

Shatri – The story of Antissa

Part One - 2003

Sitting in the Libyan Desert
A desert like any other really.
After a Day in the saddle of a camel
Gently stepping around the dry bushes
Through the sand
Until only virgin desert lay ahead.
No reason to travel here
Just the tourism of it.

Sitting in the Libyan Desert
As the night air cools the harshness
Of the day,
The millions of stars glistening
With only the unnatural light
Of the cooking fires to disturb
The display of night's nature.

Antissa, the most beautiful daughter
Of her father's.
Cool deep brown eyes
Dominating her Arab features
And long black hair framing
Her face,
Of distant solitude, but
Full of the desire of the desert cool.

It can't be, I say to her.
I know her husband and he
Is a good man.
She yearns in agreement
Ready at once

If needed
To surrender to me.
My Shatri (umbrella)
Is wide
I say to her, spreading my arms
As wide as the desert will allow.
If you ever need me
For anything
I will be waiting for you.
A kiss, and it is over.

Part Two - 2012

A phone call after nine years.
It's me, Antissa, she says.
I had heard of her presence
How her husband had moved here.
Are you going to the party? She asked me.
The party was for me, a few people
Who do appreciate me for my work.
Yes, I said, I am.

Can you come early, she asked
There is something I want to talk about.
No, I won't come early.
Tell me what it's about
And I can ruminate
And tell you the answer on the day.
I can't pull rabbits out of hats
On demand.

She didn't tell me

And so I went into Tantra mode
To enter her heart and see for myself.
It was easy, and I knew the truth.
I cancelled the party and told her
Come to my home instead.
Everyone else phoned me to demand
Who am I to cancel parties?

She came, my beautiful Antissa.
I made her a cup of tea.
She looked at me for clues
And then told me
He's dead.
I know, I said.
She cried.
I cried.
We hugged and held hands.

I built myself up and said
Do you remember the promise I made you
In 2003, in the desert?
She barely nodded.
You are mine now I simply stated,
You will live under my umbrella.
And that was it.
She relaxed back into her seat
And just cried with release.

She asked me later
Like a wife asks permission.
I want to spend Christmas with his family.
I said it was correct and loose ends
Needed to be trimmed off.
Then I want to go home

To spend the new year with my parents
She asked.
That is also the right thing to do.

I will return on the 4th January.
On the 4th January you will return to me
I stated.
She kissed my hand
And in return I held her tightly
To let her know that now
She was under my protection.

She told me he had wanted an XJS,
A sports car.
She gave me the keys and I said
I would take care of dispensing of it.
She gave me keys to her house
And told me about legal things.
Don't worry, I said,
It's done and has nothing to do with you anymore.

I'm frightened of only one thing
She whispered conspiratorially.
I want you to stop the Tantra.
I've seen what it does to you.
It's part of me, I said
As much as my heart is
But I will never let it touch you.
She lowered her eyes, submitting to my will.

I repeated the old words....