

THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTER

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A father lived with his daughter in a wonderful country. The scenery was so beautiful there that you would want to move there immediately. Sadly his wife had died at a young age. The father dearly loved his daughter. She was his most important possession on earth. With great joy he thought of the wonderful future ahead of her. The father was a very wealthy man. He had a fantastic farm. It was so large you could get lost there. The servants did their best to help the friendly father make sure the farm was a blessing to everyone living nearby. The man was particularly popular among the people in the village.

Sarah, the farmer's daughter, was a free girl. She was able to fully enjoy life. She loved wandering around in the beautiful countryside. She always felt her father's protection over her, as if he went everywhere with her. Father had told her on occasion that she wasn't to go outside the boundary of his grounds. He trusted her completely.

One day Sarah rode up to the boundary of the grounds on her horse. She saw a group of people standing by the fence. Her attention was caught by this group. Curious, she walked up to the group to see what was going on. It looked as though the people were celebrating something, it looked like a lot of fun. One of the young men came up to Sarah and asked her if she wanted to join him. His rich father was going to throw a big dinner party. Sarah wasn't sure, but because it looked like such fun, she thought there could be no harm in it. She thought the young man, named Ali, was very kind. And so she went with Ali. Ali took her to his father's manor. They were welcomed warmly and joined the other guests at the table. Once the dinner was finished, Ali asked Sarah to go with him to a wonderful place nearby. Sarah remembered that her father had always warned her off things like this, but the sense of adventure overtook her as the opportunity had just presented itself. It was wonderful to ride her horse through the wonderful surroundings next to her new friend. They came to a dazzling ravine. A small river disappeared into a waterfall down below. The cool water was spraying in all directions. What a dream view, thought Sarah. She loved enjoying such freedom. Ali suggested they stay and enjoy the view together for a while. He talked all about his wonderful life on these grounds. Sarah was completely captivated by this charming young man. Her heart started to beat more quickly. She had never liked a boy like this before, but this time she was smitten. Yes, Ali truly was very kind.

The weeks passed and Sarah and Ali met each other more frequently at the place they had first met. Sometimes Ali wanted to do things Sarah would rather not do, but Sarah did not give in to him. One day Ali told Sarah that it was time for them to strengthen their friendship. He wanted to take her to his father's manor for a longer period. There was more to do there than in the village where Sarah lived.

Together they agreed to go there. Sarah had a great excuse for her father. She was going to stay with a good girlfriend for a while. Her father wanted to take her but Sarah managed to persuade him not to.

The next evening Sarah left the grounds of the farm and quickly met Ali who stood waiting outside the fence for her. They disappeared into the darkness together. The night fell upon Sarah as a shadow. She had no idea what was about to happen to her. It would become a dark shadow in her life.

When they arrived at Ali's father's manor there was a party taking place. Sarah saw people everyone who, judging by the laughter, were having a great time. At the start Sarah struggled to join in the party but Ali helped come out of her shell. He gave her delicious drinks and pills which made her feel happy. It was a wonderful feeling. It seemed as though everything was light in this world in which she had landed. Ali was even kinder than she had thought. They spent the first night together in Ali's bedroom. What happened that night, Sarah had never experienced before. Many days and nights

followed in that palace. Sarah got used to the drinks and pills and then one day, they didn't help make her happy any more. She wanted to go home. Ali started hitting her and threatening her. Sarah was completely surprised that her kind Ali could suddenly act so differently towards her.

One day as she sat reading the newspaper, she suddenly saw her own photo. It was an advertisement placed by her father who was looking for her. How Sarah longed for home. She wanted to get away from this place. She wished she had never gone off with Ali.

Life was suddenly hell instead of paradise. How could she ever get back from such a nightmare? She started to pray to God silently. If He were there then maybe He could help her.

Months later, when her body was just a shadow of who she was, due to so much violence and neglect, the bell rang. Someone was standing at the door, but no one opened up. Ali had always forbidden her to open the door. The house had become a prison for Sarah.

Sarah made her way to the door and opened it to see a man standing there. The man introduced himself as Issa and asked Sarah for directions. Sarah saw her chance and started begging the man: "Please help me to get away from here". The man understood immediately that this was a serious case. He took her with him. Together they walked to Issa's vehicle. Issa took her to his own home. The first few days were a nightmare for Sarah. She had become addicted to the pills and was suffering tremendously from withdrawal symptoms. The man helped her to come off the pills. Sarah thought Issa was a very kind man. She never wanted to go back to Ali's palace, but she couldn't go back to her father's place either, and she hoped she could stay with Issa. And she could. Issa asked her to marry him and they wed. Sarah was now beginning to feel slightly happy. A year passed. Now and then she thought of her father. Then she was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt. How is he doing? He most probably never wanted to see her again.

One day when Sarah was out shopping she met an old acquaintance from the palace where she had lived as a love slave for such a long time. As the man walked past her she smelt the familiar smell of the house. It was a strange smell which brought with it mixed feelings. On the one hand she hated that palace. Yet at the same time the smell had an almost magical effect on her. Strangely enough she was reminded of the pleasure at the start of that period, when life in the palace seemed one big party. Somehow she missed the kick and excitement she experienced back then.

She decided to talk to the man. That awakened her desire for pleasure, drink and pills even more. Before evening came she left for the palace without telling her husband. She would try and get hold of some pills. With a slight sense of excitement, doubled with fear and trembling, she entered the house. There in the living room stood Ali. Before Sarah knew it she was taken to the enclosed wing of the palace. She had heard about this place but didn't know what it was like there. Now she would get to know the most horrendous place in her life. From that moment onward she was there for the pleasure of men who paid for her services.

When Issa got home late that evening from his work and discovered Sarah was gone, he became concerned. After days of searching and asking he suspected she had returned to the palace. From then on he went to the palace regularly to ask if anyone had seen Sarah. He would show them a picture of her but no one could confirm they had seen her. Issa did not give up. He wanted his wife back.

Months later Issa heard from a regular visitor to the palace that Sarah was one of the women who looked after the men so well. This man assumed that Sarah was happy there and that she definitely would not want to leave.

Issa went back to the palace. This time he was successful. While he was waiting he saw Ali standing there. He had heard a lot about him from Sarah. At first Ali did not want to admit that Sarah was there but after Issa told him who had tipped him off, he changed his attitude. Issa asked if he could speak to his wife. Ali thought about it briefly and gave his permission. That same evening Issa spoke to Sarah. He asked her to come home. But Sarah didn't want to any more. She needed the pills and drink. With pain in his heart Issa saw how skinny she had become and that she looked completely uncared for.

Ali walked to Issa and laughed. He said that he could have Sarah back for one million euro if he wanted her. This amount was too much for Sarah's husband. Full of sorrow he left the house. It was an impossible situation. Still he decided to do everything he could to gather the amount to pay for Sarah. He found very dangerous work in the mines where he could work night and day. He had to deposit explosives and then enter the mine first to see if everything was safe. Sometimes days passed without Issa getting any sleep. His love for Sarah made it possible for him to carry on, even though he was risking his life each day. After a year Issa had saved enough money. He headed for the palace with a heavy case with him full of money. He was immediately received by Ali at the door who gave him Sarah in exchange for the money. She could barely walk any more. Her clothes were all baggy. Issa helped her to the vehicle. And they headed for their little house.

Gradually Sarah became free from her addiction. But her sense of guilt was eating her away. Shame ran through her body. It was almost unbearable. She wanted to go back to the palace where she could stifle her feelings with drink and drugs, but she was too weak to return. That evening Issa came home with a bunch of flowers which filled the house with a beautiful aroma. He told her how much he loved her. Sarah broke down and the tears streamed over her cheeks. At last the dam which had held back her emotions burst. How could this man love her so much? How could he possibly want to do so much to help her? This love was too much for her. Yet she allowed herself to be loved by Issa. At the end of the evening she told her husband that she had a father. She showed him the advertisement which she had kept all this time. Up until this moment she had always pretended to Issa that she was an orphan, but this time she told him the truth. Her husband was shocked but wanted to help her again. He said he would take her to her father's house the next day. Sarah started to cry. She needed a sign as she wasn't sure if her father would want to see her. She would first write him a letter and ask for his forgiveness. If her father still wanted to see her then he should let his white horse run around the grounds of the farm. Then Sarah would know that she was welcome. They sent the letter and a few days later Sarah and her husband left for her father's house. It seemed to take forever. The closer they got to the farm the more tense things became. Would the white horse be out in the field? Slowly Issa and Sarah drove on. Sarah didn't dare look and kept her eyes shut tightly. "Sarah, Sarah, look! There are a hundred white horses! Sarah, look, that must be your father. He is sitting on a white horse. He is looking through binoculars. He's waving to us." Before they reached the driveway to the farm the white horse galloped towards them with the father on its back. Issa stopped the vehicle and Sarah jumped out. Father jumped from his horse and ran towards her with his arms open wide. Sarah was completely enveloped in his big arms. That evening a large party was thrown. The whole village was informed that Sarah was home. Sarah was given her mother's jewels to wear. The servants prepared a great feast. Father opened the evening with a toast to Sarah. His eyes were gleaming with pride as he looked at her and said: "Sarah, you were always my child, you are my child and always will be. Welcome home!"