

**Rasim Karaca**

**ELEVEN  
NIGHTS**

Translator:  
Ian Peart



*Love stories in a time of war -*

A Karabakh Decameron

**Rasim Karaca**

**ELEVEN NIGHTS**

Baku, Qanun publishing, 2023, 112 p.

Size: 120x185 mm

Cover: softcover

Signed for printing: 21.09.2023

Translator: Ian Peart

Text design: Rahila Shamilgizi

Cover design: Rafael Gasim

Qanun Publishing House

Azerbaijan, AZ 1102

Baku, Tbilisi avenue 76

Tel.: (+994 12) 431-16-62; 431-38-18

Mob.: (+994 55) 212-42-37

e-mail: [info@qanun.az](mailto:info@qanun.az)

[www.qanun.az](http://www.qanun.az)

[www.fb.com/Qanunpublishing](https://www.facebook.com/Qanunpublishing)

ISBN 978-9952-38-817-6

© Rasim Karaca, 2023

© Qanun publishing, 2023

## CONTENTS

WHEN I START WRITING .....	7
1. SHE WAS A BLONDE WOMAN WITH FAIR SKIN	9
2. THE MIDNIGHT DANCER.....	17
3. THESE THINGS CAN HAPPEN IN YOUR YOUTH ...	30
4. A KISS IN POXLUDERE.....	39
5. TWO WHO WENT ASTRAY.....	51
6. THE PUMP STATION WORKER .....	64
7. ANOTHER LOVER .....	79
8. LIFE LIKE A FILM.....	90
9. LOVE TURNS TO HATE .....	96
10. IT'S HARD UNTIL YOU DIE ... ..	106



## WHEN I START WRITING

None of them are alive now. I'm the only one with a life - in a wheelchair. I decided to revive and write down from memory the stories my comrades-in-arms told the night before we went into bloody battle. I don't know why, but I don't want these stories to be forgotten. I think that as long as these stories live, so will my friends ...

We had lost contact with the rear. The 10 of us were under enemy siege in village G, Terter region. Running out of ammunition, almost no food left, and no way back. Headquarters knew about us and we had no doubt that help would come. The guys' mood plunged along with the torrential rains of those days. Water leaked in from every crack in the hut we were sheltering in. The night-time dark drained hope. Maybe this is why our team commander, Chingiz, came up with an interesting proposition: each of us should tell the story of his first love or his first relationship with a woman. As visibility was zero, there was no need to hide embarrassment ...

He went first. We knew he was doing this to maintain the morale of we soldiers under his command. We were all ears. In the dark, his cigarette drew smoke trails in the air. Chingiz's voice was muffled, there were occasional lengthy pauses; and it was clear that even he hesitated to tell the intimate details.

The next day, at the end of the eleventh night, we would fight to break the siege before it got light. Our fate was; life or death. None of us slept.



# 1

## **SHE WAS A BLONDE WOMAN WITH FAIR SKIN**

### **Chingiz's Story**

So guys, I really don't know where to start. Honestly, it's not my style to talk about intimate things. And, believe me, the story I'll tell you now, I've never told anyone before. But for some reason, I feel the need to tell it now. There are things that you just have to tell someone sooner or later. So now I want to tell you about my first love, my first woman.

I don't know if I'll survive this siege or not, but I'm asking God for another chance. If I survive here, I'll go

straight to her house in Sovietsky, knock on her door and beg her to forgive me, to forgive me for all my mistakes.

I was 19 when I first met her. She was 10 years older than me. I couldn't remember where her house was. There was a big mulberry tree by the door. The main thing was to find that tree. Believe me, searching for Nazaket's house in Sovietsky's labyrinth of streets is one of the brightest memories in my life.

We were going to Nazaket's work in Jesaret's car - he was a distant relative. We had to go to the railway station in Keshla and then come back. I had nothing else to do, and so I went with him. Nazaket worked there, at the railway station. I remember that she was going to get her monthly salary. She stopped the car some way from the office. She hopped like a bird over the large pipes that crossed the road and ran to the office. She was wearing a wide flowered white skirt. I saw her lovely thighs as she jumped over the pipes, they were a fine sight. Jesaret is a clever so and so; he read my thoughts and said,

- If you want, I can get her for you.

I said nothing, held my peace. My relative had volunteered to help me get into the seedier side of life. I was ok with that, so I didn't object. But for some reason, his words about Nazaket touched my heart, and upset

me. Even though I had some thoughts in my head about Nazaket, someone else reading them hurt my pride.

After a while, she returned with a man about her own age. She was very cheerful, laughing, talking and aglow. She sat next to me in the back seat, occasionally touching my knees as if that was normal, and holding my arm naturally as the car turned right and left. Jesaret was the same with the man in the front. I realised that this was a woman of easy virtue. But that didn't bother me much. I was very happy to have her next to me, I felt her warmth and I wanted it to stay. Apparently, Nazaket felt the same way, and she was happy that this young boy, sitting stiff as an iron rod, was totally under her spell.

It's been a long time, I've forgotten everything else... Anyway, I somehow stayed that night at Nazaket's house. It was a more recently built neighbourhood house. As soon as you went in the front gate, you turned left to the door of the two-room house. The way the yard was built, you could come and go to it without attracting the neighbours' attention... Nazaket set the table while we three were sitting on the sofa and armchair, then she was sitting in a chair, often getting up to bring something to the table. She drank vodka with us - the first time I saw a woman drinking vodka. After that, she was even more cheerful, singing and laughing out loud.

She was a blonde, white-skinned woman with lines under her throat. When she sat quietly, there was a terrible sadness on her face, and she looked quite old. But when she laughed, she was very beautiful; she seemed to know it and would laugh when necessary, and when not.

When she sat, it was next to me on the sofa, put her arm around my neck, pulling me to her, and asked me why I wasn't saying anything.

- What should I say? - I said quietly.

- Tell me, do you have a girl you love?

- There was one, but not now.

She burst out laughing again:

- Look how honest he is, there was one, but not now

...

Jesaret and the man whose name I've forgotten smoked and played backgammon. Then, suddenly, they both got up, said goodbye and left the house without letting me open my mouth. Being alone with Nazaket in her place made my heart beat with a mysterious excitement. It was as if it should be that way, I should be there and Nazaket shouldn't be surprised; she should get up quietly, clear the table and wash the dishes. I squinted