

Green-Eyed Monster

by Vera Gajic

Rosin had always been plagued by the green-eyed monster though she didn't know it. She found out early that humans were unfair and cruel. As a young girl she felt her parents' greater love for her younger sister keenly. She saw it in hundreds of little actions and signs from the presents at Christmas to the scoldings dealt out, each one cut like a knife. At first she would complain, why had Petra been given more chocolate cake? Why did Petra have a nicer dress than her? Why did she have to wait until she was eight for a bike when Petra got one when she was seven?

No matter how much her parents denied the unequal love showered on both their beloved daughters and explained every slight reasonably, Petra had a bike a year earlier so that she could keep Rosin company when out cycling, Petra's dress was only available in that size and so on and on. But the inevitable came to pass as so often does in cases like this, by railing against her parents for loving her less they did grow to love her less despite trying their best they found her sister much easier to love. With no pressure to prove their love for Petra they could give it unconditionally.

Rosin left home for university at eighteen never to return but the green-eyed monster came with her. Initially she was popular with the boys, she was small boned and slim with glossy brown hair that bounced pleasingly as she walked. Over the three years she had a handful of liaisons but each one disappointed her for she soon saw their eyes wandering and their attention waning. She didn't stay around for the inevitable, not Rosin she walked away before they could deny her assertions. She'd learnt from her parents that you can't change people's feelings. No discussion, no explanations, no reprisals just over.

By the time Rosin was thirty-two the longest relationship she'd had was four months, even that was quite an achievement. She had a reasonably good job in accounting had saved hard and managed to buy a small one bedroom flat in west London. She loved her flat and was coming round to the realisation that she was probably going to remain single despite her pretty hair and perfect physic. But then she met Terry. Terry was different, she hoped. They met just before the first lock-down and they'd squeezed in a couple of dates before Covid stopped everything. Initially they talked on the phone but soon transitioned to nearly daily zooms as they'd both been furloughed. They had time to get to know each other slowly without anyone else around, a blessing for Rosin and her green eyed monster.

Terry was living in shared house for professionals but most of them had gone to live with their parents during lock down. He'd not been there long so didn't know them well. He spent most of the time in his room with his laptop. The early months of lock-down were peaceful and relief for Rosin not having to worrying about what Terry was up to as she had with all other boyfriends. He couldn't do anything else. She had a growing sense of contentment as they played games over the airwaves asking each other questions they wouldn't dare in person, finding to their delight they had much in common and shared interests. Rosin couldn't believe her luck and when the lock down eased they started long walks in the beautiful summer of 2020. The monster stayed locked away and nearly forgotten about.

The November lockdown was a horrible shock and they soon realised they didn't want to go back to a virtual relationship having successfully managed to transition to a fully functioning physical relationship. They skirted around the issue of living together as they both knew that Rosin was the flat owner and it was up to her to invite Terry to move in. She had not planned on sharing her kingdom but in these uncertain times decisions were being made quickly, who knew what was going to happen next. Rosin missed Terry more than she thought possible and finally on one of the many hours of zooming she asked him if he would like to move in.

Moving house was allowed and he became an official resident in Rosin's west London flat before Christmas, though he'd had to put most of his stuff in storage as Rosin was not giving up wardrobe space. There were hiccups of course, Rosin had never shared a bedroom before and getting some sleep was hard and the strain was showing.

A couple of months in Rosin thought she was calming down a bit and was grateful when people started going back into the office. Terry worked for an energy company managing a number of call centres. The hours were long and he often wasn't home for supper and sometimes much later. The monster started to stir.

One day when Terry was on a late start and Rosin was working from home she overheard Terry talking in the bathroom, the only private place in the flat. The shower was going so Rosin had to get a glass to listen at the door. She caught the end of the call – "yes five o clock tomorrow great, bye."

All day Rosin paced around. That evening she asked Terry what he was doing the next day.

“Working of course,” said Terry.

“But when will you be back?” asked Rosin.

“I don’t know yet – I’ll text you.”

Rosin didn’t sleep at all that night and the next day she couldn’t concentrate on work at all. She pretended to be asleep when Terry left, she couldn’t look at him.

By four o’clock she was a nervous wreck, she could hardly breath and had to try to yoga breathing to calm herself. By four thirty she knew she had to do something and texted Terry, *I know what you are doing.*

He didn’t reply.

At five o’clock the doorbell rang. Rosin answered the door and there was a man holding a very large bouquet of flowers.

“Thank you,” Rosin took the flowers, her hands trembling as she picked out the card.

Happy anniversary Rosin, its been the happiest year of my life. All my love Terry

Rosin sat down and wept.