

I AM SOFFIE

Novel

Soffie is a forty-four year old Swedish lady. She is married and has two sons. She fell in love with Jörgen Martinson when she was eighteen years old. Jörgen was a very wellknown ice hockey player at the time. They had a short romantic engagement then married just three months after they met. Jorgen made her feel special in their marriage. and was a very good husband you could say their marriage was as happy as the fairy tales. The fairytale was great until summer 2012 when Soffie became ill. Soffie's life was turned into a nightmare during that summer. She didn't know the illness would be such a turning point in her life.

The result of various tests proved positive and revealed Soffie was suffering from bowel cancer. This made Jörgen very sad. He wanted to do something for Soffie that would cheer her up while she was waiting for her operation. He decided to book a holiday in Spain to make her happy. Jörgen knew Soffie was interested in historical sites so he knew that would please her.

In the first days of their holiday everything was going well, Jörgen was arranging a surprise every day and Soffie was extremely happy. On the fourth night of the holiday, Soffie woke up with severer stomach pains Jorgen called an ambulance but before the ambulance arrived Soffie became unconscious. On arrival at the hospital she was immediately taken into surgery.

She stayed three days in the hospital's intensive care unit. When she opened her eyes she looked around but didn't see Jörgen. His sister Anne-grethe was sitting in the companion's seat. Soffie learned from her that Jorgen had left her in the hospital to her own destiny. He had abandoned her. She could not believe it. How could he do this. Surely he wouldn't leave her without saying a word or leaving a note. this was so cruel Soffie and Anne-grethe stayed in the hospital for a further 13 days until the doctor finally discharged her. Soffie returned to Malmö airport in a wheelchair where a group of friends and family met her and Anne-grethe. She hoped with all her heart that Jörgen was amongst the crowd, but unfortunately he wasn't there. She now believed he had really abandoned her.

They went to her mother's house from the airport. After a few days, she went back to her own house. She didn't see Jörgen at home either. He wasn't at home but his photographs were still hanging on the wall. She knew that nothing would be the same in her life again. She was still in love with him. She tried to forget him but it wasn't easy for her. She was also very angry with herself for not being able to forget him.

She lived with her two teenage sons but had to quit her job because of her illness. When she quit her job, she had to live on social welfare money but it was hardly enough to keep her and her children. Economic problems brought unrest to the family, but after a while, she started making money by walking dogs. Soffie was now able now to get what her children wanted with the extra money she earned.

Soffie continued treatment with chemotherapy sessions and at the same time her hair had completely fallen out. She was very upset that she had lost her hair during the treatment period, so her friends shaved their heads to give her their support. Her family and friends never left her alone. Actually, this illness showed Soffie that she wasn't alone.

During her treatment, she learned that Jörgen had a Moroccan lover. They had bought a house in the most beautiful part of town. Soffie had asked Jörgen to move to that same place several times but Jörgen refused each time. Soffie now had to remove Jörgen from her heart and accept the fact that Jörgen would no longer be in her life.

Her mother and Anne-grethe wanted to do something for her so they decided to book a holiday to Turkey for all of them. A Turkish holiday would be a different experience for her. She didn't know anything about Turkey because they always went to Spain for the holidays.

Her family took her to Alanya. Turkey was completely different to Spain, all the people were always smiling. She couldn't believe it, she felt she was dreaming. Soffie was fascinated by the Turkish people, the food and beaches. Everything was cheap in Turkey. She bought gifts for her children and her neighbour. They had a great holiday in Alanya. Soffie returned to Malmö very happy and discovered she had gained four pounds in weight in a week whilst staying in Alanya.

When she returned from Turkey Soffie opened up several social media accounts. She was making new friends and trying her best to be happy. After a few weeks she noticed a friend request from a man his name was Oscar and he was from Turkey. She didn't recognize this person and was hesitant to confirm his request. She saw they had a common friend, but she still didn't recognize him. At first she was in a dilemma, but

finally she accepted. Her new social media friend was named Oscar. How could she know that action would mean another turning point in her life. Nothing would ever be the same again.

The mysterious friend started to send photographs with a caption written under each photo. Soffie liked his photos. He sent a sunset photo and he wrote "Greetings from Alanya" under the photo. Soffie sent a picture of the lake next to her house and wrote "Greetings from Malmö" under the photo. Oscar sent two pictures the next day. As the days passed, the messages he sent became longer. Oscar's messages made Soffie happy. Her family and friends immediately noticed how happy she was. Everyone wondered who had made her happy, but Soffie wanted to keep it a secret.

Soffie's problems with her eldest son, were growing. He was now 14 years old and showing all the signs of being a teenager. He played computer games in his room most of the time, he sulked if Soffie asked him to help her and did not agree with anything she said. Soffie found this difficult to cope with due to her bad health. On the other hand her youngest son was quite the opposite, he did anything Soffie asked him to do and didn't answer back, he was quiet and polite. The boys were as different as chalk and cheese.

She became a very good friend with Oscar. She shared her problems with him and he supported her. Messaging that started with a single sentence, had now become three to five pages. Their feelings for each other had changed.

Soffie had fallen in love? But Soffie was afraid to admit it to herself because she didn't trust men after Jörgen but Oscar had changed her mind. Soffie was defeated by love and was very angry with herself when she had to admit she had fallen in love with Oscar. Once again she was in a dilemma but knew she had to make a decision. She decided not to write anymore. It was not an easy decision. She didn't turn on her computer for a week. She was at war with herself. But she was determined to never write again, she knew that if she kept writing, she'd fall in love deeper and Soffie didn't want to compromise herself.

A week later Anne-grethe came to visit her. She told Soffie that Oscar was very curious about her. Soffie didn't know how to react. She just promised she would contact Oscar.

When she turned her computer on she was very surprised to see there were dozens of messages from Oscar. The messages were enough to make her happy. She checked every photograph and each photo was

telling a story. Maybe Oscar was a professional photographer. She read every message in detail and after reading all the messages then decided to reply. She knew very well that this message would be the beginning of love. When her fingers touched the keyboard, her heart was filled with happiness. They were corresponding in English, and Soffie was improving her English.

When everything was going well, Oscar invited her to Alanya. Soffie was surprised by his invitation, it was completely unexpected. Soffie bought the ticket but unfortunately she had no money for her other needs. She politely rejected Oscar's kind invitation but her mother and sister surprised her once again by buying her ticket to Alanya.

Soffie arrived in Alanya at the end of October. Oscar was waiting at the airport for her with a large bouquet of roses. Both of them were very excited. Their palms were sweating and hearts were beating fast. They hugged each other for the first time. That hug was their first physical contact. They wanted time to stop, and time stopped. Soffie asked Oscar questions, but he didn't answer any question. She was sure that Oscar couldn't speak English. She didn't want to believe that, because Oscar's messages were written in perfect English.

After a two-hour trip, they arrived in Alanya. The hotel was small but had a beautiful garden. Oscar had booked a wonderful room. There was a fruit basket and a bottle of wine on the coffee table. The bed was decorated with rose petals.

Oscar began to speak a little English, after one or two glasses of wine. He was such a fun man and was making some stupid jokes to make Soffie laugh. To be honest his jokes were successful. After midnight, he asked for a second bottle of wine from room service. Oscar was saying most things in body language. The situation was equal after the second bottle of wine.

Soffie had been with him and woken up in his arms in the morning. She didn't regret being with him. After breakfast he took her to Cleopatra Beach. Cleopatra beach was very nice. In October the sea water was warmer than thought so they swam, walked on the beach and played beach volleyball with other holidaymakers. They went to the castle at night to see the view of Alanya. Soffie was so happy that her holiday was going so well. Oscar knew the spirit of women very well and also he knew how to make Soffie happy.

On the third day of the holiday he took Soffie to Side, a magnificent ancient city. There was a different historical place in every

street of this ancient city. Soffie could have stayed there for days, because of her love of historical sites. They later visited Oscar's uncle in Side. His uncle spoke very good English. She understood that his uncle was the translator between them. Oscar's uncle was a very good man as well and she became a good friend with him. Later they walked along the Manavgat river which is very beautiful. Soffie loved Side and Manavgat and especially admired the landscape by the Manavgat River.

There were a couple of tragic stories people had spoken, about European women. One story was of a German woman named Erika which touched her deeply. Erika fell in love with a very young man. She divorced her husband to be with the young man she loved. She came from Germany with a million German marks. Unfortunately, her boyfriend lost all the Money in a few years. When her money was gone, her boyfriend's attitude changed and he was gone too. Erika wasn't the only woman with a tragic story. Olga's story also made her very sad, whereas all the stories had started happily they had a sad ending. Soffie left Side with stories of these unhappy women in her heart.

Side was in her Heart when she returned to Alanya. Soffie didn't want to leave Oscar when the holiday was over and was very sad on the last day of the holiday. She knew she was falling in love with Oscar. Oscar cried a lot on their last night. For the first time in her life, a man was crying for her. She couldn't stay indifferent to him. He drove her to the airport with his cousin. She couldn't leave him until her name was announced and cried on the plane from Antalya to Malmö. Soffie found out that her boyfriend's real name is Yunus.

The first days at home were not easy. Her doctor put an end to her dog walking. He said she needed more rest for her health. She was walking around the lake twice a day and chatting with her English friends Michael and Patricia. It was good for her to chat with them.

Soffie found a cheap ticket to Turkey on the internet for a Christmas holiday. The ticket was really cheap, She wanted to buy it and had the money to buy the ticket, but still needed spending money. It was the last ticket at this price. Her fingers hovered over the keyboard and she finally bought the ticket. It was crazy.

She didn't tell anyone she had bought the ticket. The next problem was to find some cash. It wasn't easy for an unemployed person to find a loan but finally decided to ask Reider for some money. Reider was a good man with a heart of gold. The money he gave her was a secret

between them. Oscar was the happiest man in the world when she showed him her ticket.

For the first two days of the holiday they stayed in Alanya. Then on the third day went to Side. They planned to stay in Side for Christmas night and then return to Alanya. On Christmas night they went to a restaurant. It was decorated for Christmas with sparkling lights and baubles and had a mixed grill on the menu. Everything was going very well. After the acrobatics and dance performances Soffie went to the dance floor. Oscar did not go with her but continued to drink at the table. She was dancing a traditional dance of the Turks and dancing arm in arm and she had to admit she was enjoying it. A man then asked her to dance with him to slow music. Soffie accepted the innocent offer. Suddenly there was a big noise, a scuffle broke out and her dancing partner fell to the floor. She closed her eyes and when she opened them, Oscar was kicking her dancing partner who was now on the floor. There was another noise and Soffie fell to the floor too. She fainted without understanding anything. When her eyes opened she was in a hospital room once again.

Oscar's uncle Kemal his wife and his daughter were in the room. Soffie looked around, but couldn't see Oscar. She asked Kemal "Where is Oscar?" Kemal looked in her eyes and said "Just forget him." How easily he said it. She was shocked by that sentence. At that moment Soffie wanted to die. It was unbelievable, once again she had been abandoned in a hospital. When she was discharged from the hospital, Kemal took her to his house. They went to a cafe to talk about Oscar. He said Oscar is going to marry another woman and said the wedding would be soon. After the last sentence she heard, her coffee cup fall to the floor. How could he marry another woman when he loved her? Kemal explained that according to Turkish tradition, his family chose the woman he would marry. It didn't matter what Oscar felt.

Soffie was silent and didn't say a word. Once again she was devastated and thought about Erika, Olga, and the other unhappy women. Soffie had now joined that list of unhappy women too.

The next day she told Kemal she wanted to go back to Sweden. Kemal and his daughter drove her to the airport. Soffie would never forget their support and would miss them very much. She said her goodbyes and went inside. She checked her luggage in and took her flight card. She would never forget Turkey and the nice times she had spent there.

Soffie was slowly walking up the airport stairs. When she came to the security gate, she heard Oscar's voice call "Soffie." She stopped where

she was and turned and ran in the direction of his voice. He was looking at her in a miserable way. They looked at each other for a long time. Soffie held on to the stair rail to avoid falling but couldn't go to him, and he didn't come to her. He was just crying. She still believed he was in love with her but on the other hand, there were realities in life to face. Once again her name was announced through the airport speaker.

She let go of the rail she was holding on to and left him alone to his own destiny.

Written by Ali YILMAZ