

MYKONOS  
by  
Supratik Bose

It was absurd. On the most romantic of Greek islands, I spent a whole night talking to my girlfriend about our relationship. How could two young, attractive, intelligent people, apparently in love, be so unhappy? Exhausted, I decided to have breakfast by myself.

At the crescent promenade lined with Cafés overlooking colorful dinghies and elegant sailboats I took a table. Just a breeze with gentle warmth, and the sun trying to rise. In the silence I could hear the tiny waves lapping on the beach. I settled down in the comfort of being by myself as coffee and a croissant arrived. It was splendid.

An attractive man sat at a table near me. His white curly hair and sun baked olive skin were Greek classic. He wore a Venetian gondolier's shirt with white and blue horizontal stripes, a pair of white pants and sandals, sketching with pencil and pad all by himself. There was an air of calm about him as if he needed no one. I couldn't resist. I went over and asked if I might join him. He was welcoming.

He said, "You're from India studying architecture in America, right?"

I was astonished. "How did you know? Yes I know the Indian part is easy. But what about the rest?"

"It's shouting from your looks."

"But I can't read you. Please tell me about yourself."

He resisted, "I just sketch. It allows me to see what I'm looking at. I notice the details when I sketch, and I understand what I am seeing better."

I thought that was profound, but not what I wanted to know.

He said, "You want to know how I make a living, right? What will that tell you that is worth knowing?"

I was embarrassed to have been caught wanting to ask such a personal question about someone I had just met.

He asked, "Are you having problems with your girlfriend?"

Again I was surprised, "How did you know?"

"It's my business to know."

Now I was really curious and he knew it. He had given me a mysterious clue about what he does for living.

"You are forcing me to ask what you do for a living."

"I make women love themselves when they forget how to."

With astonishment I asked, "And you get paid?"

"Very well."

He paused, "It is not about sex."

"Wow. How do they find *you*?"

"Usually the husbands contact me; they are the ones who pay me. It's word-of-mouth."

"So the husbands believe you can bring their wives back to life, so to speak? How do you do that?"

“Yes. I tend to them when they need tending to and I give them space when they feel crowded. That’s my art. I am giving someone space right now.”

“You mean you’re working right now? Where is she?”

He pointed to a beautiful yacht moored in the distance. I was amazed.

“What makes you different from other men? What makes you a professional?”

“I know how to get her back in touch with herself and I know how to end relationships without trauma.”

“Do you ever take a vacation? And what do you do then?”

“I ski, scuba-dive, and make pottery.”

“Could I see her with you? Is that allowed?”

“You are curious!” He laughed.

“Extremely.”

“Well, I tell you what. Why don’t you come to that rooftop restaurant right over there at midnight? Remember, I’ve never met you and you’ve never met me. OK?”

“OK.”

We shook hands.

A full moon flooded the white jewel of the town below. The Blue Danube filled the soft night air. A woman in a long white dress, her man also in white, gently floated across the moonlit space. With my girlfriend I sat, with a few others, watching: a perfect couple, in a perfect setting. Were we all now in perfect harmony?

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