

ROCKS OF RUBY / YAKUT KAYALAR (1931)

Şükûfe Nihal Başar

OVERVIEW

Author Şükûfe Nihal Başar, one of the most important women writers of the early Republican period, also she was the first woman graduate from the geography department of the Darülfünûn. Şükûfe Nihal, who was also active in social life, served as the general secretary of the Women's People's Party (Kadınlar Halk Fırkası) and was among the founders of that party. She who also supported the National Struggle, made a speech at the 2nd Sultanahmet Rally during the Armistice of Mudros years, in which she talked about the fear of losing her beloved homeland and emphasized that no power could separate them from their homeland. In her works, she especially focused on women's problems, the issue of individual identity and patriotism. She, who wrote novels and poetry books, also traveled to Anatolia and wrote two travel books. Şükûfe Nihal wrote her works in a plain and realistic language. She states that in order for national consciousness and patriotism to be formed strongly, everyone should work and labor without discrimination between men and women. In this sense, she adopts an approach that criticizes the patriarchal order in her works. She defends the equality of men and women and she also draws attention to the fact that intellectuals like herself in her works should develop the homeland. Some of her idealized concepts such as the ideal individual, ideal love and ideal marriage frequently appear in her novels.

Novel It is a work written in poetic language and style. This novel is about a young woman's love story with a sad ending. This young woman, who belongs to a wealthy family, has been raised as an artist. She values her feelings and expects her family to support her in following her feelings, especially her father. However, despite the fact that her father has raised this young woman as a well-educated and well-grounded individual, he does not approve of the person she wants to marry. He forces this young woman into a marriage she does not want. As a result, the two young people who love each other are forced to separate. Unable to bear the pain of this separation, the young man dies and the young woman is hospitalized due to her psychological breakdown. This sad love story set in the 1910s and 1920's are at the center. But there is not reference to the political, military or economic events of those years. Where this young woman's family is from, her father's occupation, and even the names of her family and friends, just like the young woman herself and the man she loves, are not mentioned in this work. *Yakut Kayalar* can be called an introspective novel in which a woman's emotionality is dominant and first-hand materials such as diaries and letters are used.

Background This novel is considered by some experts to reflect the private life of the author. According to some sources, Şükûfe Nihal falls in love with her husband's friend and poet Osman Fahri, with whom she takes poetry lessons, and this love is not unrequited. Osman Fahri thinks that it is not appropriate to fall in love with a married woman and leaves Istanbul. For this reason, it can be argued that this event can be read as the love story between the nameless young man and the nameless young woman in the novel, which ends in sadness. In Istanbul in the 1910s and 1920s, the reader is taken around Bebek, Ortaköy and Emirgan neighborhoods on the Bosphorus where wealthy families live. There is no reference to the political and economic situation of these years. Those years were the years when the Ottoman Empire experienced World War I, the War of Independence and the Early Republican years and period of reforms. The impact of these changes is great, but the effects of these ruptures are not seen in this novel. However, the unnamed young woman in this work expresses a particular concern about the women's question in these years. The main concern of this work is to explain in detail the love story with a sad ending.

SYNOPSIS

She wrote the novel *Yakut Kayalar* in 1931. This novel opens with a verse of unknown authorship and is like a work created by an anonymous young woman writing her memories. The protagonist of the novel is this nameless young woman. In the first pages of the novel, this nameless young woman utters sentences of regret, anger and resentment: "Now I am in a hospital corner. There is neither you nor me anymore, everything was ten years ago." Then this nameless young woman takes the reader back to the past. She takes the reader on a journey to the house where she was born and the neighborhood where this house is located, Bebek and the Bosphorus. From then on, the reader wanders with the nameless young woman in neighborhoods such as Bebek, Ortaköy and RumeliHisarı. This young woman, the daughter of a wealthy family, had a good childhood and youth. With the guidance of her father, she started playing the violin and violoncello at an early age. Her father first read the books in the library in her father's house to her. Then this young woman got into the habit of reading herself. She is passionate about art. Literature, painting and music are a passion for her. One day, on a trip, she met a young man who was just as artistic as she was and they fell in love. The name of this young man is also unknown. But because her father had made a promise to her uncle in the past, this young girl was not allowed to marry the young man she was in love with. As a result, they are forced to separate. Young woman has a nervous breakdown when she hears the news of the death of the man she loved and she is hospitalized. In summary, this novel is a love story that ends in frustration.

SCENES

1. Unnamed young woman is cured by the sound of the ney, but also recalls memories of her loved man

They hospitalize this young woman who has a nervous breakdown after receiving the news of the death of the man she loved. In the hospital she keeps saying to herself: "you are dead, and I am alive, years have passed." This young woman, who eats only enough food to live, sleeps all the time with the effect of the medication she takes, she wants to get rid of the sadness and regret she feels by sleeping. When she wakes up, they make her listen to the sound of the ney as a therapy. The sound of the ney is very good for this woman's soul, because this woman with an artistic soul finds a meaning to hold on to life with the sound of the ney. But on the other hand, the sound of the ney reminds her of the loved one she lost, because this young woman and the man she loved were enjoying listening to the sound of the ney together. And so, the memories come to life in front of her eyes.

2. The unnamed young woman passionate about art belittles women who are not like her

Since the age of five, this young woman has been playing different instruments such as piano, violin and viola and is very proud of herself. Literature and painting are her special interests, but she also excels in other subjects. In fact, memorizing poems from the books he read from an early age was another passion of his. Whenever he was by himself, he would recite the verses he had memorized. It made him feel good. However, some of her friends around her are not like her. While they are forced by their families to play instruments, this young woman is on her way to specializing in music, painting and literature. And, this art-loving woman also dislikes her mother and her view of life. Because her mother does not have a refined taste like her. However, when she has to leave her ideal love, life loses its meaning for her.

3. The unnamed young woman rebels silently, saying "no one understands me"

At home, her mother is a quiet, old housewife. Her girlfriends in her neighborhood are not as artistic as she is. Her friends care about appearance, the fashionable clothes and hairstyles of the day, whereas she is more interested in intellectual development and self-improvement than in appearance or fashion. Moreover, according to this young woman their only ambition is to "be a puppet with a stringed veil." She, on the other hand, thinks so much that it disturbs her sleep. According to this young woman, every individual should think about women, the country, the family and poverty at that time, so that change can begin. This young woman seeks to be free both mentally and physically.

4. This unnamed young woman's dream marriage

She falls in love with the art-loving young man she sees on the ferry. After that, in her mind and heart, she feels the idea of marrying this young man with auburn hair, tall, wavy hair and an artistic spirit. According to this woman, the young man she falls in love with resembles a Roman poet. When they get married, they will not live in a mansion but in a two-room house. But in that house, instead of silk fabrics and expensive furniture, there will be paintings, piano, violin, paints, books. This will be their preference. There will be the sea and pine trees in front of the windows of their house. So, these two art-loving young people will be able to live a happy and peaceful life.

5. The idea of arranged marriage and the unnamed young woman's rebellion

Just when this young woman had found the ideal love she was looking for and was happy, one evening she was shocked by the news delivered by her father. "In twenty days your fiancé, your cousin, will be in Istanbul, my daughter," her father tells her. The young woman was surprised, she could not understand what was happening, she just said to her father, "Am I going to get married?" Then, "You are still a child, you will see, there is no one more suitable for you than him, and we have to fulfill the will of a dead person," her father tells her. Finally this young woman says to her father, "I will never accept such a thing. I am rebelling. I am not a foolish girl who will give my future into the hands of someone else." All hell breaks loose in the house. According to this woman, all family members turn against her, no one understands her. When her father gives the excuse of heart disease as an excuse, she can't stand it and agrees to get engaged to her cousin.

6. This unnamed young woman's forced time with her fiancé and her frustration

Her fiancé, who graduated from an unnamed school somewhere outside of Istanbul, would often come to visit this young woman. These frequent visits of her fiancé tormented this young woman since every time he would come, he would only talk to her about material things for the future: "We will have mansions, we will have money, we will have fame, we will have diamonds, and we will have servants at our beck and call." When this young woman heard these words, she thought to herself, "I am dying, they have stolen my soul." In order to endure her fiancé's words, this young woman spent more time playing the violin, reading books and painting, almost as a remedy. But there was no escape for this young woman, even art could no longer be an escape for her, because she was separated from her beloved.

7. The unnamed young woman's room that turns into a prison before a forced marriage

When this young woman goes back in time, she remembers her forced marriage to her cousin. Her cousin had come one night from his alma mater and gotten engaged to this young woman. According to the decision, the two young people were to get married after one year. Eight months had passed and four months were left. But this young woman was counting the days, even the hours. Time was not passing for her. "How can a lifetime pass with this man with clothes just bought from a tailor, rings with big stones, a watch with diamonds?" this young woman was constantly thinking in her mind. This young woman spent most of her time in her small room and even this small room had become a prison for her. Even in this room, this young woman felt like she could not breathe.

8. The forced maturation process of this unnamed young woman who examines herself in front of the mirror

She was increasingly nauseated by the affection and love shown to her by her family and her fiancé when her wedding was imminent. For her, there was no color and light left in the world. Even the flowers were not blooming. All the plants had withered. Everything had become stiff. Everything had lost its soul, just like this young woman. One day, she stood in front of the mirror and looked at herself. She still had two eyes, two arms, a mouth and a nose, but she had lost her soul in the process. This young woman could neither laugh nor cry anymore. She had become numb. It was this numbness that saddened and surprised her the most. But she realized that this young woman had necessarily begun to mature while waiting for an arranged marriage.

9. Painting of the unnamed young woman by her ideal love, a young man with an artistic spirit, on a trip to Yeniköy

This young woman was on a ferry on the Bosphorus with the young man she was in love with a young man with an artistic spirit. On this trip, the young man wanted to paint this young woman. He wanted the young woman to pose for him. The young man was telling her "don't turn, stay as you are, don't move".

The young woman was worried that her friends had left and “there is no one left, they will call us”. The young man replied, “they will.” The young woman was standing on a rock with her back turned in the way her painter friend wanted. “The pine trees next to her were like souls hugging each other.” And the pine trees offered an atmosphere of peace to these two young people. The hills of Yeniköy in front of the young woman were like “rubies shining red”.

10. Family's efforts to convince the unnamed young woman to extend her engagement

It was planned that this young woman would marry her cousin within a year. But three years had passed and still this young woman was not willing to marry. This began to worry the family of this young woman. So her father started talking to her often, trying to reassure her that the marriage would be good: “Your fiancé is a good boy. He will make you happy. You are still young. And after a while you'll realize you made the right decision.” But all these words of her father meant nothing to the young woman. She did not feel ready for a forced marriage in any case, as if this young woman was looking for an opportunity to escape from it.

11. This unnamed young woman invites her ideal love into her home as a brother and friend

On the one hand, this young woman was engaged to her cousin at the request of her family, but on the other, she was inviting the man she had met by chance and fallen in love with to her home. She introduced him to her family as a brother. But one day the man she was in love with told her that he was uncomfortable with this situation. “Are we still going to cheat on each other?” he asked her. And he continued: “At this rate, all three of us will be miserable. She deserves to be miserable. That man has no right to waste you. Seeing you like this makes me miserable too.” We can't and shouldn't continue this “fake brotherhood role” anymore, we don't have the power anymore, we have to admit it to everyone,” the young man said. But the young woman was obliged to reply: “We will, have to remain brothers, I made a promise to my father”. And then, young woman felt like a “proud death row inmate”.

12. An unexpected gesture from the departed lover: Letter sent on purpose to make his fiancée leave the unnamed young woman

The young woman had given the man she loved an address other than her home address to send a letter. Because this young woman did not want her family to know. She was engaged at that moment, she knew that her family would not take it well. And so it happened. When she wasn't expecting it, her father brought her a letter. Moreover, her father had opened the letter and read it before giving it to her. “This letter is for you, I didn't think you would stoop so low, my daughter,” he told her. The young woman was at a loss what to do. The young man had deliberately sent the letter to her house and not to the address she had given him. This was so that her fiancé would leave the young woman. Because of this letter, the young woman began to resent the man she had fallen in love with and decided that she would never have him in her life. However, in his letter, when he told her “I beg Allah to reunite with you”, she wrote him the following two-line letter: “Do not speak of me again, go away from me.”

13. The night unnamed young woman is forced to leave her ideal love and curse her family

The man this young woman was in love with wanted everyone to know about their love for each other. But the young woman does not want to go back on her promise to her father, because he has a heart disease and she does not want anything to happen to him because of her. So the young woman does not want to confess her love. In short, she rejects the idea of building their future together. So the two lovers, while loving each other, are forced to separate. However, the young woman said, “I became more attached to him when they broke up”. On the other hand, she cursed her family for separating her from this man she was in love with due to her family. Because her family didn't care about her and her feelings. Her family kept repeating the following sentence to this young woman: “Do you want to disgrace us? Your father is sick, don't you pity him? Won't you be sad if your father dies because of you?” These words prevented the young woman from pursuing her love.

14. The ideal lover who leaves this unnamed young woman without saying “I'm leaving”

When the man she loved left this young woman, her family began to dote on her. The young woman's fiancé thought he now had complete control over her and that it was only a matter of time before they would be married as well. According to this woman, her fiancé was delusional. He had even begun proudly telling everyone that their marriage was imminent. The young woman made up her mind that if

the man she loved left, the other one would leave too. She would surely break up with her fiancé. Just as this was happening, one day, unexpectedly, the young woman received a letter from the man she loved. In the letter, he asked her, "I am miserable, more miserable than you can imagine. I am sure you are too. do you still have the strength to deny your feelings?" And the young woman wrote back: "You are right, but I had to for my family, you know that I will never be anyone's, I will never be with anyone."

15. This unnamed young woman who had a nervous breakdown and hurt herself

Forced into a marriage she did not want, this young woman looks back and remembers one evening six months ago when she deliberately banged her head on a green-covered table. This young woman had punched her head on purpose. She was immediately hospitalized. When she woke up in the hospital, this young woman said to herself and then to her family, "I am no different from an object now." "I was a young person, but there is nothing left in the world to move me," this young woman said. "I have fallen into the grip of melancholy," this young woman was struggling. "I want to escape from these people who have turned me into a puppet," this young woman was saying. She wanted to run away, wanted to get rid of the people around her and at the same time even though this young woman was mentally ill, she still wanted to help others in need. Despite everything, this woman did not completely break away from life.

16. Sixteen-years old unnamed young woman declares that she is the victim of her family's unconsciousness

Her family could not understand the pain and anguish of this young woman who was hospitalized after having a nervous breakdown. They even said that she had a weakness, that she worked too much, that she was nervous, that she was tired, which made the young woman even more upset. But what destroyed this young woman was the loss of her ideal love and the hatred she felt for her family. Young woman family did not have the will to save her, and also they also did not have the courage. This young woman had also lost her courage because of her father's illness. She couldn't forgive her family for not understanding her, her ability, her feelings and her expectations. Her family did not realize, or did not want to realize, that she had become like this because of them. Seeing this consumed the young woman.

17. A psychologically disturbed unnamed young woman is ignored by her family

As a young child, this young woman had been raised with care by her family. She was especially spoiled by her father. She was well educated from her childhood. She took private lessons, learned to play instruments and started to paint with the help of her teacher who came to the house. But now, after the loss of the young man she loved and when she was about to have an arranged marriage, this young woman had a nervous breakdown and self-harmed. She was hospitalized for treatment. Her family left this young woman alone after she was hospitalized. "It was like a frosted glass between me and my father, who taught me about love," this young woman said. She was especially upset that her father was distant from her during her illness. "How could my father let me turn into a piece of furniture?" she kept repeating to herself.

18. Hallucination of this unnamed young woman in hospital

This young woman was hospitalized after suffering a nervous breakdown. One night she experienced an event that she could not distinguish whether it was real or a dream. The man she had lost, the man she loved, had come and was now standing in front of her. This young man was telling her "why are you miserable, you were playing the violin, I listened to you, you can't stop playing the violin". Hearing these words, the young woman started to come to her senses and started playing the violin. Gradually her violin playing got better and better. She was noticing this and it made her feel good to see this. The feelings of this young woman were awakening again. "She felt as if she had escaped from a world that was falling apart". Now this young woman was no longer "a prisoner with her soul in chains."

19. This hospitalized unnamed young woman's new friend and support during her treatment

While being treated in the hospital, this woman, who was hallucinating, met and befriended the brother of the doctor who was treating her. This friend was also someone who understood art. She met him twice a week and they talked about their favorite subjects, science and art. In short, they spoke the same language, there was a strong communication between them. When this friend came to see this young woman, he brought some books. This made the young woman happy. This friend was also a man who did

not care about money, did not care about clothes, but was proud in spirit. People who cared about money were worthless to her.

20. The unnamed young woman who mistook the ticket seller she met on the Şişli tram for her ideal love

At the age of eighteen, this young woman was still sad. She even felt that she was getting old. She compared the murky waters of the Golden Horn to her own old face. The reason for her aging was that she had to leave the man she was in love with. Whenever she went out of the house and saw people, it was as if she was seeing the man she loved, she thought everyone was him. One day, the young woman boarded the Şişli tram. When she saw the ticket seller, she immediately thought of the man she loved and stared at him. When she looked at the ticket man, he started grinning at her. Then the young woman came to her senses and again began to realize the crisis she was in, and how devastated she was.

21. This unnamed young woman's first solution to forget the man she fell in love with: Be like other young women

This young woman was aware that she had to be able to forget the man she loved. Otherwise it would not be possible to live. One of the first solutions she came up with was to be like the other young women around her. So that she could forget her lost love and hold on to life. In desperation, this young woman wanted to be like the other women she had previously despised. She dressed up like them, wore beautiful clothes and made up. Her mother and father were happy to see her. She was going to travel. So she wouldn't think about the man she loved. She wanted to play the violin, but she couldn't because the man she loved inspired her, and she had lost her inspiration. Anyway, painting or playing the violin would have reminded her of the artistic man she loved. Forgetting was her only wish. She was determined and she read books to keep her mind occupied. But in the end she realized this: "To forget him, what a ridiculous endeavor." Every effort this young woman made was in vain.

22. This unnamed young woman took a Bosphorus ferry to commemorate her lost loved one and she started working as a nurse at the hospital where the young man she loved died

When she first heard the news of the death of the man she loved, the young woman froze. But in the intervening four years, she almost exhausted. She just ate and slept every day like a robot. And she was in constant fits of weeping. Now the young woman blamed herself for the death of the man she loved. As a nurse, it would make her feel good to be in the hospital where the man she loved had died. She took the ferry to Emirgan, Tarabya and Rumelihisar and tried to see the "beautiful red ruby rocks" she had seen when they were together, but it was futile. What appeared to him as ruby rocks were black rocks. The love of this young woman had made the black colored rocks look like rubies to him. And finally the young woman understood the power of love.

CHARACTER

Unnamed young woman: An intellectual with a talent for literature, music and painting and a woman looking for a man like her, the ideal love.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Unnamed young woman

Living in the 1910s and 1920s, this unnamed young woman was lucky compared to other women of that time. She is the daughter of a well-off family. She lives in a mansion in Bebek. She spends most of her time playing instruments, reading, thinking, memorizing poems and walking in the countryside. The person she communicates best with in her family is her father. She is surrounded by well-educated friends like her, with whom she goes to the countryside. But her sharing with these friends is limited and this young woman complains that there is no one exactly like her around.

Intellectual: From the age of five, this nameless young woman begins to play the violin with the lessons of private teachers who come to her home. Soon after, she also plays the violin. While her friends are forced to play instruments by their families, this nameless young woman plays an instrument willingly

at an early age. She enjoys playing instruments. She also takes painting lessons. She is interested in literature. One of her favorite activities is reading books and memorizing poems and humming them to herself. This young woman, who has raised herself so well, feels that she is not fully understood by her family and those around her. Thus she suffers from not seeing people around her who speak the same language and have a refined taste in art.

Self-sacrificing: This young woman finds her ideal love one day when she least expects it. One day, she and her friends take a trip in the Bosphorus and they board a ferry. During that trip, she meets a young man with a taste for art that she has always dreamed of. There is an immediate interaction between them. In short, her love reciprocated and this makes her happy. However, when she informs her family of the situation, she is upset because her father has promised her uncle that she will marry her cousin. At first, this young woman says no to her father but because her father is a heart patient and he may have a heart attack, this young woman pities her father. She sacrifices her love for the sake of her father's health. Finally, she gets engaged to her cousin, whom she does not want and with whom she cannot even communicate.

Overwhelmed: This young woman, engaged to her cousin at her father's request, receives the news of the suicide of the man she loved as soon as she breaks up with her cousin after they can not communicate. And this young woman blames herself for this suicide. The man she loved is not dead, but he is hospitalized because of a nervous breakdown and dies there. It is no longer important for this young woman to live. Since she herself falls into mental depression she is hospitalized for treatment and begins to spend her days in regret and sadness, constantly thinking about the past. She wants to physically harm herself, this young woman.

THEMES

Arranged marriage: The unnamed young woman, the protagonist of this work, is forced by her father to enter into an arranged marriage, despite being the daughter of a rich and educated father. However, there is a young man that she is in love with. But her father does not allow them to marry. Because years ago he promised the young woman's uncle that he would marry his son and daughter. When the young woman protests against this decision, her father uses heart disease as an excuse, her father tells her "I am ill" and expects his daughter to take pity on him. Upon this situation, the young woman reluctantly writes a letter to her beloved saying that she is leaving him. Eventually, the two young people who love each other sober up. The young woman is forcibly engaged to her cousin, but when she realizes that he does not have the same mentality as her, her sorrow increases. The future of this young woman and the young man she loves is ruined because her father, although educated, is a man with an old mentality.

Ideal love: The protagonist, a young woman, lived a beautiful and peaceful life until she reached the age of marriage. In her mind, this young woman has an idealized man. She waits for this ideal man to appear in real life so that she can experience the ideal love. The only thing that matters to this young woman is to marry a man with a mindset like hers, a taste for art and a point of view. She does not care about wealth or power. She wants to be understood by the man she loves. This young woman unexpectedly finds the ideal love she is looking for on a ferry during a trip to the countryside with her friends. The young man also falls in love with the young woman. Everything happens as she wants and imagines. However, this ideal love ends in disappointment due to the disapproval of the young woman's father and the ideal love disappears into the dusty pages of history.

Passion for art: At the beginning of the 20th century, many of the wealthy families living in Istanbul encouraged their children to pursue art. One of these families was the family of this nameless young woman. Only with one difference. While the children of other families are forced to play an instrument, the young woman here willingly plays the violin and violoncello as a child. From the age of five, private teachers come to the house to teach her these instruments. She was also given painting lessons. She enjoyed it all very much, unlike her friends when she was a young child. This young woman also enjoyed literature at a young age, she would be with her father while he read books. This young woman, who devoted some of her time to reading books, read and memorized poems as a child. When she has time to

herself, she recites the poems she has memorized. This young woman, who has been fond of art since childhood, builds her life on art.

Sadness: The feeling that dominates this work from beginning to end is sadness. Because in this work there is a forced separation and two young people with artistic souls and refined tastes whose lives are ruined as a result of this separation. Their expectations from life are to love, to be loved and to marry someone who has the same taste and understanding of life as they do. The two young people, who are exactly right for each other, see each other on a ferry, fall in love and want to marry and meet the future together. But they encounter an obstacle. This obstacle is the young woman's family, especially her father, who is adamantly opposed to their marriage. This is an insurmountable difficulty. They are forced to separate and fall into a mental depression. Eventually the young man dies and the young woman who receives this news does not want to live. She has turned into a "living corpse".

Regret: The young woman experiences great regret for leaving her beloved, prioritizing her family's decision, especially her father's health, over her own feelings. Because she cannot even have a conversation with her cousin to whom she was forcibly engaged. More importantly, she loses the ideal man of her dreams because of her own decision. Losing the only thing she has dreamed of and waited for for a long time, her ideal love, upsets this young woman and her psychology deteriorates. She blames her family, saying "I left because of you". She regrets her decision to break up with them, but it is too late. Because the man she loved was also depressed and died after a short period of time, when he was only twenty-nine years old. Hearing this, the young woman also gave up on living and was admitted to the hospital where the man she loved died for psychological treatment. When she learns this, the young woman feels even worse. The regret she feels consumes her.

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