

THE GARDEN OF SAADET

A long time ago when there was no trace of electricity and the streets were lit by kerosene light, when there was no television or radios, but the only source of entertainment was story telling and when there was no libraries or newspapers and information was carried out orally from old to young, there lived a young, masterful gardener in the capital of Ottoman who was said to possess the magic spell of gardening. Gardener was as tall as a willow tree, his body was as muscular as a warrior, his face was as glorious as the sun and his skin color was the same color as the olive oil.

Gardener had the gift of turning every piece of land into a magnificent garden. The trees he planted were always the fruitiest, his roses produced the most dazzling and long-lasting bulbs, his flowers had the most flourishing and striking fragrance among all the others. The residents who passed near by his gardens could not take their eyes away and fell in love with his artwork right away. He was renowned to be the creator of “Garden of Saadet” - pleasure garden.

His fame grew slowly and he began to look after the gardens of noblemen. He built gigantic fountains and urns to satisfy the pleasures and luxury of inhabitants. He

pioneered new innovations and brought various plants from all over the world. The sumptuous gardens and pools became the showcase of the city.

GARDENER'S FAME REACHED THE PALACE

His talent was soon recognized by the palace and Sultan called him into his presence. When Gardener entered throne room, Sultan was sitting upon his royal throne, arrayed in royal apparel, covered with gold and precious stones. Gardener bowed in front of him with his forehead touching the ground. Sultan approved his action and ordered “You may stand.” Gardener stood before him. Sultan wasn't expecting a young and spirited man in front of him but he was a statesman who judged by his acumen not by his eyes.

Sultan said “I heard only good things about you. People admire your work and adore your gardens. As a man representing the law and the power, I demand you to build me the greatest and loveliest of all the gardens that one will ever see. Let your garden become the highlight of my sultanate. Let your name be written in golden letters in the great book of Shehname. From now on you're the master gardener of my palace.”

Gardener left Sultan's presence. Now he had access to unlimited man power and money, he could build the most beautiful and charming gardens one could ever dream of. He started working without loosing any time.

He constructed the site next to a brook so that he could build water channels to run water streams around the garden. He ordered to plant two rows cypress and myrtle trees around the border. The focal point of the garden was the pavilion which was designed around a mosaic-decorated pool and a majestic fountain. There were all kinds of flowers; carnations, lilacs, jasmines and tulips planted in square beds.

Sultan said “Let your garden become the highlight of my sultanate. Let your name be written in golden letters in the great book of Shehname.”

Sultan was watching the site construction very closely and he was content with the progress and Gardener's hard work and willpower. Soon construction came to an end and garden was opened for public access. The charm of the pavilion, the fragrance of the flowers and the meditative hymn coming out of the fountain amazed everyone who entered the garden. As expected, the garden became one of the highlights of the city and a popular destination spot for the foreign visitors.

Sultan was happy with the reception the garden was getting and he was talking highly about Gardener's talent and inspirational spirit. Meanwhile, he could not stop wondering why a guy as handsome and hardworking as him was still bachelor and not married. He sent one of his envoys to invite him for dinner so that he could satisfy his curiosity.

THE LOVE STORY OF GARDENER

For the dinner banquet, Sultan ordered a cooking contest to be organized in Gardener's honor. High state officials and royal families were invited to the party. Seven-course dinner was served to the guests, starting with a rich selection meze appetizers, wedding soup, deep-fried octopus and calamari, buttery-rich pastry cigars, char-coal grilled lamb shish kebabs, sweet cinnamon pilaf with currants, fresh baklava with pistachio and coffee served with pieces of Turkish delight. Dinner banquet was followed by traditional belly dance performance.

Before the night ends, Sultan said to Gardener "You demonstrated to me and for all to see that you're masterful in your art and deserve a life-long good income and fame attached to your name. Yet, I don't understand why a young man as smart and bright as you are, is still single and not affiliated. I adore craftsmanship and talent, I worship knowledge and discipline but one shouldn't forget that life is never complete and well-spent without the other half and the joy and passion will be wasted in its absence." Upon completion of his words, a deep sorrow covered Gardener's face and he went into silence for a while. Sultan read the agony in his eyes and sorrow in his heart. This was the first time Sultan saw Gardener in such a sad mood. Gardener spoke out ultimately and told Sultan his story.

He was on a mission traveling all around the country to look for new inspirations

and ideas four years ago. He visited beautiful and elaborately decorated gardens, studied remarkable designs of pavilions and fountains and explored a variety of flowers, plants and trees that he had never seen before. He was happy with his collection and ready to come back when he came in front of an exotic garden that caught his immediate attention. The garden appeared to have no fear of strangers; there were no walls or a fence surrounding the premise and the front gate was wide open. He couldn't prevent himself from entering the garden.

It was a small garden with overgrown tropical plants, wild berries and fruit fragrant flowering trees that took up the entire space. The garden seemed to be left on its destiny for a long time. He had to open a trail to find his way through courtyard.

It was that moment when Gardener saw her for the first time. She was Beauty. She had long hair as black as charcoal, dark skin as smooth and shiny as a cottonseed oil, her lips were as tender as butterfly's and her face was like a full moon shimmering beauty and charm. He was struck by her haunting beauty and fell in love with her right away.

She was sleeping under the shade of a huge walnut tree with such tranquility and peace that Gardener couldn't take his eyes away from her. He climbed up the walnut tree and started watching her. Time stood still and he felt asleep.

When Gardener opened his eyes, he found himself lying on the ground under the walnut tree. There was no trace of Beauty. He searched for her in the entire garden but there wasn't any living soul. He visited next door neighbors to make an inquiry about her but nobody had ever seen nor heard anybody in his description. They told him that it was an abandoned garden whose owners passed away years ago and there were no caretakers since then.

If it wasn't that handkerchief Gardener found where Beauty was sleeping, he might have thought that everything was a dream of his and a delightful hallucination. But he knew that she wasn't a fairy and he was determined to find her. Though his relentless efforts were fruitless and he failed to find her. He returned home empty-handed.

Following that incident, the young Gardener couldn't think of anything but her. He lost his appetite and desire for living. He shut doors to love. As days passed by, his feelings towards her sharpened and his temptation became more profound. His parents and friends were worried about the situation, but unable to find a solution.

His parents consulted to the best shamans who had reputation to cure even the most hopeless diseases and asked their help but after listening to his story, they all told that there was no treatment for love.

Gardener became loner and dedicated most of his time in the garden-work,

planting flowers and doing landscape. Gardens became his passion and only salvation.

THE STORY OF BLACK AND WHITE HOUND

Sultan listened to Gardener without interrupting till he finished his story. He asked “Then what happened?” Gardener said “I waited her four years, visiting the abandoned garden every summer but coming back disappointed and sad every time with no sign of her. In the end I gave up. I lost my hope and belief of seeing her again. Since then I didn’t have courage to open my heart to another girl and became cold hearted.”

Sultan said “I’m the head of the sovereign and the ultimate power in the dynasty. There is nothing that I should ask for but not responded in return.”

Sultan said “I’m the head of the sovereign and the ultimate power in the dynasty. There is nothing that I should ask for but not responded in return. I’ll gather my wisest and most fearless men not later than tomorrow and assign them with the duty of finding her. If she is alive and lives in my sultanate, she will be found. It’s my word to you. Now go home and come to my presence tomorrow morning.”

As Sultan asked, Gardener visited Sultan’s palace first thing in the morning. Sultan had already gathered his court into his presence including his grand Vizier,

statesmen and military officers. He told them the story of Gardener and asked each of them to speak their mind to devise a plan to find Beauty.

One by one his subordinates stepped forward and spoke out their ideas. One suggested commissioning a group of men to search every household in the country; the other suggested organizing a festivity and inviting all the single girls to the palace and the last one suggested assigning a guard in the garden with the hope that she would visit the garden again. But none of their recommendations were satisfying enough for Sultan to pursue.

Realizing Sultan’s growing disappointment and knowing his fiery temper and full-blooded personality better than anyone else, wise Vizier acted promptly before Sultan ran out of patience and burst in anger. He said “My Sultan, this is a matter of love and worship not warfare, statesmanship and kinship. You have the best advisors and governors in your court, but this may not be the area of their expertise. Give me your royal order to search for the right person who can feel the empathy of the young gardener and has the courage and wisdom to deal with it.”

Listening to his Vizier advice and content with what he was hearing Sultan commanded to him “So be it. Spread my divine order and issue a ferman announcing that I’ll praise gold equivalent to his weight to whom that comes up with an idea and succeeds in finding her. Make

it clear though, whoever wastes my time and shall fail in their attempt, his head will be decapitated.”

Vizier was a kind and warm-hearted man with strong will and values. Soon the announcement was made; his court was occupied with hundreds of youngsters among them peasants, hunters, janissaries, blacksmiths and firemen. Yet neither of their stories was compelling enough to convince Vizier that they would succeed in their attempts. He knew that Sultan had high expectations from his subordinates and the punishments were as great as the rewards in his court. If he let them go to Sultan’s presence, they would end up losing their life and he would not allow it.

He refused their proposals one by one to protect them from the misery. He was almost at the end of his list, a Farmer stood in front of him carrying a two months old black and white hound in his arms. Vizier asked his story. Farmer said that his hound was descended from a rare breed, famed for its ability to follow a scent days long, over long distances.

Vizier examined the hound closely; it was a puppy with solid black spots and patches on its body. Vizier said “Don’t be silly and waste my time and nerves. I’m a reasonable person but I can’t tolerate impertinence. What makes you think that a puppy will manage to overcome all the difficulties where many courageous and strong men cannot possibly succeed?” Farmer responded “My Vizier, don’t underestimate its size and age. Give me a

chance. And I promise you that you won't regret it. With the proper amount of time, I can train him. He has the keenest sense of smell of any breed of dog and a strong tracking instinct. He's the only one that could find her location from thousand miles away."

Vizier went into a silence for a while remembering the handkerchief Gardener was referring to. It was the only connection they had to trace the beauty. After a short moment, he spoke out "Young fellow. I listened to what you have to say and I decided to give you a chance and grant you my permission to search for beauty. Take your puppy now and begin the training without delay. But don't forget. You're responsible for consequences of your deeds and there is nobody but you to blame if things go wrong." Farmer said "I hear and obey."

THE SEARCH FOR BEAUTY

Training took in the palace for two months under supervision of Sultan's best trainers. Puppy grew very fast and turned into a medium-size hound, powerfully built, muscled, with skin color white and black. He was a powerful runner that could maintain a swift pace for several hours. Vizier was watching the progress very closely so as the Gardener and Sultan. At the end of two months, Farmer proclaimed that the hound was ready for the task.

Vizier sent his envoys to find Gardener and asked him to bring the handkerchief that once belonged to Beauty. Gardener

arrived shortly carrying a wooden box under his arm where he kept the handkerchief for four years inside. He broke the seal and took the handkerchief out of the box. It was a beautiful silk white handkerchief with embroidered pink rose buds on each corner. He passed it to Vizier and said "This is my sole connection to life and single hope to see her again. I can't afford it to get lost." Vizier confirmed "You don't need to worry or feel anxious about losing the handkerchief. I advise you now to detach yourself from any concerns and keep your spirit strong and your mind restful till the black and white hound comes back from his journey. I assure you that you won't need the handkerchief any longer while Beauty will be found till then."

Gardener did as Vizier suggested. He freed himself from his worries and devoted his entire time to Sultan's garden. He planted carnations in various colors, from peach to dark red, from white to rose pink in the pathway. He extended the fountain to add a large pool in front. Pavilion was enlarged twice to its original size. Soon with the new additions and improvements, the garden looked more dazzling and beautiful than it had ever been before and stunned everyone who visited it.

While Gardener was keeping himself busy with the garden, the black and white hound was running all around the country in search for Beauty. Ten of Sultan's most brave and courageous hunters were assigned to accompany Farmer in his journey. The hunters and Farmer ran all

day long after the hound that was vigorously searching every corner and every site in the town and then moved to the next one. When the dusk came, they set a campground to rest and get ready for the next day. The chase continued the next morning despite there was a pouring rain, gusting wind or heat wave.

The search took three months and ten days. Day by day Farmer and Sultan's hunters were declined in strength and worn out with exhaustion while the hound was stubborn and unrelenting more than ever. If it wasn't the Sultan's order they were carrying, they would have quit the mission and returned back.

On the dawn of next day, hunters were awoken by Farmer's utter scream. Farmer was disoriented and panicked running all around in every direction. Soon they learnt the reason of Farmer's abrupt frustration; the hound had disappeared from the sight leaving no traces behind. They began looking for the hound but there was no sign of him in the entire campground.

Farmer got panicked in fear and said "I can't go back empty-handed. I promised to Sultan, if I shall fail to find her, my head will be decapitated. I'm a dead man now." The youngest and probably the smartest among the other hunters stepped forward and calmed Farmer down with his words "You shouldn't get panicked nor feel worried about the situation. We're the best hunters of Sultan and there is no living-being but a dog could survive our chase. We'll trace it down and find him." And

they started their chase immediately following the footsteps the black and white hound left behind.

Indeed, the black and white hound was not far from where they were. When he woke up in the early lights of dawn, he was tempted with the smell carried away by the morning breeze coming from the coast. The smell buried in the wind was no different than the one he sniffed in Beauty's handkerchief earlier. He rose from his place, left the campground hurriedly and followed the smell which took him down to a small fishing village by the sea.

When Farmer and hunters arrived to the scene, they found the black and white hound sitting next to Beauty who was busy pruning the roses. First time Farmer's eyes contacted with her, he understood right away how profound Gardener's feeling towards her was and the extent of his agony losing her. He couldn't say a word dazzled by her beauty and charm.

Beauty was surprised to see a group of visitors in her garden and asked the reason of their visit. Farmer came back to himself quickly and introduced himself making up a story without telling her anything about Gardener, his love towards her and the handkerchief. He said "I'm pursuing a mission by the order of Sultan to look for candidates to marry with the young prince. I'm here to inform you that you're one of the invitees to join a party organized in honor of Sultan. The invitees will be rewarded 100 golden coins each and will

be hosted 40 days in the comfort and extravagance of the royal palace."

Beauty said "Love cannot be forced or pre-arranged. It should come by itself with no influence from any side."

Soon enough, Beauty's parent arrived with curious looks in their eyes. Farmer introduced himself to them and repeated the same story that he told to Beauty without changing a word. The old couple was so happy to hear the generous reward from Sultan and the opportunity of their daughter to get married with a prince. They didn't question him further and went inside to make the required preparation for Beauty's departure. And it was how Beauty found herself in the palace in front of the Vizier three days later.

BEAUTY'S VISIT TO PALACE

Vizier was happy to hear that the mission was completed successfully and Beauty was not beyond the reach but real. He paid the reward to Farmer that he had promised; gold equivalent to his weight. Farmer was delighted seeing the sacks filled with shiny gold coins standing in front of him. He requested help from Vizier to have someone help him carrying them. Vizier approved his request and assigned two porters in his service. He told him that his door was always open to him whenever he needed help. Farmer bowed in front of him, gave his benevolences and

left. Right after his departure, Beauty was brought to his presence.

Vizier was ready to tell the actual reason of her travel to palace and Gardener's platonic love towards her but something forced him to hold his thoughts back when he saw her. She looked so pretty and fragile. Vizier observed her for a while without saying a word. He then asked her several questions and listened to her carefully while she was answering them unhurriedly.

Vizier learnt that Beauty was the only kid of an old couple. Her parents loved her more than anything else and cared for her more than anyone else. They were very happy to live together and possibly could not afford not seeing her even one single day. But in the mean time they were desperately waiting her to get married and have babies before they passed away. She said "I want to make them happy with my whole heart but I haven't met with anyone that makes me feel excited and passionate. I forced myself to like someone just to make my parents happy but it didn't last long and they became more upset and I became more detached. I learnt that love cannot be forced or pre-arranged. It should come by itself naturally with no influence from any side."

She later told Vizier that when she was bored of everything and cursed with her faith, she made short excursions to go out of town and visit new gardens where she spent hours inside by herself. That was how Gardener came across with Beauty.

Listening to her, wise Vizier made up his mind right away. Although he knew how Gardener was passionately in love with her and Sultan was desperately waiting for the wedding, he couldn't ask her to marry with a stranger that she hadn't seen him once in her entire life. She already had regrets from past relationships that didn't work out and he didn't want to be the cause of another one. He decided to give her a chance to love him with no prejudice or enforcement. He commanded her to go to her room and make necessary preparations immediately for the departure. In shorter than an hour, Beauty found herself back on the road going home.

Meanwhile Sultan heard Vizier's order of Beauty's departure from the palace and stormed at him showing no mercy and like. Vizier responded to his harsh words in confidence and asked his permission to explain him his reason. After listening to Vizier's rational, Sultan calmed down and realized that his Vizier was a man of virtues and wisdom who didn't harbor any prejudices and looked after good will of everyone. He asked him what his plan was. Vizier said "I know a shaman who used to help young lovers find the true path in love and help married couples find the joy and pleasure in their relationship. I'll call him and ask his help." Sultan said "Very well, do as you suggested. But don't forget you're responsible for your all decisions and regardless what the result will be, I want it to be resolved sooner than later."

Vizier called Gardener to his presence and told him the story of Beauty. Gardener

was first overjoyed learning that Beauty was located and brought to the palace but then shocked with the news that she had disappeared once again. He cried out for an explanation. Vizier calmed him down telling his rational behind the decision and Sultan's approval with his action. He said "Love could not be forced or challenged. It should come by itself without enforcement. If your souls are connected and bodies are one and the same, there is no power or force on earth that can prevent the union and keep you apart. I want you to prove me that your love is divine and supreme and nurtured by each side equally without interference or influence from outside. The only condition to see her again was to agree with my terms and satisfy my request." Gardener exclaimed "I'm happy to do anything to see her again. Tell me what I need to do."

Vizier told him about the shaman and his plan. He said "I'll call this shaman who is known to be one of the best match-makers in the world and a great relationship savior. He is an expert on love affairs and has no equivalent that could possibly judge the situation better than anyone else. I'll ask him to give you an assignment so that you can demonstrate the greatness of your love. If you succeed in fulfilling his assignment then you'll be granted with the marriage but if you happen to fail then you have to give up Beauty. That is my condition."

Gardener had no other choice but to agree with Vizier's terms. He said "I hear and obey. I'm ready to take the challenge and

listen to Shaman's assignment." Vizier said "Very well. I'll have your assignment be ready very soon." Vizier was certain that Gardener and Beauty were created for each other and they were the other half of the divine whole but still he wanted to see it with his own eyes. Gardener asked his handkerchief before he left and placed it inside his breast.

VIZIER'S ASSIGNMENT TO GARDENER

Shaman was in Vizier's court in the afternoon. Vizier told him the love story of Gardener, the spirited Farmer and his talented black and white hound, the quest for Beauty across the country and his decision for Beauty's departure from the palace from the beginning to the end without leaving any details out. Shaman listened to him attentively with great interest and enthusiasm. After Vizier finished his talking, Shaman said that this was one of the most amazing stories he had ever heard and he was happy to help in any way he could.

Vizier spelled out his request without losing any time. He said "I want you to come up with an assignment for Gardener so that he can prove me the greatness of his love. And you're the only one that I can trust while you're the expert on that subject." Shaman exclaimed in surprise saying "My Vizier, the supreme officer in Sultan's court and the virtuous man in the sultanate, how can one come up with such an assignment and be able to measure something that is not meant to be measurable. My neck is thinner than a hair

in your court and your orders are my commands but don't ask from me something that is beyond the reach and out of my control."

Vizier took a sigh of relief and started speaking again "I hear your doubts and share your worries but considering the conditions I don't see any other options. As much as I like Gardener and want him to be happy, after seeing the noble beauty of her and listening to her previous heartbreaking affairs and fragile nature, my heart didn't allow me to command her to get married with a stranger that she had never seen before. I wanted to give her a chance to like him and allow him to win her heart. If you aren't the one that can help me then whom should I consult?"

Listening to Vizier and realizing the complexity and sensitivity of the situation Shaman made up his mind to give it a try and work on a task for Gardener. He said "My Vizier, you're a very kindred man with wits and wisdom. I'll do my best to help you. Give me three days and three nights to think about the assignment and I promise you to come up with a proposal in the morning of the fourth day." Vizier was pleased to hear his response and granted his wish.

It was a long, restless three days not only for Gardener but for Beauty as well. When she reached home, she was confused by the incidents of the day. She told her parents what took place in the palace, her conversation with Vizier and her sudden departure from the palace with no

indications of what went wrong. Her parents were not only upset to find their daughter in great agony and her heart being broken once again but also felt sad about missing the opportunity for her to get married with a prince and them having a carefree and wealthy life. Beauty went to her room crying and cursed about her bad luck all night long.

Shaman said "My neck is thinner than a hair in your court and your orders are my commands but don't ask from me something that is beyond the reach and out of my control."

In the mean-time Gardener spent the nights sitting in the garden of pleasure that he created for Sultan and thinking restlessly about what the assignment would be and what if he would not be able to complete it successfully. He consoled himself in the belief that if things went wrong, having a chance to see her once more would be worth the effort and the trouble.

In the morning of the fourth day, Shaman arrived to Vizier's court carrying a tiny box in his hand. Gardener was standing next to Vizier and waiting anxiously. Vizier asked whether he had his assignment ready. Shaman confirmed. He opened the tiny box, took out a seed and gave it to Gardener. He said "This is the seed of lust, a very special and extremely delicate seed that requires compassion, knowledge and precision to handle. Take this seed and

plant it in her garden. If your love is divine and if two souls are created for each other, the seed will turn into a giant tree, yielding a different type of fruit every day. Each fruit symbolizes a virtue of yours and illustrates your ultimate love and passion to her. If she is your companion in this world, eating its fruits, she will fall in love with you right away."

Gardener took the seed from Shaman, wrapped it gently inside the handkerchief and placed it inside his breast. He said "Now I know what the assignment is, all I need to know is the directions to her." Vizier said "You'll get the address and everything you need to reach there. But before that I want you to promise me that she will never see you till the tree grows and its fruits are ripened. You'll be hidden from her sight." Gardener said "I hear and obey. My word is my promise. She'll never see me and even aware of my existence till the tree blooms and fruits are ripened." Vizier asked his men to give Gardener the whereabouts of Beauty and wished him good luck.

GARDENER PLANTED THE TREE OF LUST

Gardener traveled three days without taking any rest and on the morning of the fourth day, he reached the Beauty's house. He found her father sitting in the garden at ease. He introduced himself and asked him if he needed a gardener to look after his property. Her father was an old man and lately he couldn't find any strength to take care of the garden. He said "I'm not at any situation to pay for a gardener although

the need is obvious. But I can provide you food and shelter if you'll be okay with that." Gardener said "I gladly accept your offer." Her father continued "I have one condition though. I have a daughter who is very shy and protective. I don't want you to be in her sight and disturb her in any way." He promised him that during his stay her daughter would not be aware of his existence and he would be hidden from her sight. That night, he waited till householders went to sleep and then sneaked into the garden and planted the seed in the backyard.

A month passed by with no further incident. There was nothing unusual in their life except that the garden changed nicely in the hands of Gardener and turned into a cozy and pleasant relaxation place. That was how Beauty became aware of the garden and started spending most of her time inside. Her parents were very happy to see her out of her bedroom and engaged in something fulfilling. Beauty never questioned the recent changes in the garden and thought that it was her father who was looking after it. Gardener on the other hand, kept his promise and never showed his sight to Beauty. He was watching her closely with longing eyes from his hidden place every day and then going back to work when she was asleep.

Within two months, the seed turned into a young tree and very soon it became one of the biggest and most beautiful trees in the garden with its blooming pink flowers and enchanting branches. That was how Beauty noticed the tree first time and was

surprised to see that all the flowers developed into delicious apples in the afternoon. She picked up the red, sour apples and ate them till she was full. Next morning she waked up early to pick up more apples but to her surprise, the tree bloomed in white flowers with no trace of apples on it. When she came back in the afternoon, the tree was loaded with ripe pears and those were the most delicious ones that she'd ever had. She picked up a couple more and took it inside to share with her parents. Her parents weren't aware of such a pear tree in their garden and couldn't relate to her comments about the tree blooming every morning with fresh flowers and then yielding fruits in the afternoon.

Indeed she was right with her comments. To everybody's surprise the lust tree continued to bloom every morning with fresh flowers and yielded delicious fruits in the afternoon. Beauty enjoyed picking up a handful of those delightful fruits; cherries, figs, apricots, peaches, plums one day after another and satisfied her appetite. She could hardly wait for the next morning to come so that she could visit the garden and ate its fruits. She was overjoyed with the beauty of the tree and the taste of the fruits and day by day she became more attached to it and couldn't step aside for a moment. If it wasn't her mother who brought up the existence of a gardener who was looking after the garden, she would have lived in the garden of pleasure till the end of her life.

Learning the existence of a stranger in their property, she asked them more questions about him. Her father told her everything he knew about the gardener and suggested that he might be the person who planted the tree in their backyard. More intrigued by his answers, she insisted to meet with him. She said "I want to thank him for turning our garden into a paradise and also ask him the origins of the mystical tree."

Her father had no other choice to go inside and call Gardener. After a short time he came back with Gardener. It was that moment when young Gardener entered the garden; Beauty looked into his eyes and carried away by the intimacy and deepness of his spirit. She fell in love with him right away. She rose from her place and came closer to him and kissed him without saying a word. Gardener burst into cries and hugged her so tight as if he would never release her again. He gave her the handkerchief he kept for many years.

He told her his story from the beginning in one breath; his first encounter with her in the exotic garden, his platonic love to her after her disappearance, his four-year long painful waiting to find her again, devoting himself in garden work, his fame reaching to palace, Sultan's royal order to conduct a search for Beauty, the successful quest of courageous Farmer and his talented black and white hound, Vizier's worries about the situation, Shaman's assignment for him and the mystery of the lust tree. Listening to his amazing story and the greatness of

his love, Beauty felt love deeper than she had ever felt in her life.

WEDDING LASTED FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

The news spread very fast. Vizier was the first person who heard the happy union of Gardener and Beauty. He couldn't be more pleased how things ended and informed Sultan with the situation without a delay. Sultan congratulated Vizier for his correct judgment and perception and ordered him to make preparations for a party that would last forty days and forty nights in his palace to celebrate the wedding of Gardener and Beauty.

Wedding preparations were completed in a week. People were invited all around the country to enjoy the feasting and revelry and witness the magnificent story of two lovers. Sultan demanded that the story of Gardener and Beauty should be recorded for future generations. And it did.

Gardener and Beauty leaved happily ever after enjoying their companion and eating the delightful fruits of lust tree every day. Since then it became a custom for the groom to plant a tree in the garden of the bride on the wedding eve to represent the passion and the fruitfulness of their love.

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THE END