

## Stories of love beyond death

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PETER KEIJSERS

**MYSTICAL AND  
MYSTERIOUS  
STORIES OF  
LOVE BEYOND  
DEATH**

A COLLECTION OF SHORT  
STORIES



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## **Nine Lives**





## Nine lives

The day has already dawned when I wake up after a long night of sleep. The sun shines through a small opening through the curtains while one of the windows is open as to let the room breathe fresh air. Still underneath the sheets, I linger in the afterglow of a vivid dream I try to hold grasp on. I do not want to get out of bed yet, and turn around to let that dream have its continuation. It is such a beautiful dream, of beautiful meadows with flowers in all colors of the rainbow and sheep being herded in the distance. It is a warm day with a clear blue sky, and I long to be in that meadow. It gives me a sense of tranquility, of inner peace. I try to memorize the face of the shepherd that leads his sheep so competently, but all I see is a blurry face underneath a simple straw hat on top of plain clothing. The whole scenery feels so familiar, so real that it is almost as if I know that place. But then the harsh reality takes hold of me.

The phone rings, and half-dazed I pick up. My best friend wants to meet with me for coffee, and asks what time suits me best. I answer that I am yet to wake up, and that I will call her back later. I turn around and prepare to return to my magical dream. I toss and I turn, but the dream is

very reluctant not to return. Still, I do not want to leave the coziness of my bed, though, and lie awake staring at the ceiling. What a pleasant dream that was indeed. But the cruel reality of everyday life makes get up eventually. I turn the sheets of myself and my feet search for the slippers alongside the bed.

Like every morning, I make my breakfast. Two eggs, sunny side up, toast, fruit and yoghurt and a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice. It is a ritual that I have done for so many years. While watching the news on tv, I start eating. Then I feel something at my toes, but when I take a look, I cannot see anything. I continue to eat my breakfast, but then again I feel something at my toes. In the glimpse of an eye, I can see a golden shadow of a long lost friend.

I had you put to sleep about ten years ago, after I noticed you had gone blind and almost starved to death because you longer could find your food bowl. You had been my companion for almost seventeen years, and it broke my heart to see you suffer. Ever since I brought you to the veterenarian, I missed you dearly. To my surprise, you even stayed with me afterwards. Your innocent and pure soul had attached to me in the afterlife, and now I find you again, licking my toes. I had to miss you for

so many years, and now it comforts me to find you at my feet once again. You have not forgotten me, and although it gives me a strange sensation I am overjoyed to meet you once again.



**So close, and yet so far  
away**



## **So close, and yet so far away**

They were playing in a remote area of the ancient castle ruins, like they had done so many times. These ruins had been there for ages, it seemed. It once belonged to an illustrious knight who had been banned out of the nearby city after it had become clear that he was in fact supplying robbers with weapons, to attack innocent passers-by. But after his death, there had been no one who claimed the rights to the castle, and it fell to decay ever since. He and his young wife had remained childless, and his next of kin had denounced him years before. Only two marl-stone gravestones in this remote area were silent witnesses of his existence.

At present day, the ruins were a popular playground of the current youth. Although certain areas had decayed beyond repair and were quite dangerous, these youngsters cared not much for the warnings. They regarded it as an exciting place where they could brisk up their vivid imagination. Anywhere they could go, they stepped. They pictured themselves knights fighting over the hand of a beautiful maiden, or conquering an enemy in battle, or dueling a mischievous villain. And now they were imagining it yet again, as they had done so many