

# REALMATTER



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**Kino**



REAL**MATTER**

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# 1. Arab Love

Reading Time 7'

So, there are the two of us, riding a black camel with a 7-11 licence plate. Its neck and legs are incredibly long, and on its back there is a sort of palanquin, twisty and absurdly lithe. I hold the reins and you sit behind me like a queen, on polka-dot cushions, fanning yourself with one of those rigid fans, not the folding kind. I turn towards you, gazing at you longingly, and you giggle.

And where are we going?

You'll see! The ride across the desert comes to an end, and we are at the entrance of a village surrounded by fortified walls. At the gate there is a black guard, with a spear in his hand, but he is happily sleeping, leaning against the wall. The gate is very low, but the camel is so supple that we manage to squeeze under its eaves, palanquin and all. There's a party in the village: singing and dancing to the rhythm of throaty drums and shrill winds. You are getting excited; I know you well! You can't wait to join the crowd. There's a snake charmer too, of course dressed in a turban, surrounded by kids and grownups and all sorts of onlookers. In front of him are eight cobras, their heads popping out of their vases, waiting to be tamed. From a lateral alley comes a big woman, carrying a satchel on her shoulder and on her head, perfectly balanced, a long wooden plank with five jars. From each vase pops

the head of a child, all crying loudly.

But where the hell are we?

You'll see, Edna, you'll see. Here's an old man with a long white beard; he has set his pointy shoes aside and he's sleeping with his back against a brick wall, his hands resting on his knees. A little kid pulls his beard and another jumps over it, as if it were a skipping rope.

The little scoundrels!

Now we cross another woman with a satchel on her back and a jar on her head, smoke comes out from it...

Is something on fire?

Not exactly! In the jar is her tiny husband, smoking a cigar!

I see! But what about the two of us?

We are still on the camel. But now I order it to bend its knees, we jump down and begin our wanderings. As soon as it gets rid of us, the camel runs to a barrel to drink.

Poor thing, it must be thirsty!

Yes, but the barrel is full of beer! As soon as the camel notices it starts drinking in earnest. Its long hairy neck bobs up and down with the bug gulps. We

set out on foot and we run into a veiled odalisque, skinny but sexy. She, too, carries a jar on her head. She agrees to have her picture taken, but she is so tall I need to climb on a pot so that you can take a picture of the two of us together.

So I am the photographer?

Of course you are! Who else?

I have my camera with me?

Absolutely! Your portable bellows model. You bend to take the photograph, and as you squeeze the rubber button, your skirt flies up and your panties show, the ones with the stitching on the back.

Shush! You have very good memory, mister! What if someone hears you?

I gawk at the odalisque and she smiles back at me, but she has only one tooth in her whole mouth! Is this why she wears a veil? Meanwhile you have spotted a handsome juggler. You bend to take a picture of him and...

My panties show?

Yes, every time, Edna dear! But this is not the point. The juggler is so good that he sends two of his balls behind his back and juggles them with his butt cheeks! I whistle to catch his attention—don't forget we don't speak the local language—and he notices that you are taking a picture, so he freezes all eight

balls in the air until your shutter clicks. How does he manage?

Why it's obvious, darling: he stops time! Don't you, when you take photos?

Now two tiny kids wearing fez hats approach us. I take one in each hand, that's how teeny they are, and smile so you can take a picture. You step back to capture the whole scene in the frame. Behind you, unbeknownst to you, a lecherous sultan is ogling you from behind the walls surrounding his luxurious mansion. He craves you, you are so exotic, Edna! He roars, "ah! Ah!" and disappears behind the wall. A tiny door opens just behind you, as you keep moving back towards it trying to get a better shot of my and the little negroes.

How scary!

It is indeed! His big black hands shoot out of the little door and pull you inside.

Oh my god! I am getting kidnapped!

I am desperate. I throw the two kids on the ground and lunge against the door, hitting it as hard as I can. I jump over the wall trying to rescue you. But in that very moment the door opens and the bandit runs off on a donkey, holding you roughly. I run after you, you scream frantically! You and the sultan run across the city on the donkey and head towards the desert. I pass our camel, still parked where we left it, and jump on its back, ordering it to gallop. But it is still



drunk, its legs weak and its face dreamy. I try to get on the palanquin but it flies off and I fall on the ground. We finally manage to get going, but at every step it hiccups. At some point things get so confused that I realise I am sitting on its belly, and its hump is running on the ground.

Oh darling, that's too much!

You keep screaming as the sultan takes you to a fortress in the desert. It is his love nest! The heavy doors close behind you, and a few seconds later the donkey gets kicked out by your evil kidnapper. Now the two of you are in a big room with a canopy bed, lots of oriental carpets and vases.

Are you sure it is ok to show a bed, Elias? Won't we get in trouble with censors?

Don't you worry your little head about this, dear. Listen now. At this point my camel, hiccupping and wobbling, finally reaches the fortress. I climb over the wall and enter through a little window; you and the sultan are just below me. I jump down and land right on the sultan's butt, making him fly against a big gong. He hits it with his head and passes out.

My hero!

But it's not over yet, my little mousie! I take your hand and we start running, but the sultan's guard come out from all directions, big curved sabres in hand. The sultan comes back to his senses and pulls out two guns from his pockets. He starts

shooting everywhere! The guards get scared; some jump out of the windows, while others hide inside the big pots that are scattered around. That gives me an idea: I pull a plant out of a pot and put you inside instead. Now you are mine again, locked inside! I start running towards the door with you in the pot, but the door is bolted with a big lock.

Oh, save me, please!

The sultan has run out of ammo; he stands up and pulls out of his pocket a humungous sabre. He throws it skilfully towards us and it stabs the wooden door, an inch from my face. Enough is enough! I grab the sabre and run towards him. But as I do so I notice that the blade is still stuck in the door, and I am holding just the handle! He seizes another sword, hanging from the wall, and lunges towards me. I am done for! He will slice me in two! But just at the last minute I duck down, and he is carried onward by the momentum, sword forward. He ends up hitting one of the pots, skewering one of his guards right on the butt. The guard screams in pain, and jumps so high that he breaks the ceiling. Stirred by the noise, a tiny old man with a long white beard comes out from a little window, looking at the hole in the ceiling. The guard comes back down from the hole and grabs the old man's beard, that makes a sound like when you twist a faggot of sticks, you know that sound?

Oh yes, I know it very well!

Meanwhile I am running away, but the sultan finds

two jars full of little daggers and throws them at me one after the other. I dive into a pot to escape them, but one of the daggers hits it and makes it explode under me. The next dagger pierces my underpants and pins me to a screen nearby. You know those cork panels that we use in the studios to pin machine sheets? Just like that! I manage to wiggle free and hide behind the panel just as another ten daggers hit it.

So how does this end, Elias?

You'll see! I'm sure you will like it. So I grab the top of the screen and pull it towards me, and when I release it, all the daggers fly back to the sender! They rain on the sultan tearing his clothes apart, leaving him in a singlet and undies. He pounces on me, furious, but I grab a hookah and blow all the smoke in his face.

And then?

And then, you'll see when the time comes, Edna.

What, you said I would like the ending, and now you hold back?

The ending, in short, is that I save you from the evil sultan.

So that I can fall into the arms of my other evil sultan, you?

Is that how you see me?

I'm joking, I'm joking. But you know that's what a lot of people think of you.

Oh, believe me, I know! Bloody commies, that's what they are. But I know that you are different, Edna. That's why I promoted you from inking to voice acting, you know. I know I can always count on your loyalty, my little mouse.

## 2. Blue

Reading Time 1'

“I cannot see you, but I know you’re there.”

He flinches and I have to laugh because I can see him perfectly well, in fact.

He does not know that I am looking at him, that my eyes are not embracing emptiness but his person.

He wants to become human so much that he is already visible, with his long dark coat and the armour glittering under the collar. On his black and white face, the eyes shine an intense blue that betrays him.

He does not know what blue is.

He does not know that I am trembling from the desire to hold him.

I do not know what life looks like from his side.

I do not know what my eyes look like in black and white.

I want to tell him about the pleasures of life, convince him to become flesh and blood so that I can touch him; I want to tell him to run away because the sky can be grey seen from down below, and some days can be long and dark and desperate.

The outer feathers of his wings sway gently as he walks away with bouncing gait, without hurry. He will go back to his ramblings, to other people, other

places, to listen to the thoughts of a child leaning on a fence, of a man fallen from his motorbike.

I find myself full of blue, almost transparent. I suddenly realise how beautiful it is to drink a cup of coffee, to smoke a cigarette, to have a fever, to rub your hands when it is cold. A smile rises to my lips, in my head and in my stomach a fluttering of wings.

First, I will have a bath. Then I will drink an ice-cold beer...

# 3. Play

Reading Time 2'

The teenage daughter is really the mother's daughter. They don't look the same at all, and yet there is a certain air de famille between them; they are both beautiful, they both act with artful awkwardness; they both have unusual smiles, irregular, odd, charming.

They sit side by side on the doorstep to the mother's house, the daughter is visiting, she lives with her father now. The moment somehow captures all that happened before, the strangeness and normality, the heartbreaking moments and the trivial ones. We are at the end. It's all in the past now.

The mother was right, after all: she will never see the boy shave for the first time, get a job, become a man. He will do all of those things, but she will not see them. Neither will we: it ends here for us and for her. But all that happened before, that remains, immortalized for her memories as it is for our gaze. She can remember it again and again; will she? Or would she rather not think about it? We cannot know. But we can watch the story, again and again, happen before our eyes. And so we do.

Every time, the boy will drink too much vodka at a party. He will crawl up the stairs, staggering in search of the bathroom. The mother will leave the bedside of her younger daughter, feverish with a

cold, and ask him what's wrong. I was an idiot, he will say, I had too much to drink and now I feel sick. She will teach him how to make himself throw up; she will put her adult hand in his teenager's mouth and help him puke. Every time, for days afterwards, she will think of him, and he of her. She will accidentally hit him with her car outside the school, and to make up for it and check that he is not hurt, she will take him to a café. She will buy him a soft drink and give him coins to play his favourite videogame.

Weeks later, they will be kissing on a rocky island, waves crashing around them. His adolescent body will look so small next to her adult one, and yet the scene will be so charged with love that it will break our hearts, again.

The teenage daughter had seen them kiss once before, in an English garden that looked almost Italian, among plants and stone sculptures. After that, she was left behind; she is not on the island with them. But the teenage daughter, the real teenage daughter, she must have seen them on the island, her mother and the boy, kissing, his body so small. Did she watch it again and again, like we do? Does she find it disturbing or moving?

As we watch her sit on the stone steps next to her mother, the moment seems to capture all that will come after, too, the heartbreaking moments and the trivial ones. We are at the beginning, no, we are in the middle of the circle. It's all around us now. We press play again.



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