

Publisher:
INNAMORATA

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Cover design:
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Title:
The Voyeur

Place and year of publishing:
Booksfactory.hr, Szczecin,
Zagreb, June 2024

ISBN: 978-953-8457-28-9

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*The
Voyeur*

INNA MOORE

Ryan

Today is the thirty-third day since I've been staring silently through the window. The thirty-third day since I arrived in this small place, in the middle of nowhere, just to run away from people and the world. Every day is the same: waking up at eight, toilet, breakfast, exercise, pills, TV, lunch, and then everything all over again until I go to bed. I count each of these days, I know them by heart, each smothering me and pulling me into darkness. I wish each of them would end, forever.

Being lonely, isolated, is still better than being among all those people because this way I know each of my thoughts, each depth of my soul. Then again, I don't really know myself well because each of these damn days I keep wondering the same thing over and over again.

I have no idea why I am still alive, why I have survived if I can't be the man I used to be. If I could have only one day of my old life back, I would enjoy life thoroughly, I would kiss more sincerely, I would hug more firmly, and spend money more recklessly. Today I have no one to enjoy life with, no one to kiss or to hug, and no one to spend money with.

A knock on the door snaps me out of my contemplation, even though I know it could only be Oscar. I shout listlessly:

"Come in."

His bald head peeps in, and I force myself to lift my head off the pillow. I look at him as he addresses me.

“I brought you lunch, and I’d like to go to the city to pick up groceries and medication.” I just nod and reach for the remote to turn the TV on.

“Shall I help you get out of bed?” He offers politely as always.

“No need.” I hate this question from the bottom of my heart, like I can’t do anything on my own.

I reach for my phone and finally turn on the sound. Twenty calls from last night and several messages. I know who it is. My mother.

Before I moved here, to Odessa, I explained to her why I was leaving Toronto. The family home was suffocating me, I was annoyed by all those people who kept showing up each day, and on whose faces I could only see pity. I don’t think anyone understands that this hurts me to the core. I suffered for months, secretly hoping that the pain would finish me off. Once I understood it wouldn’t, because life doesn’t play that way, I tried to be my own executioner and end this life. This isn’t life. Still, at a single moment of lucidness, at the very edge, I gave up and spat out all the pills. I couldn’t do it to my mother or my sisters, they are the sole reason why I’m alive, even though I’m far away from them.

Since Lilly’s visits became less frequent, and since my friends’ calls, with whom I used to spend every single day with, became less frequent as well, I realized I had to get away. I woke up, chose this place, and bought a deserted house far away from everyone. I had the largest room upstairs decorated, built an elevator and equipped the room with high- tech fitness equipment, an LCD TV and a stereo.

The only medicine which has stopped me from losing my mind by now is music. When my heart sinks, and I realize I have nothing to hope for in my pathetic life, I take

my guitar and play. It is only then that I feel alive, only then, when my fingers caress the strings and make art, do I know I may have been kept alive because of my talent. Even though each song that has spilled out of my soul reminds me of what I had, and what I've lost; the life I was envied for, the life for which every single person in this world would gladly switch places with me, and now... Now I don't exist anymore for those that mattered to me.

I am only alive when I play and when I look outside, at a beautiful garden full of flowers which is watered and taken care of by an elderly gentleman every single day. The garden is not mine, it belongs to a house located at the very end of the village, only fifty-five yards away from my house. I have never seen anyone there, only the gardener. I watch every day how he waters the plants, removes the weeds and replants the flowers, and how he treats each and every flower with attention and care. He is dedicated to it as if he were nourishing the most fragile woman in the world.

A kaleidoscope of colors taunts my eyes as I look down through the curtains, heavenly scents bring a breath of spring, which only exists in the moments when I sit in front of the balcony, behind the curtains, and peer outside. For some reason, this scene soothes me, it makes me feel I belong to a world which lives in a rhapsody of vivid colors and syrupy scents.

I look at the blue skies, then glance back at the floral lavishness, when my tediousness gets broken by an unexpected appearance.

I widen my eyes as I notice a brunette approaching the gardener with a beautiful, growing smile on her face. She's entered through the yard and walked up to the man, thrown all her things on the ground from sheer impatience and joy, and hugged the gardener intimately. He

seems a bit lost, but she keeps on hugging him with affection. Her eyes are squinting as a smile continues to adorn her face, and she is not taking her hands off the neck of the lucky man. Then she takes a step back and peers into his face, pinning her eyes on him attentively as they talk.

Her smile fascinates me. It looks so sincere and gentle. A long time has passed since a woman looked at me like that; my soul is overwhelmed by yearning to feel, after so much time, what the man is feeling now as she is smiling at him. Yearning for a woman's warm touch and perhaps a seductive look. I'd never lacked those before. Women used to throw themselves at my feet, and I, the fool that I was, had never taken advantage of that because I was faithful to Lilly. The woman who eventually let me down. The woman whom I wanted to give everything to and even bought a ring for.

I keep on staring down, making just a tiny slit between the curtains with my hands, at the girl who is still talking to the gardener. I pay utter attention to scanning her face; her lips are full and juicy, her hair is brown and wavy, she has a colorful little dress that's touching her knees. She's good-looking. Not exactly my type, but let's cut the act now, I don't even have a type anymore since I can't give anyone what I could before.

I can't unpin my eyes from her because she keeps smiling all the time and touching the man's hand, revealing how intimate they are. She's looking around, and I can hear that she's complimenting him on how well he takes care of the garden. She approaches the flowers and admires them, each of her steps is taking her closer to my balcony. She raises her head and looks up, but I don't think she can see me behind the curtains.

Minutes pass as they talk, but I can only hear half of what they're saying. Then the gardener picks up his tools

and leaves, and she... Stays? I follow her with my eyes as she strolls around the garden, still smiling and smelling each flower. The gardener has already put his stuff in the van, and she waves at him one more time before his van disappears from the yard. At that moment, a blue car, parked next to the place where the van was, catches my eye.

Could this be my neighbor? This is the thought that's racing through my head, injecting a dose of undeniable curiosity into my veins.

The house doesn't look like anyone lives there. The only sign of maintenance is the garden. No one has ever set a foot in or out of the house. I know this because I spend hours on the balcony. I continue to watch her as she leans to pick her things up from the ground and enters the house. I still can't see anything, and I'd really like to, so curiosity forces me to reach for the phone and call Oscar.

"Oscar, please, buy me a pair of binoculars." I say to him once he answers the call, and then I hang up, still looking outside even though there's nothing going on there anymore. I'm not giving up, I continue to glare for another fifteen minutes, piercing through each window of the house next door with my look, waiting for any movement that would point me to her. Finally, finally my wish comes true. My eyes catch a sight of her figure. She's opening the windows and the balcony door of the room facing mine. Her balcony is twice the size of mine. She steps outside, leans on the fence and bends over so she could bask a bit more in the view of her colorful garden.

My eyes are now widening even more as she's offering a view of her lush bosom. Her hands are rested on the railings, forming a perfectly provocative cleavage, which makes me feel like drool is about to run down my chin. I

can barely breathe as I take in her appearance, hypnotized. She's been standing there for several minutes, just observing everything around her as if she couldn't believe where she was. Suddenly, she shrieks out of joy and starts spinning in circles, clasping her hands. Her playfulness forces a smile on my face which hasn't been there for a very long time. She looks genuinely happy as her colorful dress and her wavy hair dance around her. I would be happy too if I were her, I believe.

Suddenly she stops and looks at my balcony again. I'm hiding behind the curtains, I don't want her to catch me. Perhaps she's felt me, I don't know, but she's left the balcony and entered the house, taking the smile away from my face again. My source of entertainment is gone, the only novelty that slightly managed to break the tediousness and gloominess during these thirty-three days.

Two hours later Oscar returns from the city, bringing me lunch and a pair of binoculars as I stare at the TV once again. For the fifteenth time I watch an entire season of Friends. This has at least been helping to lift my spirits, to somehow speed up the minutes that have been creeping by ever so slowly within these four walls. And once again, the walls are smothering me, and nothing can make me feel normal again. Yes, that's what I want: to be normal, to have what any other man has, nothing more. No mansions, or cars, or fortune, or fame, or women. Just a normal, average, ordinary life. When will the moment come for me to accept where I am and what I am?! Does a man ever stop searching for the hope that something will change, that he will be returned what he has lost in a twist of fate?

I'm texting Oscar as I know what's next on my menu:
„Don't disturb me over the next two hours.“

I switch onto a chair and take weights to exercise, and

then I try to find an adult channel. This is how I torture myself every single fucking day because I need a sign, even a slightest movement, that I'm not completely ruined, that I'm still a complete man. It seems that I will never accept what the doctor told me a year ago.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, no movement, no reaction. Not a single scene from these movies has turned me on. I am insanely furious now, and I do so many sets of weight lifting that my hands are falling off. I throw them so violently that even Oscar has probably heard them bang the floor. The anger makes my head ache as sweat drops keep sliding down my forehead. I decide to have a shower. Cold water might calm me down and perhaps wash out the bitterness inside me, extinguish the fire of hate for my own life.

Fresh and a bit more composed, I approach the balcony again and sit on the chair because I need a view into life. Well, look at that – the neighbor is on her balcony, taking out a small chair and unfolding a sunbed.

I don't need binoculars because I can very well see what she's doing: she's taking her colorful dress over her head, laying it on the table, which leaves her in a red, two-piece bathing suit. Sunglasses are hiding her eyes, so I can't really observe her face properly, or see where she's looking.

I was wrong when I said she wasn't my type. She most definitely is! She's not skinny or lean, but she's fit and firm. Her skin looks smooth, milky white, like a perfectly white sheet on which I could write my music.

It's a spring day, bathed in hot sun, and it's warm enough for her to take her clothes off and sunbathe. That is her intention – she is lying down on the sunbed, reaching for the oil or sunscreen from the table. Her hair is tied up in a high pony tail. She squeezes a bit of sunscreen on

her palm and starts rubbing it into her skin gracefully. First, she smears it over one hand; slowly, sensually, attentively touching each inch of her skin with her fingers. She stretches her neck a bit and tilts her head, and then she rubs the sunscreen into it, too. She squeezes out a bit more of what I now recognize as oil because her whole body is glistening, and then she brushes her hands over her lush bosom.

Christ, the oil makes her breasts glaze under the sun!

My breathing picks up as I sit tightly, not wanting to miss a second of the scene unrolling in front of my eyes most unexpectedly.

She props up a bit from the sunbed and starts caressing her legs. Her fingers slide down her skin as she attentively massages her glossy and smooth legs. She slightly raises one leg in the air, like those models from the billboards, slowly, so lazily that my head hurts. She's touching her entire body and rubbing the oil in, and I can almost feel the scent in my nose.

The scent of oil, coconut and her skin.

She spreads her thighs and starts touching them, rubbing some more oil in, approaching the most secret part of her body. I clench my jaw as her fingers gently caress the inner side of her thighs so close to her loins that I am forced to pinch my hand to grasp the fact that this is neither a dream nor a hallucination.

Fucking awesome!

This scene is better than all the others I've seen in porn movies over the last year, and frankly, I've seen a lot. This is definitely something so perfect, so intriguing and tempting because a real woman is here, so close and yet so far away from me. She takes her hands off her body in a split second and leans back, settling them above her head to sunbathe. Soft tunes are spreading from her

room, and she's opening and closing her knees in the rhythm of the music, ever so lightly, yet enough to render me utterly speechless.

My dick is hard!

It's hard for an unknown woman I watch secretly as she sunbathes across my balcony! I can't believe it, so I put my hand on my erection just to feel it under my fingers!

My dear neighbor, I have no idea how to thank you, but I still can't grasp the fact that the thing I said goodbye to a long time ago is still working, and it's clearly reacting to you.

The woman hasn't done anything to excite me, she isn't even aware of the fact that I'm here, that I'm watching her as some kind of a pervert! Fuck yeah! I'm so happy that I'm going to tell this to that fucking doctor who told me that I would never have intercourse again, and that I would never be able to get aroused. Looks like I will, and looks like the woman is nearby.

I check my reflection in the window on the left; I'm still handsome, young, attractive. I rarely shave, I like that dark note the beard gives me. Women have always found me interesting, at the concerts they used to go more nuts about me than Vance, our lead singer. But, what's the use of being physically attractive when I'm not a complete man? Who would want me like this?

I suppress what haunts me in my dreams every night and start staring at my neighbor again. My eyes fall back to the one that has returned a trace of hope to me, the one who has made me happier than anyone else in my whole life. She is on her belly, reaching for the oil again. She is slightly lifting her bottom and rubbing the oil in, first on one hip, and then on the other. I bite my lips, aware of the fact that I'm still hard just by looking at her. She moves

her panties aside and rubs in more of that glittery liquid. She lies down on the sunbed, puts her hands under her chin, determined to get a tan, completely clueless that I'm watching her, horny as hell.

I couldn't take my eyes off her not even if I wanted to. My eyes take in even the tiniest bits of her body, I cast a glance at her every curve and burn its mental image into my mind. Her ass is glistening under the sun, she slightly wiggles again, and then suddenly props herself up from a lying position to all fours, assuming the perfect position in which any man would want to see her. She remains bent like that for a while. Then she sits on her shins, turning her back to me, and starts flipping through a book. She's sitting there like a goddess while my fingers are tingling with desire to touch her back, to caress her, to rub more oil into her skin. I'm daydreaming about her with my eyes wide open; she is on top of me, I can feel her.

Oh, if only she were aware that I am here, and that my dick is hard as I watch her without blinking. What would she say if she knew about it, if she knew I was touching my penis and imagining her on top of me? I think she would be appalled because she seems so innocent and pure, like one of those women that have never had sex on a car hood or given a blowjob to an unknown guy in a club toilet.

This, this is a good girl that's surely dreaming about marriage and kids. Perhaps I get off on knowing that I, the devil incarnate, could never have her, an impeccable angel.