

# The Pomegranate

By Elaine Rosenberg Miller

“Listen to this,” she said, as they rolled away from each other.

She had picked up a book lying on a table near the bed.

“It’s from Song of Solomon.”

She read aloud.

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.”

She paused.

“Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.”

She looked up.

The afternoon sun shone through the translucent curtains.

“The pomegranate was a symbol of fertility. It was a common image in the Middle East,” she said.

He was silent.

She lay back down on the soft pillow.

The hotel provided thick, white bedding.

The linen in her own home had a southwestern design. It was turquoise and and-colored, had repeating patterns.

She turned towards him.

His dark hair contrasted against the sheets.

“This is the moment we would smoke, if we smoked,” she said.

He smiled.

“I never liked pomegranates. Too many seeds,” she said.

“It’s the seeds that make it fascinating.”

“You know what I think it means?” she asked.

“What?”

“The poem. It means that we bring to each relationship all our histories.”

“What time is it?”

“Three.”

“What time do you have to go?”

“Soon.”

She touched his forearm, muscular and tanned.

“I don’t want to bring anything into this. Everything is new.”

She looked out the window.

“We can see your office.”

“Yeah. We can.”

She examined the room. Prints of horses, magnificent glossy animals supported by molded legs, hung on the walls. Brass lamps, crowned by pleated, cream covered shades, stood on the mahogany furniture, their lights illuminating the dark blue carpet, punctuated by rows of gold stars.

His body had been dense, unlike her former husband’s whose sinewy limbs resembled those of a long distance runner.

“It was supposed to represent the seeds within a woman.”

He crooked an eye, bemused.

“Come here,” he said.

He placed her beneath him and began to run his large hands over her body.

She placed her arms above her head.

She felt excitement building at his ardor.

After a while, they were spent.

Suddenly, she felt anxious, as if someone were approaching and would momentarily knock on the door.

She swung her legs over the side of the bed. Her feet touched the carpet. She rooted around for her clothes.

“My children. I told them four o’clock. I have to meet them.”

He stood as well.

Slowly, she examined his body, as if she were studying a photograph.

He dressed quickly.

Neither said a word.

Her heart was filled with a desire to speak, to tell him how she had felt at having been with him, the cool sheets against her bare skin, his fingers compressing her hair as he kissed her.

But she was mute, as was he.

They walked to the elevator and entered it

She trembled as she pressed the ground floor button.

"I'm going in the wrong direction," she said.

He looked at her.

"We're going in the wrong direction. I shouldn't be leaving. You shouldn't be leaving."

The door opened and people stood aside as they exited.

They stood outside the hotel, in the sun.

People passed them, hurrying by.

He kissed her.

Then she turned, and left.

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