

Arabic Treasure In English

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Samira and the Seven Dwarves

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

There is no simple way to make money in this world.

Samira knew that fact, but she did not fully realize that much yet. Her desperate need for money was the reason why she is about to have a breakdown. She is not one of those people who can make money whenever they want to.

The surgeon said that the condition of her mother's eyes is getting worse, and the laser therapy is the only way available to cure her. The city council told her to find another house because her building is about to collapse, and her brother Omar asked for a private lesson because he cannot understand anything from the subject of statistics. So, she does not need just some

money, she needs a huge and an infinite amount of money. Samira did not ask for a bonus from her boss, because she knew it is non-negotiable. If he was an angelically generous person -and he really was- he would have given her three or four hundred pounds. A drop in a sea.

All ways of making money fast does not suit her -through inheritance, marriage, immigration, robbery. She does not have a relative who owns large coffee business in Brazil, and who would bequeath to her his entire money. She also has nothing to offer in order to marry a millionaire, and she cannot find a job because her certificate is not good enough .. But, what about robbery?!

I was embarrassed when I went to visit my friend Essam Fathy who is very clever with numbers, because I did not visit him for two weeks. And now I am visiting him for a personal need. I had a problem in

my work, and I believe that he has an answer for it. Afaf led me to his room. I found him sitting and thinking deeply in front of his chessboard. The weird thing is that he added two small salt cellars to the chess pieces. Wee, sometimes we do that when we lose one of the game pieces. In home, I use a lighter instead of the white horse, because the kids have thrown it from the balcony. But I found that his chessboard pieces are all there, which means that he is playing with 34 pieces. Afaf told me: "He is sitting that way since the morning. It seems like there is a problem confusing him." When he saw me, his pale face glowed and said: "Camel! This game needs another piece .. It is a camel!"

I did not tell him that I have notices he did not get any sunlight for a long time, which is the reason why he as that pale that makes him look like a vampire or a cave's moss. I said: "So, you come after all these

years to figure out that chess is wrong.” He answered calmly: “First, I did not say it is wrong, but I think it misses something. Second, I am not the first one who thought about this. The genius who discovered the rhyme scheme, al-Khalil ibn Ahmed, is the first one who thought about that. Today I am trying to see if he was right. I found out it is right and working.”

“So, tell me about the case that confuses you. I know you are not here to just check on me. I can see you are embarrassed, which means you are confused.” I thought a bit then I started to tell the story without needing to offer any excuses. Our bond is that strong. I told Essam: “It is a problem related with a computer company. The manager is Mahmoud abo Raya. He is a successful and self-made man, but he is inattentive and forgets quickly. There is a safe in his office with a considerable amount of money. As

everything is secure and he already knows who is working with him, he does not pay any attention to lock his office well. Of course, he locks his safe with a secret combination that changes everyday and no one knows it but him.

Essam said: "Let's be direct, the safe has been robbed without any signs of violence." I replied: "there are only two people who can sneak into the office, Fakhrey is the first one. He is a computer engineer and the right hand of Mahmoud. His reputation is good and there is not any suspicion around him, but he is about to get married. The second one is Samira the secretary. She has average education qualifications and she is poor. There is nothing wrong with her, but she is completely broke. In that day, the three of them stayed late in the office. Then Mahmoud got an important call, so he had to leave the two of them at the office. He

trusts them and he already knows that the safe is locked with a secret combination. Fakhrey left the company to buy sandwiches after that. When he came back, Samira was ready to leave. She left first and he did not see her. After an hour later, her left too.

I mean both of them could leave the company with a small bag, and of course both of them said that the other was nervous and confused. In the next day, Mahmoud opens the safe only to find that the amount of sixty thousand pounds, which was supposed to be deposited in the bank, was stolen. There was not any sign of violence or a break-in, which means that the thief did not come from anywhere outside the company. We interrogated Samira and Fakhrey. We also found their fingerprints inside and outside the safe. Mahmoud believes that this is not strange, since he often asks them to rearrange the contents of the safe. Surely, none of them showed

any signs of being wealthy all of a sudden. However, all fingers point to Samira, because she needs the money more.

Essam said sarcastically: “And the weakest and the poorest .. but what about your inattentive friend? Isn’t it possible that he wrote the combination on a paper and forgot it somewhere?!”

“We checked that already. He insists that he never writes the number on anything.”

“Do you have pictures of the place? It would be helpful to see the place and the faces ... First impressions do not mean anything to policemen, such as yourself, but they are very important to me ..”

I put my hand in my pocket, took out my wallet and gave him three pictures:

The first picture had been taken of the manager a month ago ... Samira was

standing besides him. The second picture was of the manager standing with Fakhrey. The third picture was of the office after the burglary had taken place ... Our men too this one.

He then looked deeply in the pictures with enjoyment and he started saying his observations, which had no meaning to me.

“A shy girl and I think she was raised well .. A manager who has a kind heart, for he does not showoff in front of his employees.”

“These statues, however, are weird yet beautiful.”

There was a small library on the right of the office with a row of small ceramic statues of the seven Disney dwarves, but their number was not complete.

He finished his inspection of the picture then looked at me smiling and said:

“You said that Samira had average education qualifications?”

“A degree in Public Service .. Yes.”

“So she would not know ... I accuse the man of committing that crime. What did you say his name was?”

“Fakhrey.”

“He would confess, if you applied enough pressure on him.”

“He looked at him in a confused way ... did he start guessing? ... Would he declare her innocent, only because she is the weakest and the poorest suspect? ... The poor also commit crimes, and not all of them are oppressed angels. Additionally, (Fakhrey) is not (Bill Gates), if you know what I mean ...

While picking up the photos he put on the table, Essam said:

“Did you know that combination of the safe on that day? The photos don’t give a complete picture of the place, but the combination starts with 183.” I stared at him in a daze. I then took my mobile out and made a fast call in a low whispering voice. Then I returned to him with thousand questions ...

Essam said quietly:

“The statues that represent the seven dwarves are a very simple way used by Mahmoud to remember the combination of the safe. He did not tell you about that, I am sure. If you notice, you can find out there are missing statues .. a statue .. a statue .. a statue .. no statue .. and so on. If we exchange the number one with the available statues and the number zero with the empty position, we could conclude the following figure:

1 1 1 0 1 1 0 1

It's a binary number, which is legible to those who have little experience in computer codes; an experience I think the girl does not have ... Mahmoud, on the other hand, has such an experience, and he used to change the positions of the statues everyday to refer to the new number of the safe. He would then leave the office. These statues may appear innocent enough to be noticed by anyone. However, his assistant, Fakhrey, must have realized that the positions of the statues change on a daily basis. Therefore, he comprised his correct theory, and could open the safe...

I said patiently:

“I know nothing about these binary numbers ...”

While writing on a paper to clarify this matter to me, he said:

“Computers do not possess ten fingers like us, but only one finger ... There is

either one charge or no charge .. yes or no ... We symbolize the first position with the number (1) and the second position with the number (0) ... Every number is called a Bit and the eight numbers are called Byte. The probability laws tell us that the potential position equal 256 starting from zero and ending with 255, whereas the binary numbering has been known since the seventeenth century as described by professor Lenz and used in computers in 1937 by professor Shannon.”

“You could read the binary number by starting from the right. Whenever you meet the number 1, this means (2) is exponentiated by the number of the digit column, subtracted by 1.

“For example, reading the binary number 1001, we start from the right. WE notice that the sum to (2) exponentiated by zero (this means the number 1) +0+0+2

exponentiated by 3 (equals eight). So, the sum is $1+8 = 9$.

1001

^^^

$1=1 \times 1=0^2 \times 1$ <----- 1111

$0=2 \times 0=1^2 \times 0$ <----- 111

$0=4 \times 0=2^2 \times 0$ <----- 11

$8=8 \times 1=3^2 \times 1$ <----- 1

“Now, let’s see the position of the six statues which your friend left in his office.”

“Three close statues from the right, then nothing, the two statues, then nothing then one statue. This means that the binary number is:

10110111

^^^

$1=1 \times 1=0^2 \times 1$ <----- 11111111

$2=2 \times 1=1^2 \times 1$ <----- 1111111

$4=4 \times 1=2^2 \times 1$ <----- 111111

$0=7 \times 0=3^2 \times 0$ <----- 11111

$16=16 \times 1=4^2 \times 1$ <----- 1111

$32=32 \times 1=5^2 \times 1$ <----- 111

$0=64 \times 0=6^2 \times 0$ <----- 11

$128=128 \times 1=7^2 \times 1$ <----- 1

“They say ironically about the binary system: ‘people are ten kinds, of them understand binary numbering and another does not understand it.’”

“Anyway, this system proves its importance in computers and codes. No one things that a decorative tap with markers 11111111 means 255.”

“The story is clear. Mahmoud did not trust his memory, so he depended on this smart way to retain the combination of the safe. He did not think that another genius

could realize that the statues were changing positions every day. All of this is complicated. I doubt that this innocent girl could know any of that, whatever her circumstances were.”

The case was closed. I was amazed, while he returned to the chessboard and put it in front of him. While he was rubbing his head, he said: “But, I still insist that this game needs a camel, don’t you thin!?!”

Horror Sweeps the City

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

The hot suffocating weather forbids any ideas, dreams and everything that is beautiful, nice or desirable ... During those dreadful hours of August in the afternoon of one day ...

In the pharmacy located at the head of the street, Sara sits. Moderate in beauty, wealth, qualifications, practically in every aspect. You can never do her the injustice of being described as not pretty, poor or ignorant. Yet, you can never say that she is beautiful, rich or educated in good conscience.

She was sitting alone in the pharmacy, following a trivial serial in attentively. It seemed as if the same people who made this silly serial are the same who caused this sweltering heat .. She then saw a young tall man entering the pharmacy.

Tall and wearing sunglasses, he had a big scar on his right cheek. His clothes were fine and fashionable. He stood in the pharmacy for few seconds contemplating the shelves. It was a sign she knew very well ... He was remembering what he wanted ... And finally, he said “Hello,” and asked her for a certain drug to make him lose his appetite and weight (I won't mention any of the drugs' names).

She looked closely at his semi-wide clothes and wondered about the reason behind his request .. Every customer has a story .. Does he see himself as a fat person and he is wrong to think so? Or he is getting this drug for his wife, who is turning into an elephant? She was sure that there was a long story behind his request. She used to imagine the rest of such stories to pass the time.

She headed to the shelf and picked up a pack full of big tablets. She said to him,

while writing some phrases on it with a pen: “Take five tablets about a quarter of an hour before eating with a large cup of water ... three times a day.”

He gasped in astonishment at the largeness of the dosage. She replied with a simple smile: “These tablets swell, leading you to lose you appetite when you start eating ...” He checked the pack and wondered saying: “There is not medical bulletin?”

She said: “This is their effect.. Don’t worry.. These tablets are fibers .. even if a child takes the whole pack, nothing will happen..”

He handed her a valuable currency. She gave him back the rest of the money with a sad smile. She then continued watching the program, while he was leaving the place.

My genius friend Essam said to me, while throwing the fourth handkerchief in the bin: “there is not hope. It is obvious that this is the disease of death.” He was a very optimistic person, as I came to know him to be. His appearance indicated that and more..

His nose was red like drunkards, and his eyes were pale ... It was the worst case of flu I have seen for ages ... And the strangest thing is that it happened in August.

He was sitting there in his wheel chair unable to speak or breathe ... Afaf, the enduring wife, poured gallons of hot lemonade down his throat, but he only got worse.

I said to him, while getting away from the virus that was spreading around my mouth: “You are in need of an anti-biotic.”

He said in rage: “An anti-biotic against a virus? You should update your medical information.”

Hence, he indicated to a pile of paper in rage saying: “I need to concentrate and find some peace of mind to read these theses, but I have a terrible headache.”

I said, while walking towards the door:

“I will bring a strong painkiller from the pharmacy.”

I felt happy when I got a chance to help him ... as he is forever filled with pride and always wishes to appear strong. So, I went out in this scorching weather that was about to become a living hell, and I headed to the nearest pharmacy.

When I entered, I felt it was a theatre of the absurd, filled with tears, chaos and screams. There were two pensive-looking

men and a girl who was crying. Her name was Sara, as far as I can tell.

She kept saying that she was not responsible for what happened, but one of these two men accused her with being stupid.

“I told you, I would keep the tablets of diabetes in this pack, and you told me that you understood that.”

Here, I interfered to ask about what happened and one of these two men said in anger:

“Nothing ... She sold the tables of diabetes as a drug that causes the loss of appetite.”

I asked: “Is this dangerous?”

One of these two men replied: “No, it is not so dangerous .. the diabetes medicine is taken once or twice a day, but the drug for appetite loss is taken for three times a day

before eating, and the dosage is five tablets in each time!”

“Is that dangerous?”

He looked at me furiously and said:

“This miserable man will swallow five tablets all at one, and he will die before realizing that!”

I asked as foolish question:

“Why don’t you tell him that?”

One of these men said: “He is an irregular customer. We have never seen him before and we may never see him again!”

This was the famous scene including the phrase of “The medicine contains a deadly poison,” from that movie that was directed by the genius Kamal al-Sheikh. He was about to be close to Hitchcock’s style of suspense and excitement.

I heard the rest of the details and the descriptions of the man. I then told them, while leaving the pharmacy: “I am a police officer, and I will handle this situation.”

But how would I handle it? The chemist in the film directed by Kamal al-Sheikh had called the chief of the police, and soon after, the radio had broadcast the famous news. This was in the past, when people greeted each other saying “Wish you a very blessed and happy day.” Additionally, the chief of police was Yousef Bey Whabi. Things are not longer that easy. I will need half a day to convince anyone to broadcast such news, and besides, no one watches the T.V. or listens to the radio anymore. Everyone watches satellite channels.

I hurried to Essam’s house and told him the whole story. He seemed concerned despite his miserable state.

He said: “Do you mean that this miserable man carries a whole pack of diabetes medicine, believing it to be a drug of appetite loss?” He then shocked his head in disbelief, saying: “How stupid people can get! They keep a medicine in another medicine’s container without a label. Mothers used to put washing soda in a glass of water, then they would scream their hearts out when their children drink it, because it looks like milk. The result is the miserable child dies immediately or loses the esophagus, and it is replaced with a part of the colon!”

He looked at me thinking. He then said: “Give me the phone.”

He held the phone and dialed a number saying:

“Hi, Mahmoud ... there is a man who bought a diet medicine in a container ... what? ... what’s your business with that? ...

let me finish ... the problem is that the container contains a poisonous medicine ... a young man in fine clothes and he has a scar on his cheek and wear black glasses ... the pharmacy is called “Ibn Sina” and it is in ... I want you to report this message literally to five of your relations ...

Whoever sees this young man should warn him immediately and call this number (he gave him his number) ... It is a responsibility that God will ask you about ...”

Then, he dialed another number and repeated the message: “Hi, Shreif ...”

There is a man who bought a diet medicine in a container ... The problem is that the container contains a poisonous medicine ... a man wearing ... etc.. etc.” He repeated that for three more times ... Then, he looked at me smiling.”

I said doubtingly: “Don’t you see that this was is ineffective?”

“But it is more efficient than broadcasting itself ... I reminded them it is a responsibility before God in order to awaken their inner conscience ... Thus, no one would disobey my orders because we are naturally religious, as Egyptians. Let’s wait and see ... What’s the time now?”

“It is 1:15 p.m.” and so we waited.

I sneezed twice and started to suffer from a runny nose. It was clear that I was infected by his disease. I began to realize it was a fatal disease. No doubt about that. I asked Afaf to bring me some hot lemonade, while Essam tried to focus on reading these theses.

At 2:45 p.m., the phone rang. Essam held the phone up ... He listened carefully and happiness started to appear on his face:

“Engineer Dawud? Welcome ... I am Essam Fathy ... Thank you ... are you saying that he is your neighbor, and that you

warned him? ... He did not take any of the tablets, you say? Than you very much ... anytime ...”

He put the phone down and gave a triumphant look. He said: “We have succeeded my man!”

I told him in amazement: “Within a quarter to two hours? How can you explain that?”

He said while holding a paper and a pen: “People do not believe the power of chain reactions ... let’s see what happens when we convey a piece of news to five persons, supposing that the communication process takes a quarter of an hour: At one o’clock, only one person received the news. At quarter past one, five persons and I got the news ... this makes six people ... At half past one, 6 people + (5×5) got the news ... the total of 31 persons. At a quarter to two, 31 people + (5×2) got the news, the total of

156 persons. At two o'clock, $156 + (25 \times 125)$ got the news, the total of 781 persons. At a quarter past two, 781 people + (25×625) got the news, the total of 3906 persons. At half past two, 3906 people + (25×3125) got the news, the total of 19531 persons. At a quarter to three 19531 people + (25×15625) got the news, the total of 97656 persons. Thus, we managed to deliver the news to 100.000 persons within less than two hours!"

I told him in amazement: "Note that Cairo's population is in millions!"

"But we are lucky that one of them knows this man ... Don't underestimate the number of 100.000 ... Anyhow, if this chain reaction continues, you will find that everyone in Cairo gets the news within 24 hours."

He added, while throwing another tissue in the bin: "Now you can go to the

pharmacy to buy me this medicine and you can take the right legal measures, as well. You may accuse them of carelessness or the like.”

I said to him, while sitting breathless: “I think I should ask Afaf first to go to the pharmacy ... There are two sick persons here ... I am happy that me being here saved the life of an innocent person. I am not, however, excluding the fact that another innocent person may die today.”

I looked at him admiringly ... He did not cease to amaze me, even when his sickness was driving him crazy. I think the cells of this man’s brain will be the last thing that will die inside him ... Actually, he deserves the name I have given him secretly: “The Man of Numbers.”

Knocks

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

Knock ... Knock ... Knock

Unique knocks are behind our story ...
They are the reason that makes me tell you
about it now.

You may disagree, but you cannot deny that the time I spent at the British Spiritist Medical Association (BSRA) was one of the most exciting times in my life. It might have been nonsense, but the most enjoyable nonsense ever. I admit that relativity governs how people see everything. I know of ten people who can wiggle their ears, even though I cannot. The world's tennis champ is just a man like me and you, yet we think him a superman. This includes the rest of the senses. Zarqaa` al-Yamamah saw the enemies approaching, while her own people did not and thought her hallucinating. Dr. Emmanuel Lippman

could hear the defect in a child's heartbeat a week before his colleagues. He could have simply pretended to have enjoyed some foresight, if he wanted. I believe those who have super senses have more perception. They can 'wiggle their ears' in the larger sense of it.

Not to mention Professor James Matthiessen, the man who invited me to the BSRA. Can't you see that he looks funny, being short, bad-tempered and hawk-eyed? What about the building that goes back to 1882? Remember that the door you have gone through, many great scientists have gone through it before you, such as the physicist Crookes, and many great literary authors, such as Conan Doyle, the author of Sherlock Holmes, as well as respectful spiritual experts, such as Douglas Home. You also need to remember that the BSRA coined the term Extrasensory Perception (E.S.P.). You may have come upon it under

the name of parapsychology, the acronym of which is (P.S.I) or psionics in a sci-fi book. Don't you find all of this exciting?

Without going into details, you know about my visit to Britain and how I met prof. James Matthiessen, the psychologist. He is one of the most prominent members of the association. He had some funny tricks that he learnt from the eugenicists, but he was surprised t amazed you. He would humbly say that it is a combination of pure mind control and a little sleight of hand.

I asked him: "As a man of science, how do you believe in this nonsense?" He nervously gave a short answer: "I don't believe in it; I just give it a try. I try to be objective right from the start. That's why I don't judge it as nonsense, till it is scientifically proven." "Here, we study E.S.P. and there are many kinds of E.S.P. such as telepathy, mindreading, emotions reading, telekinesis, foresight, that is to know the

future and to hear things that are far away. Psychometry, on the other hand, is a sensation towards someone who touched a certain item. There is also the ability of being at two places at the same time or to start a mental fire, or to bring things to yourself.”

I asked: “Do you think all of this is possible?” He said: “I don’t think. I study. That is what do not want to grasp.” He then took me to a Ganzfeld Lab (founded in 1974). It is isolated from any outer visual or audial effects. Those who claim that they have E.P.S or wonder about that, sit in this lap. In there, they are no longer treated as people, for they are treated as subjects. The subject sits blindfolded in front of a scientist to test him. The scientist shows him a set of 25 cards and asks him to guess their content. Those cards are called Zenar Cards, which have different drawings on them, such as a crucifix, a circle, a wave, a star, etc.

If the subject could guess from six to ten, he has the ability, and is considered to be a psychic-in-development, or at least he is considered to have the sixth sense.

“What makes this number special?”

“It is the result of exhaustive statistical studies developed by the American scientist Joseph Banks Rhine. It is a way to exclude the chance factor. The results are impressive, but unrepeatable. The subject that succeeds ten times at one experiment can pass only five at the next one. However, the correct scientific phenomena must be repeatable. A scientist told Matthiessen that they are ready to move... Well, it is time then, but where to?”

It is night time in the city. On the way to that country house outside London. Matthiessen told me they were on their way to conduct an E.P.S. experiment. Luckily, I would witness it, which will give me a better

idea about what they do here. The process just falls under simplicity and repetition.

At this house lived Emily and Jones. The two sisters were unmarried. Every unmarried woman is called Emily in Britain, following the habit created by Emily Bronte. The two sisters lived quite the miserable-yet-happy life, and that did not change until they moved to that house a year ago where strange things started to happen. The elder sister is quite scary to the extent that it is hard to believe that nothing would scare her ... Her clothes were not of this era ... Not to mention her patched shoes, but her tone of voice was terrified when she talked about their dog. She says that its psychological status is only changing from bad to worse, since they moved here. It refuses to enter certain parts of the house, especially the lobby, as well as certain spots in the garden. The dog would freeze and keeps whining in a pathetic way. If she tried to

force it in, it would stiffen its back, and keeps growling in a threatening way.

The younger sister was also unsettling. She was talking about the sound of knocks and how they are all over the house at night, without a certain source. They come from everywhere and nowhere. These knocks only happen when they are both at home. What do these knocks mean?

Dr. Matthiessen said: “The usual explanation, according to those who believe in these things, is that the knocks, in such cases, lead to a body buried into the walls for decades. The spirit keeps knocking until the body is found.”

I asked in a guarded-satirical tone: “And what about those who don’t believe in such things?” He answered: “They call those knocks ‘rappings’. They are a kind of telekinesis but unconsciously and -foolishly. People who has this phenomenon spend

days suffering, as they are unaware that they are moving things that make that sound. A part of his spirit acts independently. We see this phenomenon among teenagers, for this age is when those abilities appear. In the past, they said it is the age of being possessed, but now we say it is the age of unaware telekinesis.”

This is how the night started. I actually couldn't understand all they were doing. They searched for hidden microphones. They took a lot of ordinary and infrared pictures. Then, they connected cameras and recorders. There were devices that I did not know the purpose of. Installing them made the process like a scene from Star Wars. Finally, I realized that the miserable ghost will freak out, before thinking to get into the house. It is really in a bad spot this time, and no one would love to exchange places with this ghost. Matthiessen played cards with one of his companions, the haggish sisters

enjoyed sewing, while sitting on their favorite seats with the dog lying next to them. A scientist fell asleep and another is about to. I was the only Egyptian in the room watching all of that. Is it midnight? I guess it is.

Knock ... Knock ... Knock

The knocks had started, with their sound everyone in the room trembled with fear. I froze in panic, and could not stand. That noise came from everywhere and nowhere. Strange noise I have never heard the like of which before.

The recorders are on, and Matthiessen shouted: "Focus on the two sisters. I want to see them clearly at the lab. Make sure there is no tricks or hidden knocks." It was clear that there were still sitting in the same place with no change. The only thing that changed was a smiled that meant "We told you so!" The knocks

became louder and continuous, as if death itself was drawing near, walking on a wooden leg and a walking stick.

From the top, a scientist shouted: “Negative, the attic is clear.” Dr. Matthiessen looked at me saying, “any comments? Seeing is believing, right?”

I was gaining control of my senses. I pointed to Emily, the elder sister, and gave her a strange order that she did not understand. So, Matthiessen repeated it for me: “Take off your shoes.” She looked stunned and angry. It might have been seen as an insult, but I repeated the order.

She bowed and took off her patched shoes. She had gout, arthritis and dirty feet, but now as her feet stood bare in front of us, we realized that the knocks had stopped. We chillingly looked at each other before Matthiessen asked me to explain what is going on. Shaking off all of that stress, I said:

“It is easy. I read about the Fox Sisters in America at the early 20th century. It is close to what is happening here. These sisters were talking to spirits in their house using a cipher of certain knocks. They came to know about a corpse buried in their walls. Their fame was spread all over the country. That was the beginning of the psychic and their association all over the world. It is the love of fame that controls people such as those. It can make a criminal confess to show off his genius. That is how Margret Fox confessed that the terrible noise that the ghosts made was actually made by her foot joints.

She already made the sounds of the ghostly knocks in front of 2000 amazed audience in a big theatre. She then admitted that everything related to psychics is nothing, but a total swindle. It was a very high level of swindle that requires hard work. It was a serious shock for the psychics. Many of them refused to admit this defeat.

After that, I said to the elder sister: “We can see that nothing is moving here, buy can you tell me why you are wearing these old shoes? Simply because they hide her toes that the gout infected them. So, she was able to make this strong sound that came from nowhere. Taking off her shoes made this obvious to us. This lady is only seeking fame and attention.”

Matthiessen looked at the woman, who went to wear her shoes again, then she nervously said, “You all are only ignorant losers. Leave my house now!” Matthiessen looked at the men saying that this is exactly what we were going to do then. “Collect your tools, boys!” Then, he said to me with as smiling face: “That is what I told you. You can only measure by experimenting. This is not the first nor the last wasted night.”

After many years, many evaluation papers have been thrown away like the old films of Togo Mezrahi.

Dr. Matthiessen had called me a week before. We remembered together these exciting days, which would never come back. We laughed very much and he told me about his experiences with the poor Indian man who had been prisoned for two weeks underground. I reminded him of the story of these two sisters and how they managed to fool the best psychics, but they failed to do so with me. Perhaps it was because I had a bit wider scope of doubt than them. He informed me that the elder one died on year ago and the other left the house and no one knows where she is staying now. The house, however, was torn down.

And he finally said: “You know what! There was a body buried in the walls. It may have been buried there for decades at least. But I still admire your scientific mind so much.”

You may disagree with me, but you cannot deny that this period you spent in

BSRA was one of the most exciting periods in my life. Or, do you have a second opinion?!

Clairvoyance

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

Alexandria ... New Year's Eve

The night and winter are cold and filled with sorrow. Vacationers have been gone for three months leaving the sharp feeling of solitude in their wake. This feeling filled Alexandria and myself, and we tried to reduce the harshness of these moments.

I was sitting in that casino with my friend. We always spend our time there. The cheerful waiter came and made us laugh. He always does that with his words. I was listening to the beautiful music, while looking at the corniche. A great desire to cry came over me with no apparent reason. This witty personal pain that is merely a touch away from overwhelmingly exploding; an explosion that can make all the handkerchiefs of the world wet.

The casino would host some recursive shows that led to the reduction of the audience. No one seemed interested in such shows, whether the artists or the audience. However, the next stage was really brilliant.

Dr. Moreau, the mysterious reader of minds. Everything was pathetic; the accompanying music, and the voice of the presenter. The whole thing would fit better in a folk festival. He got his name from the famous novel by H. G. Wells, Of course, he did not read the novel, but watched the film. This Dr. Moreau, who was standing in the middle of the bright light, was a black man wearing an entertainer's suit, and wrapped a turban around his head. It looked like a bathroom towel. I noticed that his eyes were full of evil.

The doctor was approaching a young lady sitting beside her husband. He approached her from the rest of the crowd, which was not that big. He said: "Do you

have anything that I can touch.” She was frightened so she did what he asked in order to get rid of him. She gave him her handkerchief. “You are Ms. Shireen al-Saman: a housewife and you have two children. This is correct, right?” The woman laughed in astonishment. She applauded a lot. My friend came close to me and whispered: “They are working together, aren’t they? I mean that she is an extra!” I answered in an uncertain way: “Might be ... By psychometry is a well-recognized sense. It is the sense that allows you to know information about an object and its owner by touching it. This man might be really talented, and he might be a hoax, as well.”

He then approached our table, and asked my friend if he has anything to show. Before my friend took out his hand, I gave the man my wallet, but he gave it back in disgust, and repeated the question on my friend: “Something of yours perhaps?” I

said: "I thought we are all the same for you." He did not answer and took what my friend gave him. He then said Marawan Mohammad. 40 years. From Giza. Etc.

We were surprised how he knew all of this accurate information. Now it is a fact we cannot deny. We felt like mice trapped in a maze.

He closed his eyes for a minute, then gave my friend that piercing look, while holding his hand and said: "Be careful! You are in an eminent danger! He made us tense. We did not know what he meant. He did not say and simply moved to read the mind of some else, until the end of the night.

Five months later, I did not know why my friend decided to go back to Giza, especially tonight. I asked him to come and spend the night in, but he insisted. He said it is Friday tomorrow, and he cannot imagine

walking up not in his bed, and to have a shower and to have, then to have breakfast and go to pray. Those are his Friday rituals that he cannot give up on.

I was really worried for him. It was dark and he was too distracted to drive. I could have made him stay, if I wished, but I did not. Five months have passed, and this question is still tearing me apart. For five months, I wandered about that night and yet I wondered why I did not believe what I had heard.

Now, I am back to Alexandria, entering the same casino. It is in my nature not to trust in psychics. The true psychic won't give silly performance for a couple of pennies. If he wanted, he could be the most powerful man ever.

I asked the new bartender about Dr. Moreau, whom he did not know. So, he asked the senior bartender, who introduced

me to Captain Khamis. Captain here is one of the ranks of bartenders. It has nothing to do with sports. He was an old Nubian man that told me where Moreau works.

I went there where I saw his show, but that time he was mindreading by touching hands. He was reading a lady's mind. She was sitting alone and gasped in amazement to what he said.

After the show, I gave some money to a bartender and asked him to take me to Dr. Moreau. We went through narrow stinky corridors, leading to a room stranger than anything known of back stages. Moreau was limping out from it. After changing his clothes, he looked like a poor worker with his dirty clothes and gray hair, but still had the piercing fiery look. In one hand, he had a bag of his clothes and tools. In the other one, he wrapped the leftovers in a big piece of cloth. He was leaving, but I begged him to

talk for half an hour only. I said I will buy him dinner at a fine nearby Kabab restaurant.

His eyes widened at the thought, and he could not stop himself from swallowing his saliva. The great seer is hungry and his ego had collapsed, when I mentioned the kebab. We are now sitting in the restaurant. I lost my appetite and did not eat my meal, which had some pieces of beef. He is eating his meal voraciously. I offered him my meal to finish it. I asked him: “Few months ago, you predicted that my friend is in danger. Do you have any explanation?” He said, while eating: “I don’t remember this situation, but it happens very much, and no one believe me till it is too late.”

“What do you exactly see and makes you believe that there is a danger.”

“Believe me, I do not know. At the beginning of my life, I was just an employee. Then, I felt that there is something more

powerful in me and I needed to show the world this gift. I have many gifts that I have never heard of being all there at once in a single man. Empathy means I can feel what you feel. Precognition means seeing what will happen in the future. Clairvoyance means seeing things that are not in front of me and the ability to read thoughts and telepathy. At the beginning, I felt scared and I thought I was going crazy. Then, I read the story of Omar ibn al-Khattab when he was giving a sermon, and saw a vision of his leader Saraya ibn Zanimm who was in Nehund. He was about to fall into a trap set by the infidels. So, he shouted amidst the sermon: "Saraya! The mountain!" Saraya heard him, despite being in Iraq. He then knew he should take refuge in the mountain to avoid the ambush. This story tells of telepathy and clairvoyance. It is documented and there is not any historical doubts about it.

I said: “Don’t blame me. I think these gifts bring wealth to their owners, but you are not rich.” He simply said: “These gifts do not always obey me. Sometimes they leave me. Thus, I work in a place until my failures are repeated and I get fired. Then, I look for another place. Now I don’t know what you are thinking about. I might be able to do that tomorrow or after a couple of days. The gift does not come as I wish. Therefore, I am left with no real rewards.” He then showed me his leg from under the table and said: “This proves what I am saying. I made a horrible accident a few months ago. If my gifts always obey me, I would not get on that car. I was dying in the hospital. This is logical and there are not any doubts about that.

I asked him: “That night, you refused to read my mind, why?” He said: “I do not remember that but I must have felt that you are skeptical. Skeptical people are the most

troubling to read, because their brain waves hinder my gifts.” He eats the last slice of beef. He must be wishing now that he had a rough tongue like cats to be able to eat more.

Suddenly, he extended his hand to the spoon, which I was holding. He touched it and looked at me with his sharp eyes and whispered: “Now I remember everything. Your friend and yourself are in danger. Be careful!”

His eyes widened even more ... He stood up and just left. I stood outside the restaurant and kept watching him, as he was going away. Suddenly, Marawan called my name and asked me: “I kept watching for a long time ... What did you discover?” I said inattentively: “I have not a clue. We felt astonished, when he read your future that night. He knew everything about you. We then remember the talkative bartender, who knew everything about us. Of course,

he pointed towards us from behind the curtains, and told Moreau your name, address and your age. This is why he did not read my mind, because I have not told the waiter anything about myself.” However, I am still wondering: “What is the reason that made him warn you of an immediate danger?”

Marawan laughed and said: “He must have told this to everybody he met. Do you get what I mean?”

We have seen Moreau walking slowly at the distant street turn with a woman. I have seen her twice before: the first time, she was dressed and sitting with her husband and her name was Shireen al-Saman, and the second time was this night. Of course, she is his wife and took off her outfit and put on her shabby clothes.

The story is clear now and does not need any questions, but the question that is

still bothering me is when Marawan got his spectacles back, he saw a vision coming over him, after touching the hand of Dr. Moreau. He saw Dr. Moreau bleeding after a horrific crash. A car crashed and got turned over. A tree fell. Marwan told me that after the show. I laughed at him then.

He suggested to warn the man and he warned us, but I have laughed loudly, saying: “How can a conman allow us to con him?” Marawan, however, was sure of what he had seen. It is true that he returned to Giza at the same night to find about the truth of the whole situation, but I am still wondering, “What will Marwan say, if he touches my hand now?”

The Sunflower

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

He was smart. All of us knew that. Despite all of our attempts to set him up, we completely failed. He was so careful like a fox and expected all the time that there is someone watching him. News found its way to us that he is selling a new kind of expensive drugs in one of the private universities. The problem of this university is that it is limited on the rich, whose sons did not get high marks in the secondary school. So, the young students go to the university feeling that money means everything. They would feel that they managed to be superior to the really distinguished students, through their parents' money.

In such an atmosphere, a huge number of bad habits are spread. One of these is doing drugs. The American actor, Robin Williams, says mockingly: "Cocaine is

God's way of telling you 'you are making too much money.'" It is actually a right saying. Robin Williams himself did drugs for a while. He then stopped after realizing that drugs are the reason for the death of many Hollywood's celebrities.

The days of LSD are over, it seems. MDMA seems also to become old-fashioned. Now, there is this new drug that rich students buy with ease, even though it is expensive. My young cousin told me that all of the students know that Ramy sells this drug. Ramy, a student in the faculty of engineering, comes to college in his expensive sports car, wears only remarkable clothes, as if he is a Hollywood celebrity in an American film. He insists to put a picture of a sunflower on the glass of his car, on his books and on his jacket. You can never find around him anyone, except for his girlfriend who looks just like him in every aspect.

What is the point of the sunflower?

The connection between drugs and hippies is strong. Keep in mind that the hippies call themselves 'Flower Children'. I called some friends in the DEA. They told me that they suspected this young man, but he is so careful, and was never caught red-handed. Captain Mustafa of the DEA says: "We find great difficulty in convicting the people they arrest." He continues: "Their lawyers are too good in destroying the case and finding gaps." Besides, the young man was never caught carrying drugs. Therefore, I did the only possible thing. I gave my cousin some money, and asked him to buy some drugs from Ramy. If he gets the drugs, I will let my cousin buy more drugs from him again. Of course, the whole process will be recorded in the second time, after gaining permission from the Public Persecution.

My cousin came back to me and said: "It did not work with him."

He told me how he was getting close to Ramy, before he went to him directly. He then told him about his previous addiction to hallucinogens, and that his need to a new drug, as soon as possible, is desperate. Ramy was listening to him silently and looking at him from behind his purple glasses. He then said in a polite way: “What does this have to do with me?”

My cousin said: “Do you know the people who sell those things in our college?”

Ramy said to him: “Who said to you that I am an expert in these things! I cannot stand the smell of a cigarette, and my advice to you is that you have to search for another one because it will not work with me.”

My cousin told me this story, and I shouted in excitement: “Notice the last thing he said. He knows that we know what he actually does. He wants to challenge us to see if we can prove that he is a drug

dealer or not.” I made up my mind. I can be a young man whenever I want. I decided to change my hairstyle, put on casual clothes, wear sports shoes, black glasses and go to this private university by my car.

Undoubtedly, my wife believed that I have gone mad, and fortunately, my children did not see me.”

My cousin pointed out that young man, and I found him sitting on a car with a girl in a shameless way. It was really an astonishing thing to see, even by the unfamiliar or strange regulations of private universities.

He carried three sunflowers in his hands. He contemplated them interestedly, while he was talking to his girl. It is really strange that this young man appears to be romantic to such a degree. Anyway, there was a flowerbed filled with flowers behind him and he could have picked the flowers from it, whenever he wanted to.

Here, I saw a girl carrying some sunflowers in attentively. It seemed that she picked them from the garden. They were about five flowers. She headed towards Ramy and exchanged with him a talk filled with laughter. She then put something in his hand. It was money!

But what happens after that?

Nothing...

She stopped to talk with him for a while and he did not give her anything. She then left ...

I walked behind her and found her getting in her car and leaving the college.

If she gave him the money for the drugs, when does she get them?!

Will he meet her outside the university?

There is an important detail in these events: the process of delivering and receiving happens inside the university, because it is a place that raises no suspicions. In addition, the police have limited jurisdiction there, but any police informant may stop him outside and inspect him with ease. It means that he delivers his “goods” here. But how?

She has already departed.

Does the exchange take place in another day?

When and how?

This young man needs a full group of informants to keep track of his movements. I cannot do all of this alone. In addition, the guys at the DEA tried all of that already. Anyway, I am sure that the sunflowers are the signal to identify each other with. He carries flowers and his clients do the same he did not trust in anyone coming to him

with no flowers in hand. Of course, I did not try this process myself, but I asked one of the girls I knew to do so. He was leaning against the care in a lazy manner, as usual. He had two sunflowers in hand.

The girl went towards him carrying five of those flowers. She started the ridiculous conversation about her head, which was about to explode her and about her need of a good drug. He looked at her with a cool face and did not say anything. At the end, he said to her “you need to go to a doctor to treat you from your addiction. I am specializing in engineering and I am not an expert in these things.”

I was going mad, while watching this whole situation from afar. I understood through his gestures that he refused to sell to irregulars. He would only sell to those he knew. However, there is a first time for everything. Does he only sell to those who are recommended by others he knows?

After the departure of the girl, a young lad went to Ramy carrying three flowers. He took his money quickly without giving anything in return. He then left in the usual way.

What does this mean?

I told this story to my genius friend Essam Fathy. We spoke in the faculty where he teaches mathematics. This time he was listening to me with interest, then he asked me: "You said that he was carrying three flowers at the first time, and the girl had five flowers. In the second time, he was carrying two flowers and the boy had three flowers." I said: "Perhaps it was a coincidence."

He thought for a while and said: "Maybe, but the same flower symbol provokes me."

He then moved towards his library on his wheelchair and picked up a book. Its cover had a sunflower. He said: "The

sunflower is the famous symbol of Fibonacci's Sequence. The reason for this symbol is how the sunflower's petals are sequenced in such a miraculous way. Many scientists developed many equations based on the order of the petals' sequence in the sunflower."

"Excuse me ... What is Fibonacci's Sequence?"

"Fibonacci ... it is the name of the Italian scientist who described this sequence, but it goes back in origin to ancient Indian rituals. In the Sanskrit literature, it was called "the mountain of melody." It is a very important subject in mathematics and it is very complicate, for I cannot simplify it to you without equations. However, it is related to the Taw ratio and the Golden ratio. To the common man, it is enough to know that Fibonacci's Sequence is the sequence in which the number equals the total of the two previous numbers. If we

start from zero, then the third number is one ($1+0$). The fourth number is 2 ($1+1=2$). The fifth number is 3 ($2+1=3$) and so on.

I said: “I have not got the foggiest idea of how this is related to the case!”

He said with a smile: “It is a cryptographic way to recognize his customers who know Fibonacci’s Sequence. He would only trust those. When he has two flowers, the customer must have three of these flowers. If he carries eight flowers, the customer must have 13 flowers. If we even suppose that he comes carrying 89 flowers, the customer must carry 144 flowers. Your cousin was not wise, when she went to him carrying five flowers, and he had 2 flowers in that time. So, she was exposed.”

I said: “How is it done? I am talking about the delivery process.”

He said: “After taking the money, the next number of the sequence is shown. You said the had two flowers, and the customer had three. The drugs will be symbolized by the number five. This could refer to the fifth tree, or under the fifth seat, or even in the fifth closet. He whispers to his customer about these things in the moment of exchange. Undoubtedly, Ramy is the not the person who puts the drugs in these secret places. His role is just to carry the money and this is not a crime. Most likely, the customer does not get the drugs himself, but one of his friends does that, since he believes that he is being watched.”

I was confused and said: “So, how can we fool that Fibonacci’s Sequence expert?”

My friend told me: “You will send one of your young informants carrying a certain number of flowers, which Ramy will have determined in the day before. This number is tied to Fibonacci’s Sequence. When Ramy

takes the money, he will say one word about the place of the drugs. Listen carefully, this is your work as a policeman. I have only analyzed the mathematical part. You must take over the police part.

He said laughingly: “Remember to wear your usual clothes and make your hairstyle as it was before. Otherwise, they will arrest you on charges of being a homeless trespassing everywhere.”

I did not comment on these words, because my mind was elsewhere trying to device the plan and its details to catch Ramy. This needs some persistent police work, as my friend has just said.”

The Code

By Ahmed Khaled Tawfik

I feel as if it were an American action movie. I sit in the car pretending that I am not a police man, and I do not watch. My colleague, Awni, sits next to me eating a sandwich which he bought from that restaurant next to us... For him, he does not pretend anything.

The car stops in a street ... in the center of Cairo. It stops in a place where parking is prohibited, so the traffic man gets angry and comes from time to time to ask us to leave. Then he gazes at our faces and that look in Awni's eyes, shakes his head in such a way that indicates that he has understood something, and moves away. While eating mayonnaise which is scattering from his mouth, Awni says: "We look suspicious If I were these villains, I would stop this theft.... . They will send a signal for each other

indicating that the police officers are everywhere.”

I get angry and tell him: “This is the only place which allows us to see the cinema entrance.... I will be grateful if you stop talking until you finish eating this sandwich. If there is something I hated more than a man who cannot afford to stay without food for a few hours, it would be a man who speaks with a mouth full of food.”

Sipping a glass of soda, he says: “This is lunch time. If your tummy is shrinking, it is your problem, not mine. I look nervously at the watch, touch the video camera on my leg, and think that we must not miss any moment. There are two other cars stopping a few meters away. Both are full of our men. We never know what may happen. Finally, I see him coming a mile way. He puts one hand in his pocket and bites a piece of ice cream with the other hand. What a man! Despite the seriousness of what he does, he pretends

to be just a tourist enjoying his time. Here he is approaching the cinema entrance where the people start to crowd waiting for the next movie. What I remember is that it is a movie for

Steven Spielberg, and this means that the tickets will sell out within minutes. He stands there biting a piece of ice cream and looks with his eyes. I swear that his eyes have caught mine, but they did not stop.

Now, I introduce Walter Kaufman to you. It is his current name. He is an adventurer well known by the police of many countries. We have been watching him since he came to Egypt. He is as careful as a wolf, but when I see him now, I see nothing extraordinary about him. He is just one of the tourists you may meet at Cairo streets and forget immediately.

I took the camera carefully, turned on the lens and started filming him.

He is talking on the phone, standing in his place and feels anxious. I see an Egyptian man in the crowd coming close to him. They greet each other, and then the man gives him a bag. It is a sports bag and it is not like the horrible money bags which we see in cinema. Walter gives him a small piece of paper with a smile. And suddenly the vision becomes completely dark, and I raise my eyes only to find out that a van is parked next to me.

The traffic police man hurries up and gets into a fight with the driver asking him to move away. Meanwhile, our men get out of the cars and run towards the entrance of the cinema but Walter is no longer there.

The Egyptian man looks confused and tries to escape but our men surround him entirely. He takes the paper to his mouth but one of our men shouts loudly, so they managed with difficulty to hold his hand and take the paper. Walter has completely disappeared. Calling someone on my cell phone, I said to Awni,

“Don’t let the van driver leave. I am sure he works with Walter. He has received a call to block our vision. Walter is a wolf, so he easily felt our presence. I told you that we only lacked the sign “Police are in the service of the people”. “I will do that next time”, he said satirically.

At least this young man did not escape ... he will talk ... I am sure that he will talk. But the man did not talk.

After exhausting days of investigation, we did not reach anything. The young man said that he had to call (Kaufman) and give him some money to tell him the place where he hid kilograms of heroin.

The young man also said that Kaufman had easily escaped because we had intervened, and thus he could not find out the place of the drugs. Remanding the man in custody is in Kaufman's interest, because everyone working with him will not believe him ... They

will cut his throat at the least. The young man also assured that he does not know what is in the paper he took from Kaufman. Even when we told him what the paper contains, he did not understand. He said that it is probably a code and only those who sent him can solve it. He is just a courier.

“How could you be sure that he would not cheat you? Perhaps, he could take the money and ran away without doing anything”.

The young man said in pride:

“The people with whom I work are strong and no one can cheat them. This is a point. The second point is related to reputation. No one deals with a notorious drug trafficker.”

A good reputation in smuggling drugs!? We always hear about wonders throughout our life.

Repeating my questions, I started to believe that the young man was telling the truth, but not the whole truth.

So, I did what I wanted to do for a while. I went to my genius friend's house, Essam , who is known as "man of numbers."

There, he is sitting in front of the computer, drinking a cup of tea and solving a difficult equation in modern algebra.

I said to him:

"I hate to interrupt you, but I am really confused. Our experts cannot crack this code, so I need your help."

He smiled and said:

"Encrypted! That is nice, but remember that there are many codes which are difficult to crack. Most codes which intelligence agents claimed to decode in the Second World War, had been actually cracked by the help of a spy who offered them its key."

Then he saved what he was doing, and he retracted the seat next to the lamp to take a look at the paper in my hand.

I explained:

“I will not go into details. There is a drug smuggler... There is a shipment of drugs hidden somewhere.... . This message should lead to find it.”

He read the text loudly:

“ KY _ UT _ WII _ EJSG _ ZH _ TXZGH _ NX _ LS
_ WOSH ”

Then, he took the last paper and read what was written on it:

“ 4 _ 10 _ 7 _ 3 _ 5 _ 3 _ 5 _ 5 _ 2 _ 1 _ 5 _ 4 _
1 _ 5 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ 5 _ 1 _ 3 _ 5 _ 1 _ 10 _ 4 ”

I said to him:

“I did not understand anything from the first paper except that the Second World War (WWII) has a role in this matter.”

“Of course it has no role!”

Then he rubbed his head contemplating the first paper and said:

“ It is normal to encrypt your message by replacing each character with a symbol or number , for example you can symbolize (A) with (5) and (B) with (7) You can symbolize (A) with a laughing face or a star.... . These are the simplest forms of the code.”

“This is logical and easy to apply here.”

He rubbed his head and said:

“It is not that simple and I will explain why Did you read the story of “The Golden Insect” by Edgar Allan Poe? ”

“You know I do not read”

“Whatever... in the story, the hero found a similar code which led him to the treasure of the pirate He knew that the most used symbol in English was (E) Thus he decided

that the most repeated symbol in the message would be (E) whatever its shape. When three letters with (E) are repeated, it is highly probable that you mean the word (The). Thus, he was able to reach three letters and with a great effort he began to understand the whole message. Later, the scientists called the method used by this hero 'Entropic attack' which does not need a special genius. Everyone who has perseverance is able to crack a code of this kind".

Then he looked at the message and said:

"There is no letter repeated in an obvious way; this means that the 'Entropic attack' does not work alone. This man is an exceptionally intelligent one."

"Enjoyable", he said.

"The game is that you use more than one symbol in the same message. For example, (Z) does not refer to the letter (A) in every

time. It can refer to (F) one time or (L) in another time. This makes the message impossible to understand for whoever has access to it.”

“As well as who receives it!”

“That is right, so he must have a key that guides him in following the sequence of possibilities ... it is called ‘One Time Pad’, and when it falls in the hands of the enemy, it means that the code has been resolved.

Then he held the little paper and said:

“That's it Letter (A) refers to number (1) in all codes, (B) is number (2) ... and so on ... everyone knows this ... the small attached note asks you to subtract number 4 from the first letter , number 10 from the second letter and number 1 from the third letter and so on

Accordingly, you find the letters that follow the right arrangement. In this way, you know

the original letters of the message. Let's try together."

Then he held a paper and a pen to write:

"The first letter in the message is (k) and its number is 11 in alphabet... subtract 4 from it to get 7 ... the seventh letter in alphabet is (G)...Now the next letter in the message is (Y) and its number is 25 ... we will subtract 10 from it to get 15 ... the fifteenth letter in alphabet is (O) ."

I was extremely excited and shouted:

"Go means leave."

So, he continued to correct the message according to the small paper and finally he read what he had reached:

"Go to the cine WC stuff in third."

He raised his eyes towards me and said:

"This message means: go to the cinema's WC, drugs are in the third one."

“Which third one?”

He looked patiently to me saying:

“They have not changed the design of WC recently, there are three small rooms, right? ... drugs are in the third room.”

“Why didn’t they use a strict style?”

“This is a code message and these are drug smugglers. We are not taking an English exam at high school.”

I turned quickly to the phone and called Awni:

“You must check the cinema’s bathroom well, immediately. Of course, Walter put the drugs on the top of the combination as it always happens in the cinema. These are places where cleaners never check out. The important thing now is to hurry. The gang members may manage to contact him to know where the drugs are verbally.”

He laughed saying:

“This will not happen. They arrested a man in the airport; he maybe Walter Kaufman. We are going immediately to investigate the situation, but I think he fell into the trap.”

“Before going to the airport, you should search the cinema well.”

I put the headphone and turned to the door, but before leaving, I looked at “Essam” who forgot everything about the subject and continued the complicated contemplating the equations on the computer.

I said to him with a whispering voice which he will not hear for sure:

“Thank you.”

Death Case

By Gamal Soliman

One of the injured people in the bombing that happened in the center of Aleppo in the Araby neighborhood is a man who lived in building number 113 and lost everything but his memory. He leaned on a bed in the Central Hospital. When he woke up after two nights of coma , he removed his oxygen mask and his feeding tube from his vein leaving it to bleed out without caring at all. When the nurse came in, she was shocked by the scene. So she hurried out and called for the doctor who stood silently in front of the man, stared at him for a while, then asked him calmly before doing anything:

"Are you ok?"

the man looked at her with eyes full of sadness without replying , so The doctor tried to smile.

She looked very pale as she held the piece of bandage, sterilized it, then put it on the vein. she cleaned some of the scratches on his stomach and chest , and after sterilizing them she put the bandages over them. The man didn't make a move at all when she did that. He was in a state of total surrender. He had a light beard, a dense mustache ,___amazing green eyes , and he was wide shouldered . The bandages on his head covered most of his forehead. His fair-skinned chest and soft complexion didn't imply that he was strong, but his six pack stomach/ a tight belly and shaped muscles had something else to say. The man ignored the presence of the doctor. putting his hands aside passively, he looked out of the window at the street which was filled with people at that time. Despite

everything Aleppo looks great. Despite all the destruction that reached out to some of its markets, its people are still holding on to life, and they are still working with enthusiasm . The people of this city were known for their trade long time ago. The Turks and the Egyptians have known them in the past century as merchants of excellent kinds of fabrics and spices. The young city has still got its charm and strength, and refuses the usurpation of these by the tyrants.

The young man contemplated at a far yard to which he used to take his two daughters, and stand waiting for their school bus to take them to their in school the district of Riad Assaaliheen. He went on remembering the events of that dark night..

After work, he was going home at about 2 p.m., and as soon as he got into the building, before he went up the stairs to the second

floor where he lived in a flat with his wife, two daughters, mother, and younger sister, he heard the sound of a loud explosion at the back yard. He turned around to see what happened, then he went to the street ; and saw the first missile as it wiped out the back yard of the neighboring building.

He immediately threw what was in his hands, and rushed up the stairs to warn his family. But the distruction sound took him by surprise destroying the stairs, and the building he was in. screams were growing louder around him and in a matter of seconds the building collapsed. The falling of the stairs pushed the man back till he hit one of the base columns that held the building . He almost fell on his head ,but he injured his shoulder and his arm instead . He felt great pain specially in the upper part of his body, and as he tried to get out of the rappels the ceiling suddenly fell over him. One of the

rocks hit his head , and cut it open and he felt nothing afterwards.

Two days before...

" Please , you have to secure some tickets for us to leave this country. The situation is getting worse, and the traders of the black market are asking for more money every day . We need a visa to Egypt, Turkey or anywhere.

Even if we go as refugees, let's do that. Don't be stubborn."

He was busy trimming his fingernails while crossing one leg over the other in their bedroom, without paying her any attention.

She went on her knees in front of him and begged him:

" Please, I beg you. Do something .Don't just sit like that... the bombing will not stop , and

our turn will come next month or the one after. Why do you insist on this negativity.. .?

From where did you get all this cold-heartedness..!!

“Salim”... Please, for the sake of our children, your mother, and sister. Take these jewelries. Sell these, pay them “the 1000 dollars”, and lets immigrate to Egypt. My sister told me the situation is stable there. The houses are of moderate renting costs, and there is also a good chance of trading and working.”

For half an hour or more, she begged him to consider it, but it was in vain. And as soon as he finished trimming his nails, he held the newspaper and started reading it while totally ignoring her .He didn’t even look at her which made her go crazy. She went mad with anger bursting in his face and called him a cold- hearted person. So, he slapped her so

hard that her jaw broke, and she fell on the floor bleeding. She, then, stood up and left the room crying loudly as hard as she can.

His mother came in blaming him for what he has done. She cried and begged him to agree on the travelling idea .But he didn't say a word nor gave her a reply.

“What is happening here? Why does everyone want to leave this country?

Who are we leaving it to since every one is going abroad?

At least we are safe here, and no harm will come to us. Why don't they stop this repeated request? "

He slammed the door behind him and left.

A day before.. (the Accident):

" Why don't we just travel mother , and leave him here since he wants to stay?

Things are bad and you know most children left their schools no one goes to school any more, and still he insists on taking "Samaa" and "Afnan" to school although he knows that no one is there. Even the teachers don't go anymore."

"I don't know my dear .. It is your brother Salim, and you know him well .He will not leave his country. He is stubborn, and we can't force him to do something that he doesn't want to do. And I can't go anywhere without him.

I agree with you, we need to get out of this country before it gets worse, and everyone knows that the worse is yet to come., and disasters will happen no matter what. It will affect everyone with no exception, (I pray to God that he may lead you to the right way my

son) " .

"But this is stupid, mother. It is a crime and a violation of your rights, his daughters', and his wife's. I will not accept this! I have already made my arrangements....

I will travel. I got 500 thousand liras, and I will buy a visa with it to enter Egypt."

"My dear daughter, I don't know what to say, but if your brother finds out about this, he will be furious, and will not allow you to travel".

"If that is true.. I will run then, and he will never know about it tell

I am in Cairo."

"I fear something might happen to you ...if you travel alone!!"

"Mother it is either to travel or to die here; besides, I talked to Zeina and we will travel together."

"Does her family know that she is traveling too?"

"They are coming with us, so please mum come with us too."

"Frankly... I have agreed with Lina, my brother's wife, to go at noon to get Samaa and Afnan from school without telling him, and then we will travel. I just didn't tell you before, so that you don't tell him anything. Please mum everything is planned and set

The 500 thousand liras are enough for the five of us. Master Abu Saif agreed also. He doesn't mind us traveling with them, and he will handle everything. In Egypt I will work, and pay him back. He is a gentleman , and he agreed mum . So please... You have to come with us."

" No way my dear... I will die heart-broken for your brother. "

" Just wait... I will talk to him tonight. God willing, he will be convinced with the idea of traveling this time, because we don't have much time left. We must leave this country before the war reaches us."

At night:

"Salim my son, God bless you! Please listen to your mother to gain her blessing. We must leave Aleppo and Syria, and go anywhere else. The situation is getting worse every day. There is shortage in food, and the cost of everything is over the double compared to last month. The merchants are wild wolfs who just want more and are never satisfied. My dear son, the salary is no longer enough for us, and the deposit that your father left is almost over. Added to that, for over seven months now, you didn't get any money except a quarter of your salary..!

Doesn't all that alert you? My son lets immigrate. The lands of God are vast.

I know it is our country, and it is dear to our hearts, but our lives are priceless....!

Life is a precious blessing. Your daughters are still young , and you are obliged to look after them.

You are obliged to let them live their childhood unthreatened ; instead of, homelessness and poverty (may that never happen) if something bad happened to you, Who will take care of us and earn money for us but you my son ?"

"To cut it short, my mother, I am not going to travel, neither anyone of you. So, don't open/ bring up this subject again. It is over!

I will not leave Syria and run like a coward. I am not going to leave means that I am not going to leave; besides, things are calm here in Aleppo. Why do you always expect the worst?

This is how you all act misguided ,and pessimistic all the time.

Ooooo !!! I am sick and tired of all this!! "

He went out to the street checking all the people around him. The markets were full of people, the cafés full of elders and youths. He then went on a little walk to the neighbouring streets.

“Things don't look so bad as my mum and wife think. Oh God... How can I leave all this beauty and travel ..!!

Oh Aleppo .. How beautiful you are! the fairest of them all!”

'You seem absent-minded . Do you remember who you are? Do you know from where they brought you Mr....'

He didn't move his eyes from the window while she kept moving around the bed, wondering about him. She walked towards

the window, stood in front of it and gave it her back, then turned to the man: "but you didn't sa....."

Their eyes met, and the doctor was pinned to her place when she saw his fixed eyes overwhelmed with tears. The tears started to drop without moving his eyelids or eyelashes. His eyes involuntarily overflowed with tears. He continued , glued to his place, staring at the window, even when the doctor blocked his way with her fit body, he didn't move his eyes, as if he saw through her.

The doctor came closer to him "Are you ok.?"

He did not respond. She held his hands to check his pulse then put her stethoscope on his chest. His breathing rate went down. So she ran screaming, and calling out the nurses "bring the cardiac shock device Quicklyyyy!! Nisrine, Hind ,Taghreeeeeeeed"

He started to turn blue. The place of the feeding tube shrank turning into dark blue, and his pressure started to drop very fast.

She pulled his legs down, and put him to bed then she gave his heart a shock using the cardiac shock device. His pulse did not respond..! So, she quickly recharged the device using a higher voltage and shocked him again! But no response!! . So she recharged it for a third time with maximum voltage.. then she shocked him ,but there was no response at all..!! .She kept shocking him till his skin burned ,and the peeping sound of the device was telling her there is no use for all that .The pulse will never Respond !!.

He went into a coma ...

Hearing weird sounds..

Not knowing whether these were of monsters or devils...

But one of them was familiar...

"Saliiiiim...."

Come!... heeeree...

Don't be afraid ...

Escape... run..

Run for your life...

Mumbling :

My mother...my sister..Lina

...Samaa...Afnan...

Mum...

Sister...

Samaa...Dad..!

In seconds... his whole life passed in front of his eyes, and he remembered his childhood days....

The day his father died and his uncle took him to be raised in his grandfather's house...

The day his grandfather died...

The day his mum was fired from her work
.....

The day his uncle died....

The day he married Lina....His beloved and
college friend..

The day in which his twin daughters were
born..Samaa..and Afnan.

He closed his eyes to rest...He couldn't bare
the shock....

The siren of the device attached to his finger
blared announcing the stopping of his
heart..

**" The patient has passed away
doctor "**

The Diagnosis of the case 709 Aleppo
University Hospital:

Name/ Salim Hassan Almaeluf Sadqi.

Age/ 35 years.

The cause of death/

1- A severe and sudden drop in blood circulation.

2- The stopping of respiratory and kidney functions.

The Arab Republic of Egypt

Cairo- 6th of October City

2016

Three women and two girls sat down in the lobby of a modest hotel looking exhausted and tired of traveling. Zahraa went to the receptionist to complete the paper work required for entry.

There... in one of the corners of the hall, was a big flat television with a huge screen... it displayed images of the victims of last night's bombing.

The old lady listened to the reporter speaking with a sound full of grief:

"An official has stated to the Syrian TV. that yesterday's bombing in Aleppo, which killed over 70 people and injured 300 more, accidentally took place.

And there is no truth in what some people claimed that there were planes bombing them with highly explosive parachuted bombs.

The official also pointed out that all the injured people were received by Aleppo hospitals and its branches. The conditions of the injured are around severe and extremely severe. On the other hand the bombing, which occurred in "Idlib" and "Al Ruqqa" after half an hour from the one in Aleppo, caused no injuries.

The official also abstained from affirming on any new decisions concerning the families of the victims whether killed or injured.

Nour

By: Gamal Soliman

She went out to watch the sunlight from her balcony that overlooked the street. In her state of deep nostalgia, she stretched her arm to touch the fence he put before leaving and the two sides of the drying rack.

Three months have passed and she never heard from him. He never even emailed her. She doesn't know where he is or what he is doing now.

All that she knows is that he traveled to Australia after the door to immigration opened; the door that has been shut for Arabs and especially Egyptians for ten years.

Free immigrations were allowed from Lebanon and Iraq, but the Australian embassy in Cairo rejected all the immigration requests and advised people to transfer their requests to the embassy of New Zealand.

New Zealand is not very far from Australia, but it's very cold and doesn't have any significant activities except for agriculture, sheep herding, some dairy factories, and leather tanneries.

She received the last message from him last July. Today is the end of September and she still hasn't heard from him. She can't help but repeat the same question in her mind: "Why did he travel?"

She saw no reason for his traveling, although he had to put an end to his failure in finding a job, whether suitable or unsuitable, which would provide him with enough money to start a family.

She held the edge of the drying rack and ran her hand over the ropes, as if she saw him in those ropes.

She never forgot that it was him who brought the drying rack and the ropes before he left when his uncle sent them to him and told him

that the drying rack had fallen and a part of the balcony wall had fallen apart as well. He asked him to bring one of the workers to install a new drying rack and fix it firmly to the wall with cement and gypsum to make sure it wouldn't fall again.

In spite of its simplicity, the whole thing was dangerous because the rack may fall on the head of a passerby and cause an injury or even death, just like what happened last time.

Nour, her father's only child, never knew any man except for her cousin Malek, and that was more than enough for her. Nour has been attached to Malek ever since she was a child. He used to come to their house and play with her. When she was four years old, he was in his third year in primary school.

He is about seven years older and was like a brother to her until she turned fourteen.

Their relationship developed until she started to feel shy and couldn't bear up with his annoying sense of humor.

Malek couldn't understand that his cousin, Nour, was no longer that little girl that he used to spoil, which annoyed her. And when he felt that she changed, he did too, and stopped visiting them as often as before. She suffered, missed him, and cried a lot. But she never told him about her feelings, so he traveled without telling her.

He sent the first message to his uncle two months after his departure, telling him that things were not as easy as he thought they were. He never mentioned her in that message, which pained her. But she was happy that he was fine.

Two months later, he mentioned her in a new message, and she felt very happy and decided to reply to him. They kept exchanging messages. He told her that he

missed her a lot, and she felt like she was over the moon. Later, he confessed his love for her and decided to come back to Egypt. But suddenly, he stopped sending messages for two months.

Tension started to build up as the situation in Egypt was unstable and everyone talked about the beginning of a revolution.

Violent actions took place in Tahrir Square, which was near to where they lived.

She sent him the updates. And it was surprising for her to receive a message from him saying that he booked a flight for the following day. She was very happy, but she was also aware of the fact that it wasn't safe for him to come back.

Tahrir Square was swarming with revolutionaries and the police had no mercy. Today is supposed to be the day of his arrival, and the streets were blocked. This made it

difficult for her to go and meet him at the airport.

Everyone was trapped in his house and never went out unless it was extremely necessary. The streets around them were packed with rebels as if houses were blown inside out.

Fear crept to her heart and made her shiver more and more with growing anxiety. Her pulse raced and her heartbeat was so erratic that it actually hurt.

She hurried to watch the news, turned the TV on and stood still in front of the crowds that swept the streets in Tahrir Square.

Nothing could stop the sound of anger or the sound of bullets that echoed through the TV.

She saw clouds of smoke flying towards the sky carrying the souls of people who had been run over or choked to death.

The whole scene was bloody and painful. Her breaths slowed down as she watched the news:

There has been news on victims of the clashes between police officers and revolutionaries in Mohamed Mahmoud Street, and the bodies haven't been identified yet.

The bodies are still in the morgue.

Nour cried hard and felt that something bad might have happened to him.

She collapsed and could no longer do anything..

And suddenly...

The doorbell rang...

And it was Malek...

Parting

By Gamal Soliman

She sat holding her notebook and her pen
tightly,

Tightening her grip too much it occurs to me
that it would break,

She kept resisting her desire to sob, shaking
as if she were a house facing a forceful
earthquake hitting it violently.

She calmed down a bit and wrote:

"I am too young, daddy, to endure these
burning pains.

My lens sees no end to the bitter days;

The coming of joy, or not, means nothing to
me;

All I want is for my heart to be relieved from
all this hurtful sadness.

I want to get rid of all these pains; happiness is superfluous,

All I want is a glimpse of relief.

I demand a truce with grief. Is this too much to ask, daddy?

Why did you have to go and leave me behind, daddy?

Why not take me with you instead of leaving me, here, alone facing my sorrows after you were gone?

Why leave me behind grappling with a death that never comes; alive but constantly dying?

Does it happen that a human being be spent by grief? I thought it strange till I experienced its reality.

You left me out of grief over my mother's death.

And here I am, daddy, warring with my own survival to join you both.

There is not a place left for me in this life after the death of you both." Then she embraced her parents' picture sobbing in an explosion of tears. She was weighed down by a sadness that choked her chest and burnt her heart.

Her mind stopped working, and she was haunted by passions; preyed upon by hurt, and the self within her abhorred all;

Even her books that kept her a prisoner in her room, reading, for days and months, nonchalant about what goes on around her.

The accursed disease devoured her mother, and her father died grieving his lifetime mate.

She slept for a few hours, and then she woke up feeling as if a hammer shattered her head.

Her mind was melted by the severe pain, unable to endure the headache. She felt as if her head was split, and thus she searched her bag for some sedatives and took some.

She sought a hot cup of tea remembering the mercy of Allah, weeping violently until she calmed down.

She stood to pray, and she kept on praying and crying till she was overcome by drowsiness, and she slept in peace.

Malek

By Gamal Soliman

"**Ascetic** in what will come
forgetting what has passed"

The beginning ..

"Malek"...

An ambitious young man who wished to have the whole world, and to be the richest person on earth . **His dreams of being wealthy was over exaggerated .**

He dreamed **to own half or even more of the earth goods** , but his soul was filled with goodness' love, and his dream was to have **all this wealth to devote it to the service of the needy** ...

He dreamed of a world without anyone
being poor in it...

What a beautiful dream !

"Malek...."

As he grows year after year his dream grows
with him ...

That dream never left his mind .He longed
for it, and he thought it was so close to
become a reality .

"One day it will rain gold for him ,and
will not for anyone else"

He used to secretly speak with himself ,and
his senses were filled with his dream ...
dominating his mind in an increasing rate
day after day.

"Malek" wanted to see his dream come true without exerting any effort to achieve it for a long time until he became bored .

He found out /discovered that his **dream** was nothing except a big illusion, and the sky would **never** rain gold because it never did.

He **then started** to forget his dream till he forgot it entirely/ **completely forgot about it** .

He **got used to** his life **then** he began to **feel contented after being convinced** that he would not **gain anything from this** world except his **fortune / that he wouldn't get**

anything from this world but for the things that was written for him to have.

His feeling of satisfaction /contentment began to increase ,and he realised that his over exaggerated dream was wrong /he was wrong in exaggerating in his dream .

He should /must start to think as rational people do.

He thought about how to begin his life with what he have without caring about what he is losing , and what he is gaining / what he will lose and gain , but that wouldn't stop him from his beautiful dreams / sensational dreams .

He worked hard , as he did not want to kill his inner ambition . His search for

money/**wealth** was changed to something else / **transformed to something else** .

(It was something **supreme/ more worthy**, and that **is the thing** he realized lately ./ **which made him finally realise that it is Something more worthy / elevated / virtuous than his search for money/wealth**)

He found out **that only** one thing could give him **the** happiness he wished **for** .

It is "Love" ...

He **believed** that love **doesn't** come by chance as some people **claim** , but it was a result of work and effort/ (**it comes out / it is the fruit**)of **hard work** , and most **importantly of all** a strong desire .

Malek kept looking for his fortune till he got tired of searching , and his hopes started to fade away. When that happened he calmed himself down , and got his hopes back up then started to search again with more determination . Until finally he met his love /the person he was looking for .

A beautiful girl from a good family with a lovely face / (gentle /kind /sweet) looking , a charming voice , and good manners/ graciousness .

He was owned by her love till his heart overflowed with it, and he was filled with joy to the extent that he thought that he owns the world .

He wanted to capture/ keep these feelings in his heart ,and to never let it leave it . (He was content in his love to her ,and he found inner peace that touched his soul / He was filled with (calmness /serenity /vividness /light heartedness) that stayed with him even in his slumber). He loved her with his heart , left his mind out , and crossed all the limits/ lines for her . He didn't think of anything but of the ways to please her .

The tale.....

Abeer was the one to start getting closer to him .

He never dealt with women since his birth / Since birth dealing with females was never

one of his treats . His mother had the biggest influence in his personality . She did not accept any kind of rudeness , and modesty was her Strict educational constitution / code with which (her only son was raised . So he could not look left or right . / she controlled her only son , so he couldn't look at any girl good or bad) . It was a law that he could not cross no matter how much the temptation was strong (و علا صوتها في زعيق) (her voice came higher than it in his mind with a strong scary shout / with a screaming shout . He did not dare to speak to any girl without any necessary/clear reason that can show any absurdity or

silliness no matter how much her beauty was overwhelming /attracting . Not because he was a stammerer who did not know (the art of speech / how to speak) but it was because he was a man of high manners more than anything else .

She attracted his attention in lots of occasions , but whenever she passed in front of his house , he avoided looking at her . When Abeer started to get closer to him , he felt that destiny/fate rewarded him for respecting and following his mother's code. It wasn't long before his heart was filled with her love , and when he realised

that he was her first , he became more attached to her . Nevertheless He was trying to stop himself from thinking about her while she was dreaming of him . He could not prevent himself from her ,and (released his heart / let his heart go / unleashed his feelings/ set his heart free.) His love overflowed as a river which had been locked in a pot, and then allowed to flow. Their phones didn't leave their hands as they talked for hours . It was a waterfall of love without an end , and a feeling of guilt was shadowing it . Because they are not allowed to be this close without any official engagement to bless it ,they planned /agreed to marry

because it was the only solution for their relationship to continue .

They started to plan for their first meeting , and they wanted to do it in (a legal / an official/ a lawful /a rightful) way.

But the beginning was a "lie". They would say that they did not know each other, and that their first meeting is to start opening the subject of marriage to talk about the basic things in order not to put their parents in a position of awkwardness that would make them feel upset .

They were planning for their future , and their life together then unfortunately a little

dispute **happened/ started** . She did not **like the country side** where he was born ,and she felt agitated **whenever** he **talked** about his return to the village **/his hometown** , to his father's house in which he grew up , and to his **uncles'** house **which he went to** after his father's death .

He did his best to persuade her that his mother was waiting **for** her son , and his bride to settle down there **with her** to make her feel **comfortable** after waiting **/ to make her heart full of joy after the long wait/ to warm her heart after all this wait** .They could work there and achieve everything . **They have a** land and **a** large project **/ business** about which his uncle

had spoken as he wanted Malek to help him with it as he considered him a dependable person , and the son that he never had from his wife . But Malek failed , he tried in different ways to persuade Abeer , but their talk stopped there every time without any result .

This wish started to fade gradually till he listened to her , accepted her wish to live in the city , and to visit his mother and uncles from time to time. He let go of his dream to be part of the business then the harmony returned between them after he complied to her requests. They started planning for everything related to their new life .

How would the house be and the boys /
children? what would their names be ? but
how would/**can** she stay alone in the
house/**at home** when he **goes** to work ?
This thing got her attention , and she could
not bear the idea . He even felt her
discomfort about the idea .

She asked /**wanted** him to buy **the** house
beside the house of her father / **next to her**
father's which was for sale .This house was
very expensive in **a high class area** , and (
no matter how much he saves he won't
have enough to buy it /
he wouldn't be able to afford it no matter
how much he saves) .

She **then** started exhausting him **with** her demands **for things he could never afford, but she wants them** , so he borrows money to be able to buy them.

She **made him bare the unbearable** ,even though she **knows how limited his financials are** , and he was not hiding that he did not have much money .

Gradually , she was suffocating / **she started to suffocate** him by her endless demands . **Doubt got a hold of him** , and the gap between them started to widen.

Is she really the person whom he loved ? **But** his heart was **filled and overflowing** with her love . She told him about **every detail in** her

life honestly which shocked him ,and was a reason for his attachment to her . He decided to be with her forever(through all the difficulties/ no matter what) .

Debts ...

it was okay he will borrow money / it is ok he will be in debt for them to (be / stay) together . His heart was filled with her love ,and it dominated his own existence .

The engagement was done with the blessing of their parents .

Love this unique thing which can give hope and illuminate a heart no matter how much it sank into the darkness . That was the essence of his feelings , Abeer was

everything **and more** to Malek . He continued to **fill her heart with his** love till she **got** bored. The shock was that he would not/ **couldn't /could never** imagine that Abeer **who** loved **every detail / everything** about him ; **his stories , his funny side , his crazy one , everything ,**and she even made her heart a home for him instead of **the one in the country side**, would **someday** feel bored of him and his talk . **Talking with him became heavy on her heart (كليل الغياب) .** That was what happened ; **she got used to him**, and this was the **ugly side / downside /disease** of love "**to get used to someone** "

Gradually, she began to evade/avoid /ignore his telephone /phone calls .He knew that , and started to suffer without any admonition/ blaming her

Days were passing ,and their relationship began to break down/ Days passed by ,and the gap between them widened (, and/ while) he suffered more .

"Does she love me no more?" he spoke to himself . He could not even bear to think about that . He met her ,and faced her with his doubts .She denied at first ,then she stopped talking .

Slowly / Gradually , she began/ started to stay silent when asked. She wanted him to

believe his doubts/intuition , but he didn't believe ,and ended the conversation .

He began to ask her again/ He asked her again , and she asserted his doubts till the fateful / decisive moment came:

she said "I don't feel that I love you anymore"

The shock was so strong .He felt as if something heavy were put on his chest ,and he couldn't even breathe / he choked . His heart (refused to cry / became filled with tears that refused to come out). He resisted his weakness ,and he retracted / left in silence/ without saying a word .He

felt pain/**He was in anguish** for many days.
He did not make any mistake !
A strange feeling of comfort **/peace**
/contentment started to overflow **/overflow**
in his heart .He felt that God wanted to test
him with this pain ,and God would redeem
him by **a better thing** for all of that , so he
became content with what he have .

The End

Martha

By Gamal Soliman

my beloved, i do not know the reason
behind you coming to me that night.

i was ready to leave , but something caught
my hand and paralyzed my feet on the
ground .

a young thief stole my bag and ran away.
not daring to move, i did not chase him to
return my bag as if i were a disabled person.

here i am Martha, a daughter of the abbey.
i stand stunningly, observing the sky and the
train station, staring at the passengers who
leave. “did I find myself among them” ?

i am looking to recognize your face among
the people coming. no one is like us in this
place.

i am swaying, and i almost fell. at this moment, an old woman is holding my hand. she looks like your mother "Gozavialida". this was a polite old woman whose temper completely changed when she knew our plan.

Oh, "martha"

i missed the taste of bread that your mother usually baked. i also missed the mill beside which i met you for the first time. you were carrying a load of wheat, and a load of barley that were heavier than your weight and you were like an ant carrying two grains of rice and disappeared under them. i had pity and I carried the flour sacks instead of you and you were very shy at that moment.

you thanked me and invited me to visit your house.

although you knew that i was a Muslim Arab man , you did not eliminate me .

you said , 'laroca told the people that he lived with them that he was of Arab origin .'

you said , ' i wanted to know arabs closely. '

- i lagged and asked you, ' do you love lyrics? '

- you said, ' he is the man of my dreams. '

- i said, ' But you are not the girl of his dress. '

- you asked me, 'how do you know that? '

-i said, 'you do not look like Marian. '

-you asked me, ' do you know Marian? '

- i asked you, ' have you ever seen laroca before? '

the flour sacks are too heavy ,martha . how do you walk all this distance carrying them?

they are not so heavy but you are like old man..

i laugh and sway because of the weight of the flour sacks.

tell me about lorca

what do you want to know about him?

as, why especially lorca? he was known as homosexual person, of course , i do not believe in that . but you were free to choose some one who would not bring shame on you.

you do not understand . this ' gay' as people called him sacrificed himself and was killed for his beloved and his freedom.

notional rebels executed him because his father was feudalism. he was poor than common people .

mmm, you are right . also his execution scene was heroic . he was nor being against rebels or intimidating them. he blamed them for depriving him for the freedom which he called for .

you know, i feel that he and I are alike . two years old, I was a late bloomer walking and talking . my family thought that i was unwell. i first did it , when i was four. this is a big similarity between him and me . is that enough?

although we are alike , he was unique . he was poet , writer and singer. he used to sing from his own folk poems and lyrics.

you know ! i like piano too but I cannot play it . if I try to do it i feel that my fingers become twisted and my body trembles which things make me cannot play and write well.

whenever i looked at my watch, i felt that its hands were telling me it is a suitable time to go to you.

i spent a lot of time when i was waiting for you to get out. i knew that you needed some pieces of wood so i hopped you getting out to search for some then i could see you.

it was too late when i was waiting for you to get out. the weather was unusually warm and you wouldn't need some wood this night. would you get out martha?

i still think our first words about lorca and marian .

how could I love you? while i was not being free and my heart is not mine .

i always think about half of line of the poem before Lorca's heart was penetrated by bullets. i am trying to think of it by this way now but i cannot

how could I love you when I know that you will never be mine ?! the way is very long and it seems that it is impossible .

i love you and i know that very well .

i do not know how you will understand .

to be mine , you should first love me wish to complete our life together .

this means that you will leave everything behind you .

before that you will bet upon me , leave the old "ghosfelda" ,the monk "minas" ,the abbey , and serving old people in Lorca house .

what about your cousin "serkho" ? do you love him? will you marry him?

those are all the questions rage i am about to lost my mind.

I wonder how I could make you love me .
school days are about to end soon and i will
not stay for long in granada .
i have a very short time to win your heart .
well .. it seems that i will stay here outside
your home .
i am waiting for you "martha" to get out for
minutes only.

The Return of Light

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

“He realized that there was a higher power; a source for all powers. It grants the tranquility of heart and the light of the eye”.

He remembered the past events of his life, as if everything had happened yesterday. He was in a small room in a small hospital. It sounded quiet and appeared beautiful. However, its beauty was something only healthy people see. He, on the other hand, saw only the beauty of wellness on the faces of those who visit him.

As he wandered through the memories of the past, he wished he were a boy as he was, running on the soil of the village. Yes... In this way, he could restore his courage in enduring the diseases; courage that he gains from the nature of his age and from the

faith-born reassurance that never left his mother's pure white rectangle face, as she touched gently his cheek with her palm in a helpless smile, saying:

– "Don't be afraid, my son...Don't be afraid. My heart believes that Allah will heal you."

At that time, he was able to feel tranquil by his mother. Today, however, .. at his present time.. at that moment where he lies in a beautiful hospital on a small bed, he is helpless.. helpless.. completely.. incapable of finding reassurance in his own heart nor in the heart of the great doctor, who oversees the treatment of his eye after its surgery.

He started asking himself after closing his other eye and swimming in the dark: "I wonder if my mother were present, would her heart bring me tranquility?"

He sighed, moved restlessly in the bed and held a morning newspaper to read the

big headlines and to know how the world was going on. The letters looked like the legs of an octopus which were twisted and unclear, so he felt pain. He started to remember a big accident that had happened to the same eye when he was a boy, before he had learned and become quite a good internal physician.

They were two teams of boys playing a dangerous game; a game of war. Their weapons were long-corn firewood, and their battlefield was in front of the houses. The doctor was the leader of his team. He plucked up his courage and his enthusiasm drove him to charge, and the boys were behind him. The firewood sticks were bound forward as if they were spearing lances. The enemy became afraid, and their leader insisted on spearing him. The strike hit the spot.. Where? In his same eye because of which he lies in hospital today, and a renowned doctor oversees its treatment.

The sick doctor smiled when he remembered that the war had ended putting their weapons down. Next day, his mother saw his eye as if it were a cup filled with blood. She was very worried about eye illnesses. Once she delivered him to a low-level doctor who was treating all the diseases in the medical center, she submitted herself to the will of Allah who created the disease and the medicine. He could feel tranquil about everything in that day, when he saw tranquility on her face, and when her heart and facial features spread peace.

He moved restlessly, sighed and asked himself: “if my mother were present, would I be able to feel tranquil by her heart?” The answer came to him after the muffled ringing, which a bell was sending in one of the corridors, ended. The answer was no.

He felt sorry, nodded his head, closed his other eye and imagined in a world of

silence and darkness how far he is from tranquility. The thoughts came one after the other in his head. When he remembered how far he was, he remembered the rockets that were launched into space, the planets that became a destination, orbits, stars, the universe: the wondrous universe that aroused science and shook the scientists' faith. Faith, which he was looking for now, to find reassurance that light will return to his eye, and it will not be like a closed window in the façade of a house.

He sighed because this thing that exists inside hearts is a heavenly gift from a divine Hand that gave all the powers: magnetism, gravity, and the system of orbits. This divine Hand has the ability to give tranquility of heart and sight. Wearing a plastic smile, the nurse came in asking:

-Do you want anything, doctor?

-He took his breath and looked for a long time and said:

-Yes.

- Yes? I am at your service.

-Sit down for a little bit. Do you have a mother?

- No, she nodded.

-She is dead?

- Two months after giving birth to me.

-Who did take care of you when you were sick?

- No one.. But I am not afraid of illness or death at this time.

- Why?

-Because when my stepmother had married my father, I felt that there was neither a father nor a guardian nor a supporter except He..(She pointed to the sky).

- "Excuse me, I have to go the bell is ringing."

"If we feel that we need something, we'll feel its existence," the doctor thought. "I need you, O Allah!", he sighed and said in a great shame.

But why was he ashamed?

He was secretly making fun of some patients who were trying to resist their sickness with certainty in Allah, regardless of medicine's perfect view. He remembered one of his patients suffering from renal failure. He was overseeing his treatment, and one day he warned of serious complications if he did not follow the determined therapeutic procedure. "The decision is not yours," the patient replied and smiled with his pale face.

Although the doctor understood what he meant, he neglected it and closed his eyes without thinking about anything except the material laws.

"We feel the existence of everything we need, and we all need Allah," he muttered again after opening his other eye. Then, "no one needs you like I do, O Allah!", he continued with tears filling his sound eye.

He was no longer aware of anything, but he was in a spacious place where boys were playing the game of war ...in a way that was completely as poor as adults. There was a boy whose eye was wounded by a stick, and a woman with a white and rectangular face smiling after she took him to a non-native doctor who injected the patients of gallbladder disease with the same injections that he gave to heart patients.

He was dreaming...

He woke up at sound of a hand knocking gently on the door. He opened one eye and saw three persons and the ophthalmologist who entered feeling

pompous and presumptuous under the cover of science. He asked him in a muffled concern:

- "Hey.. how are you today?" .
- How I feel?... All what I feel is that light floods my heart. He answered with a smile in a semi-teasing voice:
- I hope that it moves up .. to your eyes.
- By the will of Allah.

After three weeks, the doctor raises the cover, and the doctor cried, the sick doctor not the treating physician. He sighed and shouted saying:

"Because that thing which exists inside hearts is a heavenly grant".

"Doctor .. doctor ... I see your face with my sick eyes.. no ..it is not your face."

He said this with a feverish tone of joy, sadness, laughter and crying ...

No... It's not your face.. but my mother's affectionate and reassuring face .. no ... it's the face of certainty .. it's God's face.

This is Happiness

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

He was extremely happy, in spite of being worried, while he was sitting far away from the living room, looking at the bedroom door, holding his breath, and waiting from time to time for the door to open to reveal the face of a woman uttering one word to him; the one word that he was waiting for about fifteen years.

The locked room fell in a deep silence, so Mahmoud laid down on a sofa near the window amusing himself by watching the dark alley. He was lost in his thoughts remembering some old and recent incidents, but in a few seconds, he got interrupted by the sound of a rooster on some roof, followed by the clock's clicking announcing it was three in the morning. He sighed and turned towards the door. No sooner than his eyes fell on the door that he heard a sob

accompanied by a beat from his heart, and then there was silence. Afterwards, the door opened revealing a smiley face of a woman calling for him in a whispering, happy, prolonged, and charming voice, saying: "Mahmoud, congratulations! It is a boy. Think of a new and nice name."

She closed the door and left him to his imagination. He began remembering his favorite place and people. Tears of joy and sorrow sparkled in his eyes when he recalled the home he left more than a year ago before coming to Damanhur to work at a cotton gin. At that time, he was thirty-nine years old, carefree and always healthy. Back then, he owned a two-feddan-piece of land, located between two massive farms belonging to two feudal lords. On that piece of land, he built a brick house which he shared with his father and young brothers. The family of this young farmer lived between these two massive

farms and its rich inhabitants as a reminder of the remorseful pangs of conscience.

Yes, he was lost in remembering all of this when the door opened again revealing the smiley fresh face of the same woman saying:

"Come on in to see your son", mumbling on her way out: "As for me, my work, here, is done."

The father kissed a face for which he had been waiting for fifteen years; a tiny, rounded face, resembling a nickel, screaming unconsciously. Then, he raised his face to his wife to see happiness brighten up her pale face. He sat down on a chair next to her bed and asked joyfully:

"What do you want to name our newborn, Zainab?"

He could see some mysterious meanings in display upon her face which he could not pin down. Then, she said: "We shall name him..

ummm, name him.. ummm, what shall we name him? We shall name him Adel!”

Her husband, then, exploded in laughter, while she was trying to control her laughter because it pained her face. The newborn baby was seized by a crying fit, and a contradictory feeling overwhelmed the place, but one could detect happiness in its surroundings. A moment passed, and then the husband said: “If we were there; if we were destined to have this beautiful baby there and named him Adel. If we did that, what happened to Hassan Aboul Gheit would have happened to us, too.” Then, he laughed.

And because his wife could not remember, she inquired: “What happened to Hassan Aboul Gheit?”

“He worked for the pasha who owned the southern estate. He was his mother's only child, so he was exempted from military service because of her, she quickly arranged

for his marriage, and asked God to endow him with a baby boy. God answered her supplication. She was so happy she named her grandson after the pasha's son, Adel. One morning, she met the pasha's son, got in the way of his horse, and told him the news. She was looking directly at him and when she was finished, she saw Adel bey groping his pockets, and thought he would give her a gift for naming the baby after him; five pounds at least. But she was surprised that he kicked her by his feet and she fell to the ground while he led his horse away," he answered.

Then the father stopped talking. The baby stared at the roof while his mother watched him, as if he was contemplating this new life. It was quiet, and then the mother said:

"We have left it all to them, yes, if only they get enough. Our land was the one located between the estate of Adel bey's father and the northern estate. It is God's will, Mahmoud, if the owner of the northern

estate did not sell a piece of his land to Adel bey's father, our land would not have gotten in the middle of all of this and..."

she was suffocated by her tears when she remembered her homeland, the fields that witnessed the happiest days of her youth, meeting Mahmoud during working hours, and the days when they fell in innocent love before marriage. Then, she remembered their last nights before immigration while her husband said:

"Are you sad, Zainab? Do not be sad ... we have lived there for fifteen years after we got married, asking God for offspring. Only when we moved to Damanhur that God granted us our wish. Still ...

He fell silent and sighed, then kissed his baby and looked at his wife saying:

"We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. Today, we have heard the bookkeeper of the gin uttering words with

the effect of balm on souls. I heard him talking about land reforms and how lands would be distributed among farmers. This reminded me of our home, Zainab, and of the land which Adel bey's father forced us to sell. Is it not possible that all this would come true soon?"

Then his wife said in a somehow reproachful tone:

"We would have lived there, if you had not been so stubborn, Mahmoud!"

He responded angrily:

"Stubborn? Would it have been manly of me to surrender to his unjust demands without the least resistance? He could have given me, in exchange of my piece of land, another at the margins of his estate. He was harassing me. In fact, he didn't want me, in particular, there, while my father and brothers remained untouched. You know the reason, Zainab; it is because I commented on several

events on the incident of the old, poor mother of Hassan Aboul Gheit, stating, in many places, that if he had had one understanding bone in his body, he would have been pleased that people name their newborns after him. But Adel bey's arrogance and density made him too proud to allow Hassan Aboul Gheit to name his son after him. This is why he kicked the old woman by his feet. When I met Adel bey, he asked me about the incident. Before I answered, I looked one of his followers in the eyes and instantly knew that he witnessed what I said. For a man like me, I had to admit it.”

Mahmoud fell silent, headed towards the window, picked a clay pot of cool water, and drank. Then, he came back and said with a sad tone: “And you know the rest of the story.”

Meanwhile, he suddenly laughed and said:

“Why do we grieve? God has given us a boy after years of deprivation. Listen, Zainab, listen to me, girl. Isn't it possible for this child to be a doctor, an engineer, an officer, or a great person of any sort? The world has changed. Take my word for it, for the bookkeeper keeps saying that each day.”

His wife sighed, turned on her side, and said to him:

“And it is possible that we could go back to our hometown with our son. If only my mother could lay eyes on him! She would immediately recover from her illness.”

The children of the small house, where the baby was born, were celebrating his birth. The house was filled with candles, ululations, and hustle when someone knocked on the door asking:

“Is Mahmoud Aboul Gheit in?”

A young child answered raising the candle in the face of the door knocker:

“Yes, he is in.”

The father went out to see what was happening, and he found himself standing face to face with his younger brother. Longing spread all over his face. When he inquired about what was happening, he knew that great things had happened in his village; and that the revolution had made true what the bookkeeper talked about. Then, Mahmoud asked:

“And what do you need from me?”

“You should come back to our village; you will get five feddans in celebration of the revolution,” answered his brother.

Mahmoud encircled his head in his hands as if he was waking up from a coma, and he said:

“Five feddans from the lands of Adel bey and the pasha's? Is this not happening too fast?”

Oh boy, I will go back with a boy whose name I may choose as I wish without fearing a kick from his feet. I swear this is a great thing!”

He quieted, then he raised his voice asking:

“What month are we, boys?”

The boys, who attended school, answered unanimously:

“It is July, uncle Mahmoud.”

He hummed as if he did not know, and when all had left, they decided to leave for his hometown as soon as possible.

The sun was about to set when Mahmoud got off the train with his wife and his son. A kilometer away, his village's buildings awaited. The family turned their gaze all around them as if they were born anew. The new born baby was welcomed, kissed, and loved by all relatives on his mother's and father's sides. They were all so overjoyed they could not sleep.

The next morning the grandfather enthusiastically inquired about the baby's health, and the father replied: "You have reminded me, dad. I forgot to register the baby's birth in the official books when we were in Damanhur, so I would go to register him here where his father's and grandfather's births were registered before him."

In an hour, the registrar was opening his huge books to write the name of the new baby: Adel Mahmoud Aboul Gheit. The registrar gave the baby's father a meaningful look reminding him of the old woman's incident. Mahmoud smiled at him joyfully, and said: "Don't forget, our respectable registrar, I will own five feddans within this month. Salaam."

Money and children! This is happiness.

A Candle on the Way

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

I noticed that you had a confusing question before we left, dear **lady**, but I did not want to answer it. I gave you the chance to accuse me of extra sensitivity .The confusing question **on your face** that **night** was "why does **he** look so melancholic although **he** lived **so long, got what he aspired to**, did **his** duties, and saw his twenty-five-year old grandchild, who is me?"

I could have **verbally** told you all that I am writing now before I returned to my work place in Alexandria, leaving you in Cairo. But many people, including me, ~~prefer~~ **know well how to** explain their problems **in the absence of those** ~~to whom~~ **who** they ask them for a solution ~~without being face-to-face to them~~ . **This is because my intuition**

~~could not help me and~~ the matter ~~belongs not only to me but also to you as long as~~ **is not a one-man deal; rather, it is about both of us since** we are on the path **which will** definitely ~~leading~~ **lead** us to a shared married life .

I lived with my grandpa in a little dwelling in a quiet suburb ten years ago .I still remember the first day ~~in which~~ **when** I entered his home ,followed by a man carrying my large luggage when I was about fourteen years old.It was in late summer in the afternoon .My grandfather was lying ~~in~~ **on** a ~~beanbag~~ **high cloth** chair in a narrow strip-shaped garden in front of **the stairs of** Selamilk ~~ladder~~.He grinned at me ~~a smile filling~~ **showing the wrinkles on his cheek** ~~his cheek with wrinkles,~~ and ~~drew me to him~~ **grabbed me,** so I felt his **trembling** hands ~~trembling~~ as well as his quick **breaths** ~~breathings~~ tackling my face .He said to me "There you are ,son,you came back to the

father of the whole family ...I am ~~the parent tree~~ **the origin of the family tree** and ~~the shadow despite of impairment.~~ **my shadow, in spite of my weakness, is the thickest compared to that of others"** Then ,he called ~~the~~ **an** old maid doing the housework ,and told her to lead me to the room which he **had** prepared for me to see what he made for me .~~Although of~~ **Despite of** ~~all the facilities of rest~~ **all the necessary amenities** ,I had been weeping **all night** ,lighting the lamp and turning it off in my room ~~the whole night~~ .And there was a stray butterfly hovering over the lamp whenever I turn it on .I was contemplating its confusion with tearful eyes , and my grandfather's cough was running right through my ears from the other room .

I never ~~figured~~ **imagined** that this man would capture my heart and ~~connect~~ **bind** my life ~~with~~ **to** his in such a **this** way. In the following morning ,he put up his

clothes, took his cane, and held my hand, saying tenderly and cheerfully: "come with your grandpa to ~~have a walk~~ in a picnic, son". While walking, he kept telling me about his youth memories **which sound** similar to what I read in history books. Little by little, he told me ~~the reason behind having~~ **why he got my** custody ~~of me~~. I acquitted myself of all the accusations ~~that~~ he made against me although some of them were true. **Definitely Of course**, he ~~learned~~ **was informed** about them from my father who got married **a long time ago** to another woman **with whom he got children whom whom I tried to love as much as I could.** ~~a long time ago~~. ~~And I had step brothers whom I tried to love as much as I could.~~

Dear, I do not tell you about the details of my life ~~in~~ **at** my father's home till the age of fourteen. Such kind of life is almost well known to everyone; however, some of its aspects are somewhat ambiguous. There is

no doubt that my father loved me and his love sometimes resulted in mercy or cruelty, depending on the conditions of the home. I want to tell you about **the details of** my life with my parents before ~~separation~~ **they had seperated. They were living with their only child, and they had a falling -out of some sort , they forgot in the heat of the moment that they like those who are messing around with a weaopn in such a careless way that would result in the killing of innocent people.** When they had argument about their alive parents' little inheritance ,they forgot about their only innocent child ,not taking into consideration his destiny.**Their** disagreement exacerbated severely by their parents who ignited the flames of the conflict to the extent **that** my father got pigheaded and they separated. And my mother left the home .

When I moved out to her parents' home ,I saw her crying whenever she was by

herself. In Winter, she was used to go up to the roof, justifying that she wanted to enjoy the sun. But, in fact, she was sitting in a corner, shedding tears silently. So, I got close to her, ~~kissing~~ **kissed** her, and **got** her salty tears by my lips. When she heard my grandma's footsteps, she got to the parapet, looking at the alley to hide her face.

My dear lady, after two years, I turned seven years old. In a muddy chilly rainy night, we were having dinner when I saw my mother ~~fearfully~~ turning in **fear** to her father who walked through furiously and took off his shoes covered in mud. I heard him telling my mother severely in a loud voice: It's over, darling. Yes it's over. What have you expected him to do? I know people like him. He got married yesterday, and that's it.

She stopped eating, ~~biting~~, **bit** her lips and she could not get up off the table. I wondered "Does marriage make people

mourn? ~~But~~ **Rather** it delights!"This was because I did not understand that they were talking about my father's marriage to another woman after being separated from my mother. When **we** went to bed ,my mother deliberately darkened the room more than any night before.But I heard the murmur of her weeping **g** all the night till she got sleepless .So, I stayed up,asking myself "If ~~the matter~~ **what happened between them leads led** to weeping , **then** why ~~did~~ they did it ,~~then?~~"

In the following months, I heard my grandmother talking about youth, longevity, and the need to act wisely. ~~The~~ wisdom was evident in one of the nights of the next Winter when I saw my mother coming out of her father's home in a ~~sad~~

such a way that made me grief **and**
frightened me as if I were lost in a desert .
No one told me anything and I asked about
nothing. When she came out, my mother
kissed me with tears in her eyes, and the
smell of perfume came running out of her
clothes. I did not move from my place nor
say goodbye because I was choked
.Calmness has spread at home , so I felt
that my mother was not here. I remembered
her tears as well as the tears of her mother
when I was in the same place where I was
last Winter , and I returned to ask myself the
old question without asking for **an** answer “
if what happened between them ~~leads~~ **led**

to weeping , then why ~~did~~ they ~~do~~ did it . ,
~~then ? “~~

Two years later, my father took me back. I will not describe the life at my father's home, but I will just describe one incident that happened to us a year later:

It was a feast day when my father took all of us to a public park. Our family laid a rug on the grass and placed their belongings, food, and drinks. As soon as we had settled down and examined people around, I found that the family close to us includes my mother. I looked at my fathers' face to see

whether or not it ~~has~~ **exhibits** the signs of the scene. When our eyes met, I found a harsh anxiety in his eyes and an understanding of what I wanted to say to him. He looked away and sighed and then turned to me and sighed. Then, he looked at the branches of the trees and sighed. Suddenly, he grabbed my arm and pressed my hand saying: “Go and say hello to your mother”.

I flew rolling like a ball scored from one ~~hits~~ **hit**; she welcomed me with hugs **and** I saw the old tears spouting from her eyes as before in her parent's home when ~~it~~ **they were always** ~~was~~ damping her cheeks ,

and my lips ~~perceived~~ **sipped** ~~it~~ **them** again .
Then, she pointed to two children **sitting**
beside her. One of them was in the arms of
an old woman who said: "these are **your**
brothers". Besides her, there was a man
with worried ~~eyes~~ **looks** resembling those of
my ~~father's~~ **father**, those which I have just
left about ten meters.

Anyway , the feast day ended , and
when I went to bed in my father's home and
recalled what I had seen in the morning , I
returned to ask myself the immortal
question but with some changes : " if what
happened requires regret , **then** why ~~did~~
they ~~do~~ **did** it. ~~—, then ?!~~ " .

My life had never settled down nor been blissful except ~~in~~ **at** my grandfather's home, in a flat in the outskirts . **There**, I found in **him** my parents' **affection** ~~tenderness with him~~ , ~~there~~ . Regretfully and shamefully , my grandfather apologized to me for all the deeds of my parents as if he were ~~the one who did so~~ **responsible for what happened** . He smoothed his lips, saying " It is the devil, son. If one of your parents had thrown a stone at him, they would never have separated from each other. But it is destiny."

Every morning, we ~~drank~~ **used to drink** milk together. I went out with him for a walk in the afternoon of most days. The evenings were full of talks and memories which made us so close to each other and also made me forget all about the deeds of my parents . But now, he is dead, dear. He bothered nobody even in his death. One day morning, we went to his room and found him dead although I heard his cough before dawn. Now, do you know the reason why I am extremely sad about him? He wished to see me married, but all I did was mocking his wishes for no reason except that I was afraid of ghosts. Don't you know that there are no ghosts but we feel afraid of them as if they

were real? Dear, can you help me to overcome the past? Do you have self-control not to do anything which makes us cry alone and get stubborn among people? Are you sure of your ability not to mess with dangerous weapons which choose their victims from our innocent children?

My heart tells me that you are able to do that. You have kind facial features. You told me one night "you sympathize with **the** weak people, and you want to blow the dust off those who fall down on the floor".

I will wait for your letter. If it is “no”, send **me** back my letter in a new envelope of your own. If it is “yes”, post me a letter in your handwriting. I think that you will say “yes”; light me a candle on the way.

Unemployed by Nature

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

That was twenty years ago, when my father was an employee in the station and a father of five children. I was the eldest son. I always loved my father and admired him ever since I opened my eyes to this world. I thought there was no man as great, rich or kind as my father was. That was until I turned eight years old and joined primary school, where I realized there were many more men who were greater and richer than him. However, he remained the kindest ever. Over the years, I always admired his soft heart and his kindness.

His work required him to come back at night because he took the responsibility of one of the writing jobs. Therefore, he used to stay at home with the fall of night, especially because our village had no clubs or any other

means of entertainment that would encourage him to go out.

My father was not an ordinary man. I could never imagine him as a man who sits at home as people normally do. He always had to busy himself with something. He talked about himself jokingly saying that things were never to settle down unless he went to sleep. "And since they never settle down, then why shouldn't I do something? Boys, I have to busy myself with something." Then he would conclude his words saying that every movement is a blessing.

I used to get back from school and find him busy doing some handiwork that attracted attention and impressed everyone. I also found my younger siblings gathered around him in astonishment, asking questions repeatedly; he answered absent-mindedly as his hands didn't stop their work.

He used to fill our bamboo chairs with thatcher, repaint them with brown, and fix the water faucets. He also made the five-drawer office that my little brother and I used, as well as the ladder that we used to reach the attic above the kitchen. Even when the alarm was broken, he used to unscrew it piece by piece and then put it back together as if it were brand new. Not to mention mom's small sewing machine that he always knew how to fix.

He never stopped trying, examining, and fixing things curiously. This made my mother afraid that he might do damage to something, but he never cared. Actually, his successful attempts made us trust him more and more. That is why my mother handed him the sewing machine every time it broke down.

When night came, my father used to give each one of us what we needed. I might need him to explain a mathematical rule for

me, my younger brother might need to recite the multiplication table, and the other one might want to hear a bedtime story. I always felt that my father was like a river which satisfied the thirst of those who lived around it with pure water that never ended.

For his friends, my father was a source of admiration and amusement at the same time; whenever they visited our house, they never stopped wondering about everything they saw, saying:

"What about this one? Did you make it or buy it?"

They once started to laugh hard when my youngest brother sneaked in from the living room, saying "Baba", and one of my father's friends said (referring jokingly to my brother) "What about this one did you make it or buy it?"

* * *

We all inherited our father's habit of being a workaholic, until it became ours too. My sister used to enjoy her time making wool vests, while my mother enjoyed her time weaving new clothes or making children clothes from the adult's clothes. My younger brother also made necklaces and fans of straw.

When it was time to sleep, deep silence prevailed after loud voices, just like throwing notebooks after students leave school, or like quiet factories after working shifts.

I never thought that there was any man richer than my father before entering the primary school stage in the village, where I started to see the illusion I had in mind, but I was a smart student anyway. Even after going to high school and then to the faculty of engineering, I never stopped the plan I had, which was hiding myself whenever I saw

rich people. I put my complete focus on studying and buried my face, not in my hands or in sands as ostriches do, but in books' pages until I graduated from college, then I was employed in the railway station.

My father who was kind and a hard worker died after my graduation. When I remembered him I cried but I knew that the years that he had left were less than those that he lived. God was kind because He took his soul only after my mother and brothers were safe enough in this tough world.

One day, when I was in my office, I was told that someone wanted to meet me but wouldn't say his name.

I apologized for being busy doing a lot of work. Besides, I was in a bad mood because of some problems related to my family's future. So I refused to meet that person who didn't want to mention his name.

Two minutes later, I called my courier and I asked him to let him in.

Then he entered.

I stood up and we shook hands. I stared at him and noticed in his eyes the tranquility of a person who already knew me. But I didn't know him. All I knew was that his face was familiar to me. I thought that his small forehead, that slightly open mouth, and those lineaments which reflected naivety, carelessness and positivity, were all familiar to me. He was tall, huge and dressed elegantly to some extent.

When he noticed that I didn't acknowledge him, he asked with a smile:

- "Did you forget me?"

"A man in Arabic is called *ensan* (human) as it is derived from *nesian* (forgetting)", I replied apologetically. He puckered his lips, then he let the lower lip relax and said:

- "I'm Samy..."

I looked at his left ear immediately to see that it was flattened as if it were pressed with a rolling pin. I got out of my chair once more and hugged him tightly. I knew he was my classmate in primary school in the village that I told you about while reciting my father's life story. He was a son of one of the landlords there. He was fat, pampered and followed by servants wherever he went. He had almost the whole part of our shared desk in the classroom. His fat thighs appeared out of his short pants. He also used to take the answers of the arithmetical questions from me either by bribing or bullying me.

That day when we sat together on the school's desk, I completely realized from his life story that there were people richer than my father.

Then I spoke out:

- "Hello Samy! It has been twenty years since we last met."

It seemed that he had a painful story and that his life was no longer luxurious.

- "Yes, but I used to hear about you from one of our friends that you may remember. It was Mahmoud Abdo who led me to your place."

- "Welcome!"

- "I need a job."

His words fell on me as a strike of thunder. Then I asked him:

- "We have taken our separate ways since primary school, and my father was transferred from the station. How is everything?"

While looking down, he replied:

- "I finished primary school and as you know I'm my father's only child, so I never continued my education, because I already

had enough money. Then you know the rest of the story."

- "Can't you tell me a little bit more of your story?"

- "I can... I thought that my fortune would fulfill the needs of a thousand men, but it turns out it's not enough even for the needs of one man, which already happened to me."

He stopped talking and I waited hoping that he would continue, but he didn't. So I asked him to continue, then he said:

- "I needed to kill time... yes... kill time. I had no job, my friend. And my fortune was enough for a thousand men, but not for me. That's because I spent all of it on wasting time... killing time. You surely understand what this means."

Then, different pictures crossed my mind, pictures of huge food tables, adventurous travelling until the break of dawn, sleeping

until sunset, and lusts that destroy the will and ruin the manners of anyone."

I nodded saying:

- "As you wish... Are you determined to find a job?"

- "Yes."

I ignored what I had in mind and replied:

- "Mastering a craft can save you from poverty. You can do that in one of the workshops..."

He looked at his hand and flipped them over. Then he looked at me with reproach in his eyes. So I asked him:

- "Tell me what kind of job you think is suitable for you."

He replied:

- "Aren't we friends?... I may work in an office."

- "Maybe.. but.. your salary will not be enough for the requirements of the (buffet), dear friend.. Think about it."

He excused me and left, saying that he would come back the following day.

* * *

A day turned into a month; a month turned into a year and he never came back. I was sure he wouldn't. I was also sure that the rest of his time would kill him... as if it takes its revenge for the time that he wasted in the past while spending his fortune that was enough for a thousand men.

Then I prayed for God to grant my father mercy. He never stopped working unless he was asleep. May God's mercy fall upon him...

Uncle Ismail's World

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

Tell me, Uncle Ismail: "Where were you yesterday?"-

- I was right here.

- You did not leave anywhere! And the day before that?

- Also here. Life can be very distracting sometimes.

Uncle Ismail is a hawker; a hawker with a cart and the cart has wheels. And though he can push the cart forward anywhere in 26th of July Street, uncle Ismail insists upon disabling the use of wheels, and fastens it to the ground. As for the world uncle Ismail talks about, it does not go beyond 100 meters in length, and just one meter in

width, for he moves from his home to the place in the street where he stands with his wagon to sell his goods. He does not live in a world per se; rather in a tunnel; an air tube that is 100 meters in length, and just one meter in diameter. This wind pipe; this pharynx; or this exhaust pipe represents the whole world of uncle Ismail.

Yet he does not inhabit this world on his own; he has children, a wife, relatives, and other hawkers, each living in his own kind of tube: narrower, wider, shorter, longer, but all are tubes all the same. Uncle Ismail's world has not changed in 20 years.

Out of 26th of July Street, he only knows these familiar square meters. And out of Cairo, he only knows the few places he used to visit as a young man or as a kid. He just does not know if life changed him or life itself has changed. He only asks Allah for one thing: refuge. When he gets sick, he asks Allah for refuge, i.e., medical

treatment, and when business goes bad, and he hits the rock bottom, he asks Allah for refuge, i.e., profit. And most importantly, when he dies, he asks Allah to grant him the ability to afford his own shrouds and burial.

And although uncle's Ismail world is filled with wolves and monsters that devour each other up, he only fears thieves and other hawkers like himself. That's why he always makes peace with them, shakes their hands, and reaches out to them with his motto: you must reach your hand out, with something in it; even if it's empty, the warmth itself is enough; that of hellos and goodbyes . One must constantly reach out to other people to bond with them and avoid their malice.

- Where did you learn all of this, uncle Ismail?

- Life, my son, it has taught a donkey to walk on the right side without daring to step on the pavement.

And for a moment I hesitated while talking with uncle Ismail. Words crossed my mind: identity, freedom, existence. I took notice that all these words have no meaning or significance. I also noticed that it is as if I am talking about spare parts of Cadillacs to a man who does not own anything but a cart with some sun stricken and yellowish cucumbers, some tomatoes and some grapes. Identity means tomato, and existence means to find a place near the sidewalk. Freedom means that the tomatoes will escape the sunstroke. We could not learn more from you, Uncle Ismail.

Now People are Finally at Peace

By Muhammad Abdel Halim Abdullah

A mystery! It is all what we can say about where this grey-haired man and the girl living with him have come from. It was only yesterday that the puzzle had finally been solved and the aura of enigma had faded.

We, the inhabitants of the region, only knew that they have been living with each other for years now. Not once did the old man stand in front of a window nor a door. We did not even see both of them together, neither in the house nor in the street. However, no one tried to question neither the old man, as he was a very kindhearted man, nor the girl as she was very polite and gentle. Because of the girl's tenderness, no one dared to question her or to be close to her. She put the curtains as barriers between her and the others. Although such curtains were not that thick or strong, they were enough to keep any curiosity at bay.

People were looking at her window, which was covered by the curtains. For them, it was like she was living above clouds. If people were content with her, they would say that she was an angel guarded by a loyal man. If she got on their nerves, they would say that she was the young princess and he was the old man.

But no one dared to knock on the door and ask about her health. Her status was ambiguous; no one knew whether she was sick, healthy or in-between. No one knew whether she might be the man's daughter or his sister. However, what confused them was the question of where her parents were, or his parents.

People gathered on the roofs chattering about the news of the old man and the girl. In a certain hour at night, the girl appears besides her window looking at the people on the streets and those who are on the roofs greeting them politely. Then, she would shut the window, turn on the lights

and sit on the piano. It was said that the old man would sit beside her, because the people saw them sitting together, when the air opened the window once seven months ago.

The girl would continue playing the piano for one or two hours. Then, the light is turned off. After that, the girl would enter her room turning on the light. At the same time, the old man would do the same thing. After an hour, the house is brought into darkness.

This happens daily. For years, people in my region have been despaired of such a story. They would begin to assume many things and create some irrational stories in the hope of reaching a conclusion. Eventually, they failed.

Some would say that the old man is a Zionist spy who betrays Egypt. They would even say that he reads all the newspapers that are published in Egypt in different languages.

Eventually, those who spread such rumors feel sorry for being hard on the old man and the girl, saying that their curiosity would get the better of them, that they were tired of all this thinking and this guessing game. As a result, the only way to satisfy their curiosity was to hit them with rumors and strange speculations.

Some would say that the old man was involved in drug smuggling and he is hiding his true face behind a mask of goodness. For them it seemed like a trick. But what could this trick be?

Simply there was no trick. The man was living quietly in Bulaq district. A district which is restless as no one there can gain neither the rest of the heart nor that of the body. If this was the case, then why would not he live in Zamalek district where everything is peaceful?

There are no answers to all these questions. As a result, these questions

hanged from the house like black flags hiding everything from the eyes and minds also.

All the people become mentally tired of all the thinking to reach an answer, whether those who are up on the roofs, down on the street, setting in their rooms or even those in their offices.

It was not until yesterday at midnight that a voice had been heard. It was not just a scream but it was like the sound of the night splitting into a piece or two.

The window had been opened, but I did neither find nor hear anything.

In the morning, a small coffin was carried followed by all the people of the neighborhood. None of them knew the girl that had died, nor the old man following the coffin with tears in his eyes. The people witnessed the crying of the old man, so they could not stop themselves from crying. They saw a coffin was being carried away, so they followed. They saw a hand was trembling, so

they gave him a hand and said: “only God lasts forever, all of us will die, and our souls are in the hands of God.”

When they came back from this funeral, they knew that the person who screamed at night was not the woman, but it was the old man who cried out his heart all night long until people gathered around him. The old man was neither her father, nor her brother, nor her lover. He was her husband. At this moment, it turned out that the old man was a doctor and she was his patient. He started to have feelings for her, and then they got married. They were both orphans. He knew her pain and she knew his, as well. He decided to live his life treating her, turning his home into a hospital for her. She did not know how to repay his kindness; she could only play the piano. The strongest part in her body was her fingers. She played for hours and hours. She prayed for him and thanked him kissing his hands and legs with her fingers and music. Her husband was satisfied, but he already knew that there was

no hope for her recovery. He lived with her, a walking shadow and an aching soul. He witnessed his love fading away from her face and lips. She was dying in his hands and he could do nothing. So, he screamed, cried and buried her. In the end, he was the only one being tortured, while the rest of the people were finally put to rest.

Wounds Before the New Year

By Dalal Saliq

He awoke to the rain showers hitting the windows strongly, rubbed his eyes, and looked at the clock hanging on the wall.

It is seven, still early, but he had to prepare himself for the interview's exam. He dismissed the idea wondering to himself: who said I am going for it?

For him, time stopped and he lost all motivation. Everyone was welcoming the new year with joy, lights, and decorations; he was not.

In retrospect, a thread of memories passed before his eyes with Wa'd and her shining smile that swelled his heart and brightened his days. They grew up together; playing in the fields, attending family gatherings, and growing attached to one another. He was two years her senior;

when he graduated college, she was graduating high school.

He hinted to his mother that he wanted to propose to his cousin, Wa'd. His mother did not object; she was pleased because Wa'd was pretty, tactful, and polite. It was a shocker for her to know that someone already proposed to Wa'd.

She hurried to her brother saying: "I want to ask for Wa'd's hand in marriage for my son Hasan; you know him like the back of your hand."

Her brother replied: "Sister, your son still has a long way to go to be financially ready, while the other guy who proposed is well off, and can provide better for her."

"Have you asked her about her opinion?", She asked

"I know what is best for her", he answered.

He remembered how he hid his grief and his pain when his mother came back with a broken heart. He began to comfort her while his heart was full of pain.

He spent too much time planning for the future with Wa'd: what she would study, where they would live, and how many children they would have.

The day they received the wedding invitation was way bitter. He felt that the entire world conspired against his love and that he hated the husband who took her away from him.

He adjusted himself, got out of bed, washed his face, looked into the mirror, and said:

“You don't deserve to live; you must defend your love, and try to communicate with her But why did she accept?! Shouldn't she tell me that she will wait for me, and that she

doesn't want anyone but me? Did they persuade or force her?!"

He sobbed and wiped a couple of tears that burned his cheeks. How could he welcome the New Year! The world went dark in his eyes, and his heart was burning with flames that could burn the whole world. She is his cousin and has become like a sister now. It is too late. He began to think: "shouldn't I be dead after this big failure? What is the use of life without love?"

The rain stopped, all nature was washed, and the sun appeared from behind the clouds to announce the start of a new day. He said "I wish that rain purifies souls from greed and selfishness, leaving only love and generosity. The year has passed leaving me with pains of failure and loss. Will the coming year be better?"

While he was lost in his thoughts, his mother came in smiling and saying: "I

brought you a cup of chocolate milk. Come on, son, you have an interview.”

He replied: “I will not go, mother. I have lost everything “

“You have lost a thing but you have a lot, and Allah will make up for that and choose, for you, the best. It is the practical exam. Come on, son. Don’t waste the chance”, she advised.

He approached his mother, and kissed her hands, and she embraced him as if he were a child while he said: “All I ask Allah is that you are contented with me. Pray for me and ask Allah to heal my broken heart.”

The Powerless Speaker

By Yusuf Idris

Need another suggestion for the title

In a time like this (in a finite voice as if it was a rustle with a tone of carelessness) it all began . And The problem was always in the beginning of anything , it was a problem for me , my wife , and others . So I will talk in detail about these problems which we faced . I was there and it was a scary black night full of frightening things. I have to tell anyone the truth , at least one person should know the truth, the whole truth.

In the building in which we currently live, I told the parking boy and the doorkeepers everything. They promised me that once they see them, they will tell me everything in detail. The occupants who live in the upper floor are friendly, and we could deal with

each other with ease. On the other hand, the number of the people beneath us is huge; there is about 50 person in one apartment ,there is too many of them as if they are ants. If you look into their eyes , you will find them as deep as the ocean and they may drawn and swig you. Their mouths are very big anything even a watermelon can fit in them. They are hungry all the time and never full. They had never seen themselves before .If they just see themselves just for once, everything will end.

Shakespeare says in his novel; “the eye sees not itself but by reflection by some other things.” But mine sees everything and it was the first to see them. Since then my sight have been blocked by a gloomy fogginess , as if it was the fog of a hot day during the summer . I don't know why they didn't suffocate in this fog instead they used it as a cover to hide from me. I tried to conciliate

with them by sending my wife to them but they insulted her. They behave as if they own this country , and we are gradually losing ourselves with each day that passes by till one day nothing will be left. He is inciting them against us and he is calling for nationalization every day. When they heard about nationalization, they came out of the fog and surrounded me. What do they want from me? Who knows! They have a vast and rich country. If we try to sell it, It can be sold for a million of a million of a million of another million. But now Egypt does not worth anything at all for me. Thieves plundered it ! what can we call them? Thieves, looting, pillaging, and plundering. I have lots of secrets but I can't talk about them all . I tried every possible way to convince them but neither the straight forward nor the sneaky way did work . They want to take everything even my son , so I sent him to his aunt in Heliopolis.

They drugged the housekeeper and when she came home , she was not in her sense. We tried to calm her down but neither yelling nor talking kindly to her did work . At the end they said what they wanted to say. When this happened I expected my wife to be on my side. Perhaps one of her family incited her. She had to make up her mind to stand with me or them . Unfortunately, she chose them. Maybe someone from my family accused her of being the cause of the crisis I am in right now .Maybe His talk made her angry so she decided to choose the other side. All of this was a result of our mistake. If we had taken an action before them many things would have not occurred, and they would have not told queen Farida anything. Although She was living in front of us we have never seen her, so why they made her part of this conflict. wherever I am, they are watching me. Their eyes are evil and uncomfortable specially the eyes of the occupants living below us. You can feel each look from their

eyes as if they are eating you from inside . I am not talking about envy. No, no, no, Envy is much simpler . It is something much worse than envy . It is like the fire eats everything in its way . When the truth came to light, I made sure that queen Farida was innocent, and what the people who live under us said was mere false accusation . My older brother came and told me that we have to move out. Because we cannot fight back anymore so it is better to give up and move out.

I told him that they will never beat us. I will never move out . I am in my forties but because of them I feel like I am in my eighties. Why should we leave ! Why bring our downfall with our own hands ! Isn't he enough ? He acts as if he owns everyone . He thinks he can take anything he wants . He treats people as if they are mere loafs of bread out of which he can cut from and eat as much as he wants . . He wants to treat us like animals without any free will so he can

control us as he likes. He stirs the occupants that live below us against us. They are always watching us with their envious eyes .The pupil of their eyes is full of envy and the whites of their eyes is darker than their pupil . I will keep fighting till my last breath. I am a human being. I have my own entity , a family , and a home. Even if they took it from me it will still be my home .

I tried to avoid meeting them by every mean possible so I spent every day at home in order to avoid bumping into them whether on stairs or in the elevator. I kept Voiding them because when they look at me with their fixed dead like eyes . I feel like I am being eaten by a black fire . Ask the people working in the garage they will tell you the same thing. They used ropes to get into the house from the windows so we used nails to stop any attempt to enter from them. Then they tried to enter from under the door so I

barricaded the door with sand bags and the couch to stop them from opening the door . When they felt that their efforts went in vain, they incited the medical assistant to give me an Intramuscular shot full of their envious eyes . After taking the shot I started feeling them inside me . At the end, they told everyone that I am mentally ill. And on top of that people believed them can you imagine ! they didn't believe me but they listened to them . Even my wife believed them and made a deal with the doctor in order for him to give me a Narcotic injection so I don't have any power to fight back . They wanted me to take this injection in order to stop me from taking any action against the people who live under us, it was well planned . Unfortunately my wife was part of this plan because of her naivety and stupidity. They drugged me in order to attack me . I have some serious talk which need to be said to anyone as it is so important . I lost everything even my wife. I have to tell anyone the truth so that one day

everyone will know it . They should know how we resisted them and how we didn't move out despite of everything. How Queen Farida was innocent from the accusations of being part of the conflict between us and them . You can ask the doorkeepers and the garage workers if you want to make sure .

I got sick of fighting them. I think I should give up and move out like my brother. Or maybe I shouldn't why give up! , this will be a triumph for them and it will make them happy . But now I am out of moves I can't resist and even if I can I don't know how to resist anymore . Do you think it is over ..? Do you .. ? Is it true that everything we have is gone ? Can you believe this ?! Are we mere cigarettes after being drained we are put out and stepped on ? Why the people around me are idle as if nothing happened? How do they eat and drink with such ease !

Don't they know that everything they have is now gone . I still have lots of important things to say but he continued (in a finite voice as if it was a rustle with a tone of carelessness). Someone must know the truth the ugly truth that no one wants to know .

The Poet

By Gibran Khalil Gibran

I am alienated in this world. In such alienation, I suffer cruel loneliness and painful solitude that make me think of a magical world that I have never known and fill my dreams with shadows of a distant land that I have never seen.

I am alienated from my relatives and friends. Whenever I see one of them, I think: who is this? How did I know him? On what basis are we together? Why do I come close and meet him?

I am alienated from my self. Whenever I speak, my ears wonder about my voice. My inner soul is both laughing and crying. It is both courageous and fearful. So, I become an admirer of my self but still unknown and hidden with fog and silence. I am alienated from my body. Each time I see myself in the mirror, my face does not reveal what my

inner soul feels and my eyes do not express what my heart hides.

Walking in the city streets, boys follow me shouting, " here is the blind, let's give him a stick to lean on." So, I quickly escape. Then, I meet a group of young ladies; they hang on my coat saying, "he has a rock ear. Let's fill his ears with melodies of longing and passion." So, I escape quickly. Then, I meet a group of older people. They stand around me saying, "he is silent like a grave. Let's cure his tongue." So, I escape in panic. Then, I meet few of aged people pointing to me with shaky fingers saying, "he has lost his mind in the kingdom of devils and monsters."

I am alienated in this world.

I am alienated and I travelled from east to west but I did not find a place to which I belong and no one knows me. I wake up in the morning to find myself imprisoned in a dark cave roofed with snakes and full of insects. Then, I get out to the light with my shadow following me and my thoughts preceding me to somewhere I do not know, searching for things I do not understand with unneeded things in hand. In the evening, when I come back to lie down on my bed of ostrich feathers and hard thorns, strange thoughts come to my mind and noisy, joyful, painful desires conquer me. In the midnight, the shadows of old ages and spirits of forgotten nations enter the cave through its cracks. We stare at each other. I wonder about them and they answer back with a smile. I try to catch them but they vanish like smoke. I am alienated in this world and the entire existing world does not understand even a word of my mind's language.

As I walk in empty wild places, I see canals running up from the bottom of the valley to the top of the mountain. I see naked trees dressing bloom leaves and fruits. Then, their branches fall to the lowest and turn to spotted shaky snakes. I see birds moving up and down twittering and squealing. Then, they stop and stretch their wings turning into naked girls with their untied hair and stretched necks. They look at me from behind their passionate lids, smile at me with pink sweet lips. They spread their fairly soft perfumed hands. Then, they tremble and disappear like mist leaving the echo of their laughing and mockery in the wide space.

I am alienated in this world. I am a poet who composes what life prosed and prosed what life diversifies. Thus, I am alienated and I will remain like that until death takes me away to my homeland.

The End

Ebony pen

By Ibrahim Aslan

Along time ago, I was obsessed by ink pens which were known as Ebony pens in that time.

I didn't know where I got the belief that the Ebony pen was a mysterious miracle and unattainable to catch. Fortunately, my aunt's husband came to visit us in Imbaba. His name is Mohammed Abo roos, who is at the same age of my father and works as a headmaster to an agriculture department.

I was a child at that time when my father had brought a jilbab for him to wear during the night. Before taking off his wooly jilbab, I saw this wonderful pen in his upper pocket.

I couldn't remember if I claimed sleeping or I actually slept and woke up during their sleep , but what I remember well is that I slinked out to his hanging clothes and I took the pen from his pocket, then I sat in the corner of the room checking it in the dark . I opened it, pondered its point, and touched its cap which was filled with ink. When I finished checking, I returned it to its place.

I couldn't remember its colour, but now, I am trembling and imagining if he woke up and saw me in that time.

The second time when I saw this pen was in one of the schools which I had joined. One of my classmates had one and kept it in a closed drawer. When he came to open the drawer and take out the pen, I left my place and joined some friends watching and asking him to allow me to hold and check it carefully.

One day, the boy came and found out that the drawer was broken, and the pen disappeared. I did not pay attention to what happened, but I noticed the boys, who were sitting in front of me to the right side, looking at me and whispering. When my teacher entered, the boy complained that I took his pen and his friends witnessed to the teacher that I was very interested in it. One student claimed that the pen was what I had hoped for. My teacher asked me to stand up.

I couldn't remember that I uttered a word , but what I remember was that my tears ran out of my eyes , and I did not have any tissues . I dried my tears and my nose in my sleeve; then my teacher shouted:

"Oh ,no you are a disgusting boy"

He pointed his hand to the door saying "Go out."

What I remember was that I walked up to the front of the classroom and ran. Maybe , I'm still running.