wind and when I opened tired eyes I had missed my bus. Crunching through the snow I didn't see you until you turned and looked at me. Blonde wind-tossed locks trembled in the gentle breeze blowing off the hills, illuminated by the silver orb trying to burn itself through the clouds. Your blue eyes twinkled merrily and your smile pulled me in and fighting for survival and control, I looked down at tiny feet in black boots. My lips parted in the faintest smiles as I shivered against the snow and tried to think of something to say, but all my wisdom had dissipated and so I said nothing.

The day you came into my life we boarded the bus together but I slipped and would have fallen if not for your tiny hand against my back pushing me forward. I fell into my seat an eternity later cursing my lack of control and you slid in beside me, a comforting presence amongst gloomy strangers and half remembered patrons. You pulled the scarf aside to adjust the collar of a blue satin blouse and spoke.

Your foreign name brushed against my charred rusted armour, seeking entrance. Your oval shaped face and gentle eyes were but a backdrop to the soothing rhythm of your voice, the melodic Swedish accent tempered by the need to make yourself understood. Born in the provinces, you talked of living in the stone city and moving to Stockholm to sing in clubs, I thought of Abba and Ikea. You spoke four languages not including English, I spoke one. You had moved here to start again, I dreamed of moving to Australia to start again. A singer, a dancer, a writer, you had married once for necessity and paid the price. Cast aside in murmured contempt you floundered on drifting seas, and found yourself washed up on Alba's shores alone again. The sum total of my creativity was found in company reports and financial analyses, I had been engaged once but we had awoken from our dream before the wedding and parted company, a mutually agreeable contract.

My eyes flickered as you pointed out the café where you ate lunch, vegetarian fare so different from my filled meat rolls and as we parted I watched you walk to your office head held high and hips swinging seductively and in that stolen look as you glanced over your shoulder my armour cracked just a little to show my beating heart.

The day we met I toiled over company reports the clock ticked slowly, so slowly and at midday I found myself standing in a vegetarian café. I felt your presence before I turned around to find you smiling at my discomfort. We watched pigeons fighting over crumbs, shared intimate moments, and I learned the Swedish word for pigeon, duva. I rolled the word around my tongue while you giggled at my lame attempt, Swedish with a Scottish accent. Your hand fell into mine as we walked to your office and when your lips brushed against my cheek the armour began to split, spontaneous affection had always been my weakness.

My perfect routine, so well rehearsed and delivered every day for the benefit of unseeing eyes faltered the day we met. I left work an hour earlier feigning sickness and found you waiting at the bus stop.

How did you know I would come?

Your body felt so warm against mine, you snuggled against me and although few words were exchanged on the way back home a lifetime of memories was shared in the quiet intimacy of our private world.

Your world so different to my ordered world, half empty boxes and packing crates, piles of unopened mail, pictures hung at crazy angles. You apologised for the mess, I laughed at the disordered chaos. The journey from the living room to your parlour of hidden desires was made in stages, minutes bled into hours as we explored your unpacked possessions, chuckling over matryoshka dolls and a kangaroo.

Your soft hair fell like silk through my fingers as I entered your parlour of dreams, every touch sending shivers down your spine as spider legs danced over your body finding places untouched for a long count of time. In a dance-like trance we moved together, letting the tension build, savouring each moment as if it was our last, our breathing finding shared rhythm. Satin shimmered in the pale light, breathless anticipation clothed in hesitant lingering, each daring the other to go further as we wandered down mist strewn paths of love.

Resistance crumbled with each tender kiss, sweat on your brow and throat tasted so salty sweet. Shifting shadows on the wall, whispered sighs released pent up emotion. Buttons fell loose beneath inquiring fingers exposing bare skin and a thin film of sweat. Teetering on the edge we hovered unwilling to go back but afraid to cross the stream. The gods sighed and we tumbled helplessly out of control into the arms of the angels my armour crackled and popped beneath your tongue.

Whispered cries in another tongue, your fyll mig propelled me higher and higher. Your hips rocked and rolled above me and trapped by your love I entered your playground of joy. Your wetness enfolded me, the river broke its banks my castle walls shuddered and trembled and when the fountain finally burst all I had known and loved was lost in the wonder of you.

Your skin so cool and wet, silky soft hair now streaked with sweat and as our fires burned low, I took your whispered hopes, dreams and nightmares deep inside. My hand on your back, your hand on my chest we let our fires mingle until they become as one. In the dying of the night we met our Waterloo and surrendered our desires in a whispered embrace your eyes alight with tenderness and

love. I gazed in wonder at the solitary flower, my castle walls laid to waste by fire and ice, no doors barred your questing footsteps for we were two halves of one. A white carpet greeted new eyes as we pressed noses against frosted glass, withering north wind bringing blankets of virgin white to our village.

The day you came, we fell asleep to the whispering snow and shared beat of our hearts.

Written by Alastair Rosie (C) 2008