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The Curtains

By Elizabeth Grigoriadou

The unprofitable line's little boat was preparing to set sail and we, the last passengers who were sitting in the café without a care in the world, ran so as not to miss it. I climbed up onto the deck. I rested my rucksack on the wooden bench and I stood up to see the harbor better. A lot of time had passed since I had last been to this island in the Northern Aegean Sea. The hardware shop had closed. The same as with Athanasio's famous Ouzeri. The Homer Hotel had succumbed to the corrosion caused by the sea. I was planning to stay on the island opposite for a few hours. I had listened to my sudden urge. In an hour I would be arriving at my destination. I hadn't informed anyone that I was going. I wanted to visit the old stone house where I had lived for two whole years and spent eighteen summers. Another woman had now taken my place.

I was planning to go into the house, as the door was always unlocked, and take down the crocheted curtains which were hanging in the bedroom. I had crocheted them when I was in the final years of school. Naked angels held flowers, ears of corn and umbrellas. They illustrated ten of the twelve months of the year. I had never crocheted November and December because I had got tired. After taking down the curtains, I would continue to the dining room to empty the drawer of the sideboard of my photographs and notes. Would I be able to do all this without bumping into that woman? His new partner who was an old flame. A very old flame.

"What does it matter seeing that he got back together with her after you splitting up" my friends said. He had never really become estranged from her though. She lived two doors down from our house. In the capital city. For twenty years he had failed to mention the fact that his first love lived thirty metres away. He had never revealed the slightest thing to me. He had never said anything at all.

And now I would go into that house, I would have found the door open, that's what I thought, I would collect the last of my things and I would leave. It was absurd that I expected things to go like that. I should have called him first. After the first two numbers I hadn't been able to remember the rest of the number for his mobile. I had tried again.

"Why can't I remember, 6972...or 6976..?" I wondered. I woke up in a panic.

I turned on the light and saw that I was in an unfamiliar place. I got up and drew the heavy curtains. I realized I was in the hotel room in Rhodes. I had arrived there on holiday a few days earlier with a friend. I went out onto the balcony and was met by the sea. The blue was calming. I decided it was time he returned those curtains to me. They would help me come out of the past where I was living in my dreams and to finally be living in the present. It was already half past nine. I hurriedly got ready. My friend would be waiting for me for breakfast.