

Apparition

“Come. You must come with me.”

I awoke abruptly. Who said those words? I sat up in bed, I didn't see anyone. Did I dream it? I considered the words I'd heard. They were not spoken, they were whispered.

Yes, it was more like they were floating on a breeze than spoken.

I'm not usually given to dreams; I'm not a dreaming person but these thoughts stayed with me for most of the day.

By the next night I'd forgotten about them but again I was awoken.

“Come. You must come.”

This time there was something there by the window. Someone outside? A shadow? I arose from my bed and walked over to the window.

Again, there was nobody there but it felt as if a strange presence had moved away from the windows, like a large diaphanous silk scarf has been waving in the wind but had just departed.

On the third night, I fought off the sleep assaulting my eyes to try to discover who, dressed in black silk, was tormenting me. She was beautiful, she was beckoning to me, saying again, “Come, come with me.” I couldn't hear her, of course, she was on the other side of the window, but I could understand from her lip movements.

What is this madness? I don't believe in spirits and ghosts so who is this woman calling me from my balcony? How did she get onto my balcony? When I reached the window she had gone. I went back to bed but couldn't sleep.

Tonight is the fourth night. I'll try not to sleep to see if this woman is real. She appears on my balcony outside the window. She smiles at me and beckons. I'm going to confront her. I open the big window. She begins to move away, over the balcony, away. I follow her up onto the rail of the balcony and move across to stop her escape but she seems to float on the breeze. She whispers, “Come with me.” And I do so.

But I live on the seventh

348