



Robert Storrow  
Once in a  
Blue Moon

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A short story imagining how young Kiko Mizuhara met Haruki Murakami at a jazz cafe-bar.

**Once in a  
Blue Moon**

Robert

Storror

Never stop chasing what sets your soul on fire.  
In the end, that's what makes life worth living.



In the heart of Tokyo, amidst the vibrant cacophony of neon signs and the ceaseless

hum of traffic, there existed a small, almost magical, jazz café-bar named "Blue Moon." It was the middle of spring, when the cherry blossoms were in full bloom, casting a delicate veil of pink over the city. The air was fresh and crisp, with a hint of anticipation, as if the entire metropolis was holding its breath for the breathtaking transformation that accompanied the changing seasons. Tokyo's energy was electric, an intoxicating blend of modernity and tradition that pulsed through its veins, fueling the dreams and aspirations of those who called it home. In this kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, and experiences, the creative spirits sought solace in the dimly lit corners of the Blue Moon, a sanctuary where artists, writers, and musicians could escape the frenetic pace of the city and immerse themselves in the soothing melodies of jazz.

One fateful evening, a young Kiko Mizuhara found herself wandering into the intimate establishment, drawn by the sultry tunes of a Brazilian bossa nova quartet. As she stepped inside, the ambiance of the Blue Moon enveloped her like a warm embrace. Soft, amber lighting emanated from vintage lamps, casting a gentle glow on the patrons who filled the cozy space. The walls were adorned with old jazz posters, sepia-toned photographs, and a mesmerizing assortment of vinyl records, creating an atmosphere that felt both timeless and evocative. Aromatic notes of freshly brewed coffee and sweet pastries intermingled with the scent of aged oak, while the low murmur of conversation melded seamlessly with the hypnotic rhythm of the quartet. The café-bar was a hidden gem, an oasis of serenity where the outside world seemed to fade away, leaving only the soulful connection between the musicians and their captivated audience. As she walked to the bar, she noticed a man sitting at a small table in the corner, his

fingers tapping on the worn wooden surface, his eyes closed as he listened intently to the music. His face was familiar, the lines and contours somehow imprinted in her memory, but she couldn't quite place him. The sense of déjà vu washed over her like a gentle wave, stirring up memories of late-night reading sessions and a dog-eared novel that had kept her company during countless sleepless nights. The sensation was both comforting and disorienting, as if she'd met this man in a past life, or perhaps, in the pages of a book. Shaking off the feeling of déjà vu, she ordered herself a glass of rum and took a seat at the bar.

The warmth of the drink radiated through her, and she found herself lost in the intoxicating melodies that filled the air. The music was a seductive fusion of bossa nova and jazz, each note a delicate dance between the guitars, piano, and soft percussion. The vocalist's sultry voice



seemed to float above the melody, weaving a spellbinding story of love, loss, and longing. As the rhythm swelled and receded like the ebb and flow of the ocean, Kiko felt her heart dancing in tune with the beat. She couldn't help but feel a strange sense of belonging in this place she'd never been before, as if the music had somehow led her here, to this very moment.

As she savored the enchanting music, Kiko couldn't help but overhear a conversation unfolding nearby. Two Brazilian men and a Russian woman, all of whom had recently moved to Japan, were sharing their first-time experiences at the Blue Moon. They spoke animatedly about the charming atmosphere and the soothing music, their faces alight with excitement. The Russian woman, her eyes shining with nostalgia, remarked how the café-bar reminded her of a quaint Parisian bar tucked away in a corner of São Paulo. Their words resonated with Kiko, reaffirming the universal allure of the Blue Moon, a place that transcended

borders and united souls in the pursuit of beauty and inspiration.

The Russian woman, her eyes shining with nostalgia, was strikingly elegant. She wore a long, dark green dress that draped gracefully over her figure, and her lips were painted a bold shade of dark red. Her slender hands were adorned with intricately handcrafted gloves, a testament to her impeccable sense of style. As Kiko observed the woman, she couldn't shake the feeling that she looked oddly familiar, as if she was a reflection of someone she knew. It was a curious sensation, a fleeting recognition that only added to the enchanting atmosphere of the Blue Moon and the connections it seemed to foster.

During a brief intermission, the man rose from his seat and approached the bar. He was dressed in a dark charcoal suit that draped effortlessly over his lean frame, paired with a crisp white shirt and a subtle navy tie. His polished black oxford shoes

reflected the soft glow of the vintage lamps as he moved. As he made his way to the bar, he passed by a couple of tables, each occupied by an eclectic mix of patrons.

At one table, an elderly couple sat in quiet contentment, their hands entwined, while they shared a knowing smile that spoke volumes about a lifetime of love and understanding. Another table was occupied by a group of young artists, their animated discussion punctuated by bursts of laughter, as they passionately debated the merits of various artistic movements. A lone poet sat hunched over a notebook at a third table, scribbling furiously, inspired by the atmosphere and melodies of the evening.

Kiko couldn't help but notice the way the man moved, his every step echoing the rhythm of the bossa nova that had just filled the room. As he ordered a rum for himself, he turned and caught Kiko's gaze.

"Enjoying the music?" he asked, his voice smooth and deep, much like the drink in her hand. His eyes, warm and inviting, seemed to hold a depth of understanding that intrigued Kiko.

She nodded, a shy smile gracing her lips, as she felt a flutter of excitement in her chest. "Yes, it's beautiful. I've never heard anything like it." Kiko hesitated for a moment, feeling a tinge of vulnerability in admitting her newfound love for the music.

He offered her a warm, knowing smile that seemed to acknowledge the connection they both felt to the entrancing melodies. "That's the magic of bossa nova for you," he said, his eyes twinkling with the same passion that drove his literary creations. "It has a way of reaching deep into your soul, stirring emotions you never knew you had."

As they sipped their rum and chatted, Kiko found herself drawn to the man's unique perspective on life and art. He spoke with a

captivating eloquence, his words painting vivid images in her mind. It was then that she realized who he was – the world-renowned author Haruki Murakami. She couldn't believe her luck, to be sharing a drink and conversation with one of her favorite writers.

Kiko's eyes widened in surprise, and she couldn't help but exclaim, "You're Haruki Murakami!" She felt a surge of admiration and awe, mixed with a touch of nervousness, as she sat across from the man whose work had touched her heart so profoundly.

Murakami chuckled, his laughter warm and disarming. "Guilty as charged," he replied with a gentle shrug, as if to downplay his own significance. "But tonight, I'm just another soul captivated by the magic of music and the charm of the Blue Moon."

The night wore on, and the bossa nova melodies continued to fill the air. Kiko and

Murakami spoke of their dreams, their passions, and their fears, each revelation deepening their connection. They found solace in each other's company, as if their encounter was a fortuitous intersection of two paths meant to cross. Their conversation ebbed and flowed as naturally as the music that had brought them together, leaving both of them feeling a profound sense of gratitude for the serendipitous encounter.

As their conversation meandered through various topics, Murakami eventually revealed that he was working on a new novel, "Norwegian Wood." He described it as a tale of love, loss, and coming of age, set against the backdrop of Tokyo in the late 1960s. He spoke with passion and excitement about the characters he had crafted, each one a complex tapestry of emotions and experiences.

Kiko listened intently, her curiosity piqued by the intricate world he was weaving with

his words. As Murakami shared more about the novel, he paused thoughtfully, a contemplative look in his eyes. "You know," he said, studying Kiko's face, "if one day someone were to make a movie based on this book, I can't help but imagine you playing a role in it."

Kiko's eyes widened in surprise, her heart skipping a beat at the unexpected compliment. She felt a rush of emotions—pride, gratitude, and a sense of wonder at the possibility of such an opportunity. She laughed softly, her cheeks flushing with a hint of color. "Thank you," she said, her voice barely above a whisper. "I would be honored to bring one of your characters to life."

In that moment, as they shared their dreams and aspirations, Kiko and Murakami found a renewed sense of purpose and inspiration. They reveled in the serendipity of their encounter, a

fortuitous crossing of paths that would forever be etched in their memories.

As the café-bar began to empty and the quartet took their final bow, Kiko and Murakami continued to share their thoughts and emotions, their glasses of rum cradled in their hands. The amber liquid swirled gently in their glasses, the rims adorned with delicate gold filigree, a testament to the Blue Moon's attention to detail. The taste of the rum was smooth and rich, with subtle notes of caramel and vanilla that lingered on their palates.

Kiko found herself entranced by the way Murakami would take a slow, deliberate sip of his rum, savoring its complexity before sharing another profound insight or whimsical anecdote. They sat close, their chairs angled towards each other, their knees occasionally brushing as they leaned in to catch every word the other spoke. The soft glow of the vintage lamps cast a warm, intimate light on their faces, heightening



the sense of connection that had blossomed between them.

In the dim, cozy atmosphere of the Blue Moon, time seemed to lose all meaning, and it felt as though they had been conversing for an eternity. Yet, neither Kiko nor Murakami wished for the night to end, as they reveled in the rare and profound connection they had found in each other's company.

During their heartfelt conversation at the Blue Moon, Kiko and Murakami delved into the philosophy of writing books and observing life. Murakami shared his belief that writing, at its core, was an exploration of the human experience, a way to capture the fleeting, ephemeral moments that made up the tapestry of existence. He explained how he found inspiration in the quiet observations of everyday life, the seemingly mundane moments that, upon closer inspection, revealed a hidden depth and complexity.

Kiko listened, captivated by his words, as she began to see the world through the lens of a writer, a landscape rich with stories waiting to be discovered and shared.

Murakami's perspective resonated deeply with her, as she came to understand that life itself was an ever-evolving narrative, with each individual a unique protagonist on their own journey of self-discovery. As they sipped their rum and spoke of life and literature, Kiko and Murakami found solace in the shared belief that the act of writing, much like their chance encounter at the jazz café-bar, was a testament to the beauty and wonder of the human spirit.

As Kiko and Murakami finally stepped outside the Blue Moon, the night was alive with the energy of Tokyo. The streets were bustling with people, the laughter and chatter of late-night revelers echoing through the air. A gentle breeze rustled the cherry blossom petals, creating a mesmerizing, snow-like flurry of pink that seemed to celebrate the connection they

had forged. Under the soft glow of streetlights, they exchanged warm smiles and heartfelt goodbyes, knowing that their chance encounter at the jazz café-bar had left an indelible mark on their souls.

