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## Love's Catch 22

by Alex Harrison

It was love at first sight. For him at least.

He was looking through his new binoculars when he saw her. She was in the opposite apartment across the street. He could see she was dancing, her arms held up above her head and her whole-body swaying and flowing to the music, oblivious she was being watched. He was gripped by her natural beauty and elegance. He put his binoculars down not wishing to intrude on her privacy.

Over the next few months he would see her come and go. He knew she lived with someone, her partner, her husband or perhaps a secret lover. Relationships were sacred to him and this meant, therefore, she was out of bounds and this simply increased his attraction to her.

Each night he would see her lover close the curtains, leaving him to imagine what it would be like to be the one beside her at night. Oh, how he longed to be in a relationship with someone like her. Someone he found so deeply attractive.

Then, one day, he saw the man leaving their apartment with suitcases. She was standing on the doorstep. He could see they were shouting at each other. It was clear from her body language it was over.

He waited a few weeks knowing she would need space and time to heal. His love for her was so intense but he knew it was too soon. He knew she was still not free of her pain and therefore not free for another relationship.

And then the time came when he saw she was no longer walking with her head down. She was no longer trapped in her pain. He realised the time had come when he must instigate meeting her. He knew which bus she got every morning, so he started waiting at the bus stop with her. He noticed which books she was holding so one day he made sure he was carrying a book by her favourite author.

Like bees to lavender she said “Oh, your reading Catch 22, that’s my favourite book”. He smiled and looked back at her. “Mine too” he replied. He saw the look in her eyes as he realised she found him deeply attractive.

And then it hit him. Bang. He felt like he had been bashed in the face with a frying pan.

She was no longer with anyone. She was no longer hurting or angry. She was no longer unobtainable and, therefore, she was no longer attractive to him.

He sat there looking at her, her stunning beauty no longer held his heart, as he realised he could never be in a relationship with someone he found attractive because to be attractive they had to be in a relationship with someone else.