

# Fantasy

## Moonlight Shards

By: *Olivia Arieti*



### Olivia Arieti

Olivia Arieti lives in Torre del Lago Puccini, Italy with her family. Her stories have appeared in *Enchanted Conversations*, *Fantasia Divinity Magazine*, *Horrified Press*, *Infective Ink*, *Sirens Call Publications*, *Forgotten Tomb Press*, *Horrified Press*, *Infective Ink*, *Pandemonium Press*, *Black Hare Press*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Iron Faerie Publishing*, *Dark Dossier Magazine*, *Black Ink Fiction*, *Gravestone Press*, *The World Of Myth Magazine*, *The Chamber Magazine*, *Dark Rose*

Madeline had always loved Paris's autumns and more than ever the one when she met Franz, a melancholic yet most handsome violinist. The season had presented itself in its best mood; a warm sweetness charmed the air with the sun rays lingering idly despite the chilly mist eager to prevail, while the lush greenness slowly yielded to the golden russet that illuminated the Seine with filigree streaks. The lampposts came to life earlier, the enticing prelude of a cozy evening in one's lover's arms.

The girl was a musician too, and despite her young age, had already performed at the city's most renowned music halls. While searching for old scores at the stalls along the river, the consuming notes of a busker's violin mesmerised her. She approached him and without any kind of compliments or praise, said, "Would you be interested in an audition? I'm a pianist and have quite a few connections in the field."

The fellow deserved more than playing in the streets.

The young man gazed at her stupefied, "Always known that a fairy would cross my way, but never imagined she could be so beautiful." His voice was as melodious as his notes.

The details were talked over at a nearby café before a glass of rosé. Franz was brilliant and extremely gifted, but his parents, unable to understand his talent, wanted him to work on the family farm. Urged by ambition and craving for success, he left his hometown in search of fame and fortune, and where better than in Paris?

Never had Madeline's drink and future appeared rosier. Although she couldn't believe it possible, love at first sight had hit her too. The musician walked her home that evening and the goodnight kiss was the obvious epilogue. Since then, they met every day whether at Franz's place or at hers. Both were enthralled by one another's skills and after playing, drinking and candlelight dinners, the goodnight kiss soon turned into something more. All passions were unleashed, and their

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burning wantonness ravished them more than whatever rhapsody.

With the zest and enthusiasm of an amateur, the violinist worked restlessly; his mastery was soon acknowledged, and one concert followed the other. Sometimes, they performed together, and the virtuoso couple were cheered and applauded everywhere. Their emotional and musical unison seemed indestructible.

Debussy's *Clair De Lune* was Madeline's favorite piece and she loved playing it while Franz sat on the couch, his eyes glowing, his head slightly tilting as if lost in reverie.

Transported by its suave intensity, her fingers weaved the notes in emotions; she never failed to capture the sad beauty of the fleeing dreams, the triste gracefulness that flowed from the piano into the room, into their hearts suspended in the oneiric atmosphere.

"Come into my arms, darling," he would say when she was through, "I want to live that moonlight spell with you tonight."

Then he kissed her tenderly while his delicate fingers ran down her body as driven by the most sensual rhythm, a counterpoint of lust and desire that seemed would never end. However, could she forget all

that?

Otherwise, they would take a walk along the Seine, sit on a bench, and talk about their future together unaware that it was one of those fleeing dreams, never to be caught. Now and then, they silenced as struck by an unsettling premonition and watched the moon's silvery beams snake upon the watery surface, their translucence, an alluring deceitfulness as bewitching as upsetting.

As a matter of fact, success tickled Franz's vanity more than his ambition and many were the ladies that fell for the attractive violinist. Flattered and intrigued, he indulged in whatever morbid pleasure as though swept by the passions, vices and obsessions lurking in the city's darkest corners and waiting to damn its artists' souls.

He, too, was turning into a dream, distant and evanescent, about to dissolve.

One evening, he left never to come back.

No staccato was ever sharper; all melodies were interrupted, their notes unable to reconnect, the piano lid slammed shut and the only rhythm left for Madeline was the palpitations of her heart.

The breakup occurred in one of the most tormented autumns with the wind never tired of wailing, the whole city clad in gray, oppressed by a continuous

rain that pitilessly drenched all bones and spirits.

The pianist began performing around the globe; staying away from whatever had turned into a heartrending reminiscence, meant survival.

Madeline returned only when she realised that distance wasn't enough to heal loss.

Restlessness had gripped her soul as there were always those memories thronging her mind. She couldn't do without them, the only remains she had to love. Once plugged in, they came back in an endless sequence and kindled her heart beyond her will. An infinite joy and cruel doom at the same time. She saw Franz walking by her side, felt his touch, heard his penetrating voice before his vanishing over and over again.

That day she was feeling particularly lonely and dejected while making her way through a cascade of leaves sadly falling on the slushy pavement. As usual, her steps led her along the Seine; there she would stop at a café and sip a glass of rosé, a sweet indulgence that made her relive the bygone emotions for a few instances.

Like in a fairy tale, when the wine finished, the visions

disappeared. How wicked could magic sometimes be!

She was about to enter the café when she distinguished a familiar figure, lean and emaciated, huddled up in a worn-out jacket playing submissively... A nostalgic lament with a dirge like sorrow flowed through the mist.

Despite the long hair and thick beard, she recognized her Franz, now only a vague resemblance of the man she once loved so intensely.

"I knew you would pass by some day," he said without raising his eyes.

"I never thought I'd see you again," she muttered taken aback by the unexpected presence.

"Paris had made me hers in glory and damnation. I guess that's the price one has to pay... but it's been worth it no matter what."

He looked like a skeleton playing ghastly notes on a spectral violin.

"Whatever, I'm sorry I hurt you, darling, that's my biggest regret."

While saying that, he dared to lift his eyes and fix them on hers. The glance recalled a beggar's one.

Whenever she thought of the possibility of an encounter, she saw herself running into his arms, crying, clinging tight to

him as if afraid to lose him again.

Madeline stood immobile instead, the gaze gelid, the lips pursed. No joy or enthusiasm stirred her as though his sight had petrified her.

He had become nothing but a memory, or rather its shadow; like all memories it would never gain consistence and come back to life.

She forced herself to a tight smile, "I wish you luck, dear, really hope you'll make it through."

That said, Madeline turned round and decided to keep on walking.

The river was as plumbeous as her spirit, a gray flow of fragmented dreams, leading to a sea that immune and impassive, swallows every sort of remains and never gives them back.

A deep melancholy seized her at the thought that all dreams, just like in her favorite sonata, were fated to flee away over and over again, only the time to shed their ephemeral torment and nothing more.

Her heart had withered, exhausted by too much ephemerality.

With the dirge like lament still in her ears, Madeline stopped on the bank's edge and hesitant and dismayed, kept gazing at the murky waters.

**The End**