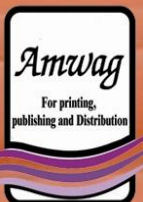


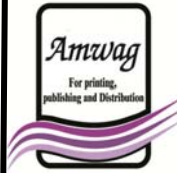
*Short stories*

# *The Convoy of Thirst*

**by: Dr.Sanaa Shalan**

**Translation: Adnan Kassir**





**First English Edition  
2016  
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# *The Convoy of Thirst*

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**Translation: Adnan Kassir**

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*Convoy of thirst was published in its first edition in Arabic in Jordan in 2006, then it was published in its second edition in Bulgarian in Bulgaria and Jordan in 2013.*

**How thirsty would be those who don't know that  
they are thirsty!**

**(Sanaa)**

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## **The Convoy of Thirst**



They were a sun-tanned convoy, exhausted by their mission and provoked by thirst. They came wrapped with sand and its endless stories. They were dressed in black gowns like their grudge, anger and misgivings. Their elder's anger was evident. His eyes were the only thing to be seen from his face cover. He conveyed his words to the tanned Bedouin who was adorned by his attractive youthful looks in a tone with a strange combination of hope and pride: "We came with the money "

The youth ate his words while choking with his misgivings, he asked: "Which money"?

The old man who was masked with shame said: "We came to redeem with our money our ladies whom you captured when you raided our camp".

The young Bedouin sighed and postured by stretching his arms. He replied in a broken and defeated manner: "Is there any way other than that"? This was not typical of a hero who defeated the desert, overcame the hills and captured these women, as the sand of the desert is familiar with his image, voice and authority.

The old veiled man feeling humiliated said in a rusty and disgusted voice: "Is there any other choice than saving one's honour by receiving the missing ones and freeing the captives?"

The young tanned Bedouin nodded his head as if he, with his silence, agreed to what he heard. He was beginning to feel suffocated with a strange thirst which scolded his mouth. He was experiencing difficulty in uttering the words which would express his inner feeling. In that single second, the desert sand blew into his eyes and changed his world into yellow darkness and landed a heavy weight on his arid chest which was drowned in thirst.

When he attacked her tribe and captured her with other women, the young tanned Bedouin was regarded as the greatest of his folk, as he was a relative of the Manathira people and a descendent of the nobles. She was pretty and attractive like the aroma of coffee. She had a captivating neigh. Her most attractive qualities are her anger and fury. Anyone who likes Arabian horses cannot afford but to love her. She was not a captive of the chains which were tying her up, but the chains were the captives of her revolt and defiance.

He fell in love with her as soon as he laid eyes on her. He realised that he had to reach the land of the mirage and conquer the beauty of the oasis before he could have her. That was the motivation for loving her. He loved her as she was elusive like a wild mare that could not be caught. However, her father has now come to pay ransom and to redeem her and the other women of her tribe. Should he swap her for money? Is it time for parting ways? Separation in the desert is dry and barren as there is no reunion after it. O desert! How many

tales have you swallowed? You are not going to swallow the one who is in love for an amount of money.

The young tanned Bedouin was searching for answers within his inner self which was laden with fears, and began to realise that by releasing her and setting her free he might be able to find some solace. He came to the conclusion that “If she wants to neigh again, she can.”

He was generous to her tribe because of her. He asked for water and food to be offered to them. They came to take back his moon like mare. He refused to take the money and the ransom. He granted all the women freedom. He gave them the choice between staying and leaving but they all decided to leave. He listened to every one of them making her choice in person, except the one who enchanted him. She went silent for a long while, then, a smile showed on her crimson lips but sorely disappeared. She startled like a grieving mare and ran towards her departing tribe. Her tribe’s convoy was waiting for her. They wanted to take her with them and return to the unknown.

He gazed at her body which was moving in her loose dress. His fingers went numb when he visualized them combing her hair which was blown by the wind with no shame. He could hear the sound of her bangle and the clamshell beads which adorn her. The sad tunes sent a tremor in his heart which

became so large that it could embrace the whole desert and embrace her as well.

In a split second, the convoy, the desert and all the men and women of the world disappeared in his eyes. He was only left with her, her neighs and thousands of oases. He could hear her mare like neighs, a mare going to put herself in chains after she became free.

He walked towards her, looked into her eyes and asked her with the refraction of a volcano and the shyness of a child: “Whom do you choose”? She was about to mount her horse when he stopped her with his strong fist from continuing her climb. He said to her with more dejection: “Whom do you choose”?

She looked into his eyes and said: “I am thirsty . . . . I have never been so thirsty all my life” The tanned Bedouin moved another step forward, he could hear her feminine neighs, he said: “Thirsty for what”? She said in a quavering voice: “I am thirsty for you”.

He went silent, so did she. Thirst is so nice in the sea of love. His tribe’s swords were raised warning the guests who were threatening the loving princess with death. Her father roared: “You are a traitor and you are vile! Kill her! She brought shame on us! How would you choose your captor instead of your family? You have come up with a heresy which Arabs

have never heard of before. How would a free woman accept to live in the shadow of her captor?”

She said with the voice of a mare which ran to the end of the world: “I am thirsty”

The convoy of thirst left. It was thirsty for love, dishonoured by its beautiful mare. This time the sand didn't bury this story in its dry gut, instead, it spread the news to the whole desert. Everyone in the convoy felt that they were laden with thirst against their will. They were thirsty for love and affection, but no one dared to talk about his thirst.

When the convoy reached the first oasis the men slaughtered many of the women whom they could see a thirst for love in their eyes. When they reached their camp, they buried their little girls alive in fear that they may weaken one day by their thirst. In the evening, the men witnessed a wailing assembly because they were thirsty as well.

Thirst for love gave the desert its harsh climate and its bloody rituals, the ritual of burying girls alive. Some people think that they bury their girls alive in fear of shame, others think that they do that in fear of poverty. Sand knows that it is obliged to swallow the tender victims so that one day it won't be saturated with their blood. Convoys were allowed to get thirsty and very thirsty or they can die if they wish, but woe to those who quench their thirst in the book of the greatest thirst.





## **The Amorous window**



A new home, heaps of debt and lean years of saving, but now she is finally occupying the new house. The house is not as spacious as she wished. It didn't have a beautiful garden for her three children to play. Her eldest child was about to become a young man. But the house was at least in a fashionable neighbourhood. She has the title deeds of the house or to be accurate, her husband owns the title deeds.

Now, she has a home, a husband and children. All of that meets the hopes and wishes of an ordinary woman like her. She didn't want more than that. She didn't care about her body which started to wobble. She wouldn't care about what others might think of her. She didn't give much attention to her clothes which were of an old and forgotten fashion or the green colour of her eyes.

Her dreams were diminished a long time ago, particularly since she got married to a man who understands manhood as a few moments in bed only. These few minutes in bed would be like two strangers meeting at an old port parting ways by waving good bye to each other without any sort of passion.

Her short straight hair which looked so contented like a sleeping baby was the last thing left from her femininity. Her femininity left her a long time ago. She forgot it or almost did. Her window was directly opposite the neighbour's garden. It was her only opening to her forgotten womanhood. It was

near her kitchen window where she spends many hours of her day. It was a normal glass window. She worked so hard cleaning and polishing it. She dressed it with transparent curtains with patterned holes. She adorned the edges with red satin. That was at the beginning. This window opened an opportunity for her to discover her femininity. It created in her a tendency for waiting a passion for meeting someone. She hasn't experienced the joy of waiting before.

Her daily waiting wasn't a long one, as the tanned lad with charming eye lashes and tall posture, used to show up on time. It was obvious that he would be about ten years younger than her, but when it came to vitality, happiness, hopes, and lightness, he would be a ages older than her.

At the beginning, she hated his curious looks while sitting on a plastic chair in his garden watching every movement she made. She has shut the window in his baby like smiling face hundreds of times. She cursed him many times in her heart. She met his mother in order to send him a message that she is married, a mother of three children and the prisoner of another person who happens to be her husband. She told some friends about him shyly, and then she told all her friends with a bit of grievance and curiosity which she enjoyed. She complained about him to his sleepy eyes for many fruitless years, but the answer was: "It is an amorous window, and windows love waiting".

She thought long and hard about closing that window forever and put an end to that waiting game. She had that feeling in her heart to stay asleep and never wake up, but she couldn't do it. Instead she took most of her daily house work to the kitchen, even the ironing. She started to receive her close friends and make her phone calls from there. She was even marking the workbooks of her students whom she spends the best hours of her day teaching them for few mean dollars in the kitchen.

Now she is back to the woman she was many years ago, to that woman who carried the same name. She heard the panting of this excited lad. Her body started to regain some of its elegance. She started to hear the ticking of the time minute by minute. She bought some elegant and colourful clothes. She wore perfume. She started to pay attention to her hair style, her nail polish, the gloss in her eyes and the smoothness of her skin. She is back to herself.

At noon she would share her coffee from afar with the charming lad. Often she wished the space between them would shrink and the two places would get so close to the extent where they become attached. She wished she could take away these few metres which separate her from her handsome neighbour, so she could tell him about thousands of tales, wishes and broken dreams. She couldn't do that because she was afraid of her husband, her children, her family, the whole world and years of deprivation.

For few happy months she was stuck to that window where she could see the tanned lad through it. Many a time she sat with her husband while he was eating his breakfast, his lunch or his dinner in the kitchen. The movements of her husband's lips while he was chewing his food were telling her something but she was always occupied by the image of the tanned lad who was sitting close to her window.

The tanned lad got sick of waiting. He left the garden and disappeared. Some people said that he got married unwillingly and went to work in another country. She could still smell the nice scent of his perfume which was carried by the wind to her window. She would hear the words which he didn't say. She would enjoy the idea of having his arms around her waist in a dance which didn't take place. She could feel shy of his kisses which she never had the chance to taste.

She was happy, very happy. That's how she could describe herself. She couldn't understand her behavior, as she used to curl helplessly and weep on the kitchen floor under her amorous window.

## **A Letter to God**





Very few people only dare to be upset with God. But she was upset with him. Yes she is upset with God Zeus, the great God who indulges in pleasure, love and happiness and forgets that he has subjects. He forgot her personally, so she pleaded to him for a long time and to his daughter the Goddess of Beauty Aphrodite and to the God of love, Cupid, so that they grant her one love only.

But the Gods turned a deaf ear to her longing, pain and wishes. Why is she a prisoner of that obnoxious feminine body? She wants to be free. She dreams of a single moment of love only. Is that too big of a request from the God of Heavens? Is it too much to hope for a man who loves her only from among all the women on earth? She wishes for a man who puts his arms around her waist in a dance that never ends. She lost faith in the deaf God of heavens because he doesn't listen to her grievance.

She took a pen and a writing pad and sat at her wooden table. She wrote with a feeling of anger and revolt which matches her despair which is against her usually calm nature: "A letter to Zeus... I am lonely....! Damn you! How do you leave me to endure all this suffering? I want a love which overwhelms me, a love which ends my longing and establish my identity, a love which stands between my soul and my body. I want a love that takes me out of my misery, out of my body, and my

loneliness. I want a strong and powerful love which doesn't cause any pain. I want a love which controls my soul and creates rattle and restless moments in my heart. Damn you! Answer my prayers for once only”!

She waited for a minute till the writing pad dried, then she presented it to one of Zeus' swift helpers who snatched it and put it into his master's hands. His master, Zeus was sitting on his grand throne at the highest point of Mount Olympus.

Zeus was sitting cross-legged on his throne with his huge body and silvery beard which was extending to his knees. His curly hair was covered with an azure crown. On his right hand side stood his maid the Goddess of victory and on his left hand side stood Jnumeid his butler. In front of him stood Fana the Goddess of luck and fame.

He read the letter to himself once, twice, three times and ten times while his entourage was watching. Everyone thought that he will be angry from the rudeness of one of his subjects. They expected him to pour his anger on the heads of the inhabitants of Earth as a punishment for them and a sign of his dismay with the rudeness of some of them, but he read the letter again and felt very sad for that lady who was dying for love, but she was never able to taste it.

He pondered on for a long while about the kind of love and lover that lady wants. He used all his thinking and imagination to create him. At the end he created 'Hades' the God of death.

He was very honest and strong as she requested. He was able to get into a person's body and stay between him and his soul. Zeus sent him to her quickly. She was submissive waiting for Zeus' ire, but 'Hades' didn't carry out Zeus' ire. He came swiftly, thirsty, willing and determined to take her from among all the women of the world. His strong black hand reached to her soul and stayed between her soul and her body. He filled up her thirsty heart. He rooted her out of existence and rescued her from the confinement of her body. He tied his chains tight around her soul and snatched it with no mercy. Death sighs were so splendid and sweet. Her body was lacking everything except the overdue love. She could feel the beauty of love before leaving with 'Hades' to the kingdom of thirst. She sent a sigh of thanks to God Zeus and vanished in death.

The fast helpers carried the contended love sighs to Zeus who was watching what was happening with great interest. He sat comfortably in his throne. He asked for everyone around him to leave even his favourite Goddess, the Goddess of Victory, he asked her to leave as well.

Anew, he read the angry letter which he received few days ago. He read it with his eyes at the beginning then he read aloud and clearly every word in it. In one minute, he forgot that he was the Great God and he wished he can get a moment of intimate love like the one requested by that lady who inhibits the Earth. In a minute of silence and seclusion by

Zeus which is considered by humans as thousands of years, he remembered all the women and Goddesses he had loved. It was a long list of lovers and love stories. He loved Hera, Urea, Lanova, Antiopi, Dion, Maya, Timis, Lornillom, Minmozen, Aorinoma, Beautiful Simillie, Kamina, Danay, Lida and many other ladies whom he forgot their names. He had thousands of women. He has experienced the sighing and disappointments of love, but he is still looking for love. He wished if he himself had a God of love so he can send him a letter pleading to him to let him taste real love even once in his life.

He had a long sigh. His sighs and moans burnt a lot of places on earth. When people exploded with complains he remembered that he was a God and he didn't have the right to make a wish even in a moment of weakness. He folded the letter he was holding in his hand and put it in the cupboard where he keeps his papers. He leaned on a piece of timber in his bed and asked for his butler to come. He drank as much as he could. Late that night he issued a decree banning the letters of lovers from coming to him. He has no time for his own heart ache, let alone other people's heart aches then he fell in a deep sleep.

- Amendment to the Decree: God Zeus is not interested in love.

- Amendment to the Second Decree: This is a legend. It has never happened
- \* Last amendment: Zeus didn't have any sleep the night he got drunk. He spent that night crying and writing a letter to an anonymous.



## **The scarecrow**





His clothes were shabby, his hat was old with big holes, his legs were wooden, his eyes were made of buttons with various colours and his mouth was sewn in a hurry. He has no ears. His guts are made of hay. He has a slim waist. His body was motionless day and night, but he still loves here. He doesn't love her just because she was the one who made him and placed him in his spot, but because she is kind and tenderhearted. He loves the tone of her nice voice when she sings.

She made him with her smooth small hands many months ago. She placed him in this spot in her strawberry farm to scare the birds and stop them from invading the farm and eat the fruit.

He performed his duty perfectly well, firstly because he is a scarecrow who was made to scare birds, and secondly, because he loves her and likes to look after her strawberry modest harvest, she clearly makes living by selling it.

He can't remember when his straw heart started to beat, but her nice voice brought it into live. He had a broken neck, suspended head and slothful limbs since he was placed in his spot. His heart started to beat when he heard her melancholic voice. She had bare feet, the rattle of her bangles and her panting was all he could hear while she was busy looking after her strawberries till midday when the sun rays start to flirt

with her turbulent hazel hair as a gypsy girl. She started to show her talent of singing by humming a song using her sweet voice. It was a sad song which describes her loneliness and her hard work in the farm. At that moment he felt that his heart started to beat, his weak limbs have come to life, his big body was raised and his heart has revived. That has left him with a nice feeling that never ends. Since then he was captivated by her nice voice.

He used to watch her tirelessly day and night. One afternoon she got tired from working in the field, so she leaned against his wooden base in order to have a rest. He was happy to feel her tender body is leaning against him. She smiled at him and said after she had a glance at his dress: “What an old dress! Don’t be sad my Dear! Tomorrow I’ll make you a new dress that matches your personality and rewards you for your hard work.” She resumed leaning against him while eating strawberries from plants close to her with great appetite.

At that moment, he wished he had enough courage to answer her and thank her for her kindness. He wished he could ask her to sing him a song, so that he could listen to it without feeling tired or bored, but he was afraid that he might scare her. He was probably more afraid of her rejection or he thought she might get a chill from the way he looks and that would break his hay heart with no mercy.

She fulfilled her promise. The next day she dressed him with new clothes. He could tell by their smell that she has made them from one of her old dresses. He felt extremely happy to be wrapped in clothes that were made from a dress which carries the scent of the sweat of her ascetic body. He felt that he was the happiest person in the world. He can hear with his ears her sweet voice. He can smell the nice scent of her body and he's wrapped in her dress and his curious eyes can watch her wherever she goes.

He doesn't know anything about her past apart from what he has known in the last few months since he was placed in her strawberry field. Her farm was small, surrounded by a timber fence. He doesn't know what's behind that fence. He doesn't know in which part of the world that little farm lies. She lives in an old hut and it is obvious that she lives there by herself. He hasn't seen anybody visiting her for several months. He can see her living room and her bedroom where she spends most of her time. He could see a lot of photos in silver or timber frames on top of the fire place in the living room, but he couldn't see or guess whom these photos belong to.

She rarely leaves the house or the farm and when she leaves, she comes back quickly laden with fruits, vegetables, meat and farm requirements, then he realizes that she has been to the shops. He feels happy when he sees her coming from the distance wearing her old velvet scarf and singing her melancholic songs. He feels like flying to meet her and help

her by carrying the bags for her, because she seems to have carried them for a long distance and that was obvious from her panting and red cheeks.

Today was exceptional from the outset. It signals the arrival of a guest. She didn't do much work in the strawberry field. She spent the whole day in her small hut. He watched her through the bedroom and the living room windows as they were opposite to where he was placed. He watched her movements. It was obvious that she was busy preparing the house and the food. By sunset she started to beautify herself. She wore a charming crimson dress which reveals her tanned skin. She combed her hazel hair and left it like wild rivers over her shoulders. He noticed that she was happy and excited. He wondered, what and whom she's waiting for tonight.

She started to play the piano, which she rarely does. She started to sing a melancholic songs, she was totally absorbed with her angelic singing. His soul would dance to her songs lyrics. Then the handsome lad who was riding a bike few minutes ago came. He was carrying a bunch of flowers. He kissed her and put his arms around her waist. He sat next to her and together they started to play the piano. Their music was a sad message to his heart and for the first time he felt happy and jealous at the same time. Still he was happy for her despite his grief. He wholeheartedly wished if he could leave his spot and knock on her door and join them, but he knew quite well that there was no place for him.

He watched them for long while. They had dinner together and played the piano again then they danced to the tunes of a recorded song. Things went well with a lot of love and harmony, but what he couldn't comprehend was what happened after that. Their screams went louder and louder. It seemed that there was a fire burning between them then he left the place angrily. He slammed the door forcefully in a manner which nearly dislocated it.

She fell on a couch near the door and started to cry. Her crying was as beautiful as her singing. He realized that she was very sad because she needed a heart to love her strongly, his heart for example. He almost called her from his spot to ask her about her grief but he remembered that he doesn't know her name because he has never heard anybody calling her name, so he couldn't learn it. He thought for a little while then he answered the calls of his heart. He left his spot, crossed the little field. He stepped advertently on some strawberries. He didn't knock on the door and he didn't wait but just opened the door and entered the hut.



## **The Nymphs' Bath**





He takes every opportunity to go to the old markets which embraces the ancient monuments. He likes architecture which he has been studying for several years, although his peers have graduated from the same college a long time ago. He is an artist who likes to draw ancient monuments. He likes to own a huge book which contains the pictures of all the places with ancient monuments. He is not interested in designing buildings and designing markets doesn't excite him either.

He knows every part of his old city as he painted and studied there. He created paintings of it with the eye of an architect, so his paintings looked like photographs which are thousands of years old. He created a painting for every place he likes without adding anything to it, but for many days he's been standing in front of the Nymph's Bath. He draws it from a close distance and from afar and from every angle that he finds interesting. He adds to his paintings spirits, bodies and laughs. Some parts could be missing in his paintings, other parts would be present, but her face is a fixed feature of every painting.

He tells his friends, who wonder about him staying in the same spot painting for so many hours without getting bored. He is fascinated by the Nymphs' Bath which is an old Roman bath most of it has been destroyed by earthquakes. But the main courtyard which is the change room and the bath tubs

are still intact. He could imagine naked women who looked like a full moon in a summer night and converse with them, watching them and flirts with them. They would all laugh. Then he smiles in vain, but he knows that there is something else attracts him to this place which is as weird as his hobby but that thing is more extreme and mad.

He is attracted to Hajer. She attracts him in all aspects, with her dirty and torn clothes, with her stained limbs, with her dirty nails, and with her blond hair which flies in a chaotic manner that erases every trace of any event that took place ages ago. He was attracted to her tears when she begs the passers-by with bouts of madness that befall on her which make her take off her clothes and assigns herself as Goddess of madness and dances naked in the Nymphs' Bath while children are screaming, men watching and some women volunteer to dress her again.

She is mad, her name is Mad Hajer. No one knows anything about her other than that. She spends her day in the ruins of the Nymphs' Bath. At night she curls in one of the corners and sleeps like a log. The police tried more than once to keep her away from the place, but because she upsets the tourists who visit the place she returned. She used to feel happy when the lights from the tourists' cameras used to flash in her eyes. In the end she became a part of the nymphs' Bath and no one was interested in keeping her away from there, even the police forgot about that.

When he met her for the first time she was having a bout of madness. She was screaming as the children were annoying her with their whistling and their teasing. She stood at one end of the old bath and started to undress herself. In a split second she was totally naked with bare feet and flying hair. She had a dirty body, her hair was untidy, but she was beautiful with crystal clear body with proportionate flowing body parts. At that time he felt that she was an enchanted Goddess. Her enchantment will recede in sacramental water.

She was in her worst state of anger when she captivated him. There was something in her that made him stop and watch her for some time. It wasn't a body which was attracted to the body of a naked body and it wasn't a man attracted to a woman, but it was a soul meeting another soul, even if she was in her worst state of madness and she was losing her mind. He wished that her bout of madness would go for longer, but that bout faded. She stayed naked in her spot and the eyes and throats of desirers staring at her. He approached her, picked her rugged dress from the floor when everyone else was afraid to do that as everyone was scared that Hajer would give him a bleeding cut with a stone as she usually does. He pushed the dress through her head, wrapped her with it to cover her body and patted her quietly on the shoulder. As he lifted strands of her hair, he saw her eyes which have been obscured by her hair for a long time. He saw in her tranquil

eyes a sad and broken woman whose mind couldn't cope with her situation so she found solace in madness.

Since that day, he has not seen her in state of madness, although Mad Hajer was still begging the passers-by and taking pleasure when tourists took photos of her.

Many times, he drew a painting of her, she used to pose for his paintings and stays still in one spot for him to finish his painting. He was sure that she understood what he was doing. He could see a lot of words in her eyes. When he desired her, he used to smile at her. He used to feel astonished when he could see a similar smile on her face at the same time too. He was sure that she wasn't mad but she was broken badly.

Once he gave her two hair clips as a present. They were golden as the colour of her hair. When he put the clips in her hair, she smiled deeply then ran away into the distance. The two golden clips looked marvelous in hair blond hair with clean face and quiet movements.

Winter approached and with the first drop of rain the painting which he drew was spoiled. The painting was for the Nymphs' Bath with the smiling face of Mad Hajer in the background with her wild and untamed looks. He was upset when the colours mixed with each other. He felt sorry. At that time he was busy with the painting and didn't notice Hajer who moved close to the painting. She took the painting from his hands and gazed at it. She said in a confident tone although

the letters were jumbled: “Oh .....Oh what a waste! The painting is wasted”

He gazed at her astonishingly. He felt that his wild girl which he usually sees in his dreams is actually, Hajer. He put the painting under his arm, collected all his drawing tools and put the wooden easel on his left shoulder. He opened his right hand and welcomed Mad Hajer’s hand. They walked to the small unit which he rented in the Old Latin alley since he came to this city to study many years ago.

Hajer entered the unit feeling happy and contented and she never left it since. Hajer has disappeared. The Nymphs’ Bath lost her. Although no one missed her, as mad persons are not missed by any one. The artist disappeared too. He appeared in another city where no one knows that he is an artist, but everyone knew that he is an outstanding architect and very successful in his job. They know that he has a great wife who is easy going and has a calm personality. Her husband was the only one who knows that he has a wife who is a witch. Her only problem was that she undresses herself and starts to cry when she gets angry.



**Tita**





This time he was determined to put an end to her excesses. She spoiled his relationship with the town's residents. She wasted his hard work of so many years. The great tragedy was when he found that some of the people in the town resort to her damned herbs. He says that he's not jealous of her and that he doesn't loathe her when she helps parents for a little amount of money or even for some fruits, legumes or wheat. But what annoys him is when she challenges him with her stern looks. He finds the tyranny of the world in the shine of her eyes. When she leaves him protesting and turns to go back to her tribe, he feels that her beautiful small bottom is challenging him. He guesses that she pulls her tongue despising him. When she leaves the sound of jewelry which is adorned by white shells rings in his ears.

He hates the fact that she is kind with a broad smile which shows her white, shining teeth. He hates her dark skin which is as dark as Brazilian coffee. He hates everything about her. He hates the fact that he has to make a great effort in order to maintain his assumed hatred. If it wasn't for that he would have had a different feeling which he doesn't dare to tell himself about. Loathing her or whatever it may be called dominates his monotonous life in that town since he came with the Red Cross and settled there in south Nigeria many years ago. He used to spend his days in the health unit which he presides till the Borrarro nomad tribe migrated to that town

where food is plentiful at the beginning of the wet season. She came with her nomad tribe which revolts against the most basic form of civilization or urbanization.

She belongs to the “Borrorro” tribe which means ‘the isolated’. They are isolated from everything but they are attached to the environment. They understand nature, its plants and its secrets.

They are famous for their pharmaceutical products. He admits that his patients would benefit from her natural medicines more than they would from the chemical medicines which he provides to his patients free of charge with the support of an international charity organization.

What annoys him most is that she runs away when he invites her to be his guest. He wishes she sits with him the same way she sits with the town’s men and women. He wishes she kisses him the same way she kisses the semi naked children which she comes across in the streets

He is been bemused for a long time by the yellow paint which covers the faces of the women of the “Borrorro” nomads but this paint on her face clearly produces a special beauty.

One day he saw her dancing in a celebration in the town’s market. She was carrying a cloth bag which she usually hangs on her right shoulder till it reaches her knees. She puts her herbs and ointments in it. She put it aside where the audience

nearly stepped on it but she didn't seem to care. He picked the bag up and carried it to her. He watched her for a long while. She was wearing a coarse cotton dress which was adorned with shells, feathers and sparkles. Her dress was opened at the sides up to her upper legs which were slim, tanned and straight. Her broad breasts were showing. They were liberated like a free bird without the restrictions of a bra which she never wears.

She danced for a long while. His eyes followed her movements. Everyone encouraged her, everyone chanted encouragement by calling: "Tita, Tita". One youth approached her and danced with her gracefully. He was annoyed by that, but he wouldn't let that rob him of the enjoyment of watching beautiful 'Tita'. When she finished her popular dance, he approached her and gave her the cloth bag. "This is your bag", he said.

Tita left the place but for him the ground was turning for some time. The turning wouldn't stop until he saw her few days later. She was at the house of a woman who was giving birth to her first child. That woman was having a hard labour to the point where she nearly died. Then Tita realized that she and the woman would need the help of the blond European doctor. He came quickly to give assistance but the ground started to turn again when he saw Tita whom he could smell the scent of her attractive amber body. After many hours of hard labour the baby was born as a flabby crying block.

The baby's father named him after the doctor who helped them and for Tita he offered his thanks. That night he knew that she was a priestess. She is in the eyes of her people – who don't follow any religion but follow some strange rituals – she is a priestess. In their eyes she is a witch, they resort to her to read their fortune, to help them search for something they had lost and to guide their convoys to follow the right track across the desert.

He thought to himself! Did she enchant me? But he despised this silly idea which dominated his thinking. He never believed in witchcraft or witches. But Tita enchanted him, yes, she has done that. He approached her and presented his right palm to her "Read my fortune!" He said with a broad smile. She looked at his fair face which was tanned by the sun - which gave him a thrilling redness "I am tired now. Come to my tribe's camp in the evening and I will read your fortune and for free too!" She said while closing his hand and embracing it between her small hands.

He said to himself: "I will not go! I will not be influenced by the quackery of this damned witch. Yes I won't go. Who does she think she is?"

When the evening came, he backed away from what he had decided and he was on his way to her tribe. He used one of the town's kids as a guide. The place was hurly burly with singing and dancing. The sound of the drums and local music echoed

in the place. There were a lot of men and women who were lining in a long line dancing and chanting some songs tirelessly. Their faces were painted with special yellow clay. They also used a black shiny stuff as lipstick. They tie their hair with shells and feathers. Women wore the most colourful clothes they had.

He couldn't understand that phenomenon. He thought that it was a wedding, but the boy told him that it was a seasonal annual festival called "Geerwal Festival or the beautiful bodies Festival. In this festival the boys adorn themselves and show themselves to the girls so the girls choose the boys with the most beautiful bodies they call them 'Togo'. This festival is the festival of beauty, love and body. At that night girls are allowed to run away with the guys they love even those girls were married. A girl can leave her husband that night and run away with the guy which she adores his beauty.

The place was teeming with life. He looked for her till he found her. She was sitting in front of her tent wearing all her adornments. She was laughing with the girls. As soon as she saw that his eyes were trying to flirt with hers, she fled and hid inside her tent. He rushed through the crowd of men dancing their traditional dance and rushed through the crowd of girls who were taking turns in coquetry and entered her tent. He was tall with a full body and green eyes and provocative beautiful lips. He didn't have a slim body with proportionate parts, straight nose, dark brown eyes, shiny

white teeth or lips covered with black paint like the handsome men of her tribe who carry traditional beauty features of the Boorrorro tribe, but she loved him, yes she loved him as she has never loved him before. Her medicines and her magic didn't help her in curing this beautiful decease.

He walked two steps into her tent. He stared at her with a hungry look. She said to him in a stammering and alleged courage: "You have come then! Can I read your fortune"? "But I have come to kidnap you my beautiful witch"! He said.

He went close to her; with his strong body he bent lightly and carried her. He put her on his shoulder, the upper part of her body slipped on his back while he was holding her legs. He ran away across the desert sand while carrying his dark witch. He had a sigh of longing and desire. He was mad and enchanted. He thought that he will never be cured.

## **Monitoring the Hidden Treasure**





He came from the high seas, his target is one man. He read about him in the talismans of the old history. HE saw his name and his times written in the Book of Great Magic. He knows for sure that in this isolated village lies a great treasure and that treasure has been guarded by a fairy snake for thousands of years. That treasure is kept for a simple man called Azzouz Al Awar. He has been waiting for this year and for tonight in particular, as it is a leap year and the Great Comet flies across the atmosphere of Venus only once in one thousand years. The door of the gate where the treasure is will open at midnight exactly, not before or after that. The treasure will be waiting for him there, where no other hand had the chance to touch it.

The great Jewish magician arrived at the village with the first light of the day. He hit the sand with his magic stones. He knew from the lines in the sand and the sound made by the stone the way to the house of the man he wanted to see. He went there quickly. That man's house was a humble mud house at the end of the village near the foothill. He recognized him as soon as he saw the astonishment in his single eye. He could see the treasure and his talismans in the man's darkened eye and he told him that he is the man he wanted to see. He told him that he saw his name written in the Book of Great Magic and with him the magic will be undone, then they will share the treasure. The first one will go back to his country at

the end of the world and the second one will see in his single eye a lot of wealth and prestige no other man with two good eyes has ever seen.

Azzouz has heard for a long time about this haunted treasure at the top of the hill near the village. He has heard grandmothers sing songs about it and tell tales about the men who lost their lives trying to find it. He knew that the story tellers at the mayor's court had told mouth watering stories about the treasure and the beauty of the fairy snake which guards it. He didn't know that his name is the name of the man despised in the eyes of people and every one would avoid him because of his filth, would be the name written on the talismans of that treasure.

The village was dark after sunset, but the magician and Azzouz were waiting for the darkness to fall. The thorns along the way in the darkness gave both of them bleeding feet. The long gown of the Jewish magician collected a lot of dust and sand on way there. Azzouz' heart was beating fast endlessly. He imagined that his strong desire for the treasure will scare the beasts of the night. His ears were receiving the Jewish magician's commandments. The Jewish magician reminded him that they would both perish by any words uttered by Azzouz. "I'll read the talismans and you stay silent! Don't try to say even one word! Whatever you might see, stay silent! If you utter one word both of us would perish and the cave will

be shut on the treasure for another thousand years!” The Jewish magician said sternly.

Finally they arrived at the cave. The comet was high in the sky above the mountain. The door of the cave opened with a stony squeak. The door was big, smooth and egg-shaped. The moonlight lit up the cave. The skulls of the adventurers who managed to reach the cave cover the floor. Azzouz swallowed his saliva with difficulty. Majestic fear overshadowed his eyes. The Jewish magician looked at him and said: “Don’t say any word!” Azzouz nod his head in agreement.

The Jewish magician started to say his talismans, his talismans lit up the place. He was trying to bring the fairy snake with his prayers. The fairy snake woke up from her long deep sleep. She raised her head with the jewels, gold and precious stones filling the rusty iron boxes. Within few seconds the snake shed its skin and changed into a girl as beautiful as the moon light. Azouz felt attracted to the beauty of the girl for the first time in all his deprived life. He saw in her eyes a desire for him. His single eye has never seen anything like this all his life. The eyes of beautiful women don’t usually take notice of simple and poor men. She was dressed in transparent clothes. Soon, piece after piece of her clothes started to fly in the air with every talisman or hymn of the Jewish magician. A lot of fear and horror could be seen in her eyes: “Uncle, cover me, may God save you! Your words

are taking my clothes off, cover me! May God save you"! She screamed

Her voice which was accompanied by her tears filled the cave but the Jewish magician wouldn't give any attention to that. He continued to say his hymns and talismans. Azzouz was watching shyly with a passion for the fairy who was screaming loudly and asking for a cover. Azzouz almost asked the Jewish magician to stop saying his talismans but he knew that any words he might say could mean death.

The epic continued. The Jewish magician was burning the fairy with his hymns and talismans while they were getting closer and closer to the treasure. Azzouz had a burning desire to save the fairy who was pleading to him: "Save me Azzouz ! Civer me! May God save you (from danger)! ", said the fairy. Azzouz turned deaf ears to her pleas and tears although his heart was bleeding for the fairy which was getting burned from the talismans of the Jewish magician.

"Azzouz, I love you. I have waited for you for one thousand years! Cover me! May God save you"! The fairy pleaded.

It was the first time that Azzouz had heard a woman saying to him that she loves him. In all his arid live, no woman has had any passion for him, but now a woman has, and it is the fairy of the treasure.

Azzouz nervously looked at the Jewish magician, who was occupied in his hymns and talismans, and yelled to him nervously: “Enough! Cover her! I love her”! The Jewish magician turned to Azzouz quickly, horrified by what he has heard and by the action of the man who didn’t follow his commandments. In few seconds the Jewish magician had turned into ash which was scattered around the cave.

The talismans almost turned Azzouz into ash too but the fairy saw in Azzouz’ eye something she had never seen in any human being’s eyes. She extended her ivory hand to him and kidnapped him to a faraway place where fairies kingdom lies. The cave’s door got shut and the treasure was kept inside.



*An Exceptional Woman*





“I am a woman with an exceptional talent. Come along and I’ll tell you about my talent! No! This is more than required! Move a step backward! Yes, this is right! Didn’t I say that I am talented! You have known my talent even before I told you about it!”

I am a woman who is capable of freeing prisoners, I am capable of bringing dead hearts back to life and I am capable of sending a shiver in dead lips! Please! All of you move backwards, the only one to stay is you! What do you want me to call you? Come closer!

The stone statue which had been sculptured from a big rock was with a lot of other laureate youths. He looked at her with his eyes which had just come to life and changed within few seconds from a stone statue sculptured from a three dimensional rock in the middle of the city for thousands of years, into a young man with flesh and blood and, may be, a heart too, who knows?

He couldn’t understand that he was that lucky as she chose him from all the other statues to be granted this gift. He didn’t know when that change took place or about the details of that change or about the method which brought about that change. The main thing was that he was happy because he was freed from his rocky prison, which he loathed, to become a modern youth roaming the streets in his old fashioned clothes. Again

the woman who was short to the point of being a midget with ugly features and shiny eyes moved closer to him: “Every time I look at something beautiful, it comes to life! Didn’t I tell you that I have exceptional talent!”! She said.

The laureate statue smiled and gave her a warm kiss on her narrow and ugly forehead. He stretched his hand and embraced her hand and they both set out wondering around the city. He talked to her at length about the city with memories which are thousands of years old. He danced with her in the old temple which sits at the top of the highest hill around the city. He yelled as loud as he could in the historic amphitheatre: “I love you”. His words echoed around the amphitheatre. The tourists who were visiting the place smiled. They thought that he was wearing old fashioned clothes for fun or he was one of the employees working in that place. They took tens of snapshots for him as souvenirs.

As for her, she was extremely happy. Her ugly small mouth showed strange happiness which she has never felt all her life. She was exceptional in all aspects. She was exceptional in her dwarf body, in her frozen features like the smile of a clown, in her scary wrinkles, in her ability to draw and in her ability to free prisoners from their prison. But despite all that, she was unable to break free from her scary body, even when she set it on fire, in order to break free from it, she couldn’t free her soul from it. She stayed as a prisoner inside that body in

addition to that she acquired a burnt and wrinkled skin like the skin of a gecko in a pond.

She couldn't find her world anywhere, so she created a world from her own thoughts. She used to leave her house every morning and would stay away from it as much as she could and as long as her absence made the inhabitants of the house happy.

In the end she felt that the loneliness is killing her. She used to isolate herself in the dark alleys and deserted streets, but when she discovered her strange talent, life came back to her or she came back to life. All she has to do was to wait for the image of a man, whether it was in a picture, a book cover, a statue in the street, a sound in her ear or any other image from her memory and he would come into being and his heart would start beating. He would be a man who wouldn't worry about the way she looks or would loathe her wrinkled skin.

No one wanted anything to do with that short woman with wrinkled skin but she wanted a man who would be interested in her loving eyes and her sweet heart. A man to share with him her happiest moments in life, a man with whom she would kiss in the streets, show her love to him in the mountains and eat with him in popular eateries and dances with him on candle lights in a room on the moon.

Once again, the statue repeated the words "I love you" and the amphitheater echoed his words. He sang an old Roman

song which she didn't understand but she guessed in her head that it was a song which a lover wrote its lyrics for the girl he loved at a certain moment.

He bent in front of her as if he was kneeling. He took her tiny body in his hands, wondered happily while carrying her and started to kiss her. The tourists wondered whether to take snapshots for the handsome lover or for his beloved midget. In the end they decided to photograph both of them even when it wasn't possible for the cameras to take snapshots because of their fast movement.

In the moon light and after a traditional dinner in a popular eatery the man statue went back to his original position in the rocky wall. Within few seconds he went back to his rocky life. She sadly had to say good bye to him. She knew the real rituals of pain because she was used to them. To be precise she hadn't known anything but pain.

Again, she was back to her lonely life but tomorrow is nigh. While waiting for a new day she slipped into her bed like a soft worm in a pond. Her bed is a humble bed which her family organized for her after they got sick of her ugly looks.

The next morning, she was looking at a picture of a handsome lad. That picture was hung at the end of a deserted car park. She wished that lad was real. She moved closer to the picture and whispered warmly with all the love of the world: "I am a woman who is capable of freeing prisoners

from captivity, I am capable of restoring shivers to dead lips and I am capable of bringing dead hearts to life! I am an exceptional woman! Move close to me"! She said

Once again the lad in the picture came to life and once again, she had a great love story for a whole day with a handsome lad. He overlooked her ugly short body and her wrinkles. In a place in the city a tourist was screaming in horror because when he developed the film of a snapshot which he took yesterday for a handsome young man and an ugly woman at the historic amphitheatre, he only found the photo of an ugly woman without the handsome young man. What he didn't know was that he took a snapshot of an exceptional woman.



## **The Midnight Train**





“It’s only half an hour and the midnight train will arrive”. She consoled herself. That night was too cold for her to endure. She didn’t take any precautions for that. She didn’t wear warm clothes because she didn’t expect the hot events of that day would lead her to a situation where she finds herself sitting alone on a seat at the railway station. She waits for a man she doesn’t know because she wants to prevent a tragedy. How this man will look like! She doesn’t know. What does he wear? She doesn’t know either. All she knows is that he will be holding a bunch of red flowers as it was agreed.

Again, she felt that the cold weather is affecting her petit rosy body which sank in her short sleeved cotton blazer. She watched her sunken tummy her stomach crumbled as she remembered that she didn’t eat anything since the early morning. Anyway, who could eat when they feel upset and wonder what would be the best way to deal with a problem without causing much pain? What about the man coming on the train! Why does she have to deal with a problem like this? What is she going to say to him? It could be better if she bought him a ticket so that he could go back to where he had come from. In this way he would have no reason to stay. She thought again about her last decision but she found it very silly. In the end, he is a man with emotions; he can make his own decisions and he got his own personality. He might be

annoyed by what will happen, she smiled and thought: “Sure he would be annoyed if he had a tiny bit of feeling”.

She unfolded her arms which were embracing her chest. She probably feels a bit of warmth. She looked at her watch. The hair on her hand stood at one end from the cold. Only fifteen more minutes and the coming person will be in front of her. From where she sits she can see the face of every passenger coming down from the station. She was horrified when she heard the sound of barking dogs further away. She remembered that the boarding house where she stays had closed its doors two hours ago. She has no choice but to find a close by hotel to spend the night in. As if it wasn't enough for her to live in a town a long way from her family to earn living and now, she has to spend the night in a hotel.

One of the station guards walked in front of her. He was marching like a soldier. He looked at his watch which was tied to his pocket with a silver chain. It's only ten minutes and the train arrives. She felt extremely nervous. Suddenly she remembered her mother. For long she described her as the stupid kind hearted who puts her nose into other people's business. She shifted her mind from her mother's image and started to think about the words she is going to say to the man coming off the train.

She felt that the words were jumbled in her mind. She has a lot of stories melted as she was confused. She tried to

reorganize her words and stories but she felt that she has difficulty breathing with the flow of words and ideas. What should she say? Does she have to welcome him then invite him to the station café and tell him what's happening? Or should she say things to his face? Or it might be better if she introduces herself to him first!

She was more comfortable with the idea of introducing herself first as it is better if he knows the reason why she is in this place and whom she is and the whereabouts of the girl who should have been waiting for him! She is going to tell him frankly that his girl won't be coming because she is a minor who claimed to be a university student just to pass time then found herself in love with another man. She has to say to him that his girl doesn't love him and she was only playing a game with him, nothing else. That girl regrets that now and she hopes that he would accept her apology although it is coming late.

What else, she is going to tell him. Yes she is going to tell him that she's the teacher of that naughty adolescent girl and she knew about this matter because she has a very good relationship with her female students at the high school. She loves her students dearly and they trust her on their secrets. She'll tell him that she only knew today the details of this silly game played by her student of a relationship through the internet. She saw the risk of that game when she knew that the man who loves that girl thinks that she is an adult and he is

coming to see her only to be told that she is a minor and that she is scared that her parents will be angry with her when they know about this. She is also worried that she might be banned from using the internet forever when she spends many hours emailing people from different parts of the world.

Yes she is going to stand in front of him shaking hands with him and apologizing for the behavior of her unthinking student and plead to him to accept her apology. What is she going to do after that? She doesn't know.

She looked at her watch again, four more minutes to go then she has to stand and welcome a man she already feels embarrassed to meet even before she sees him. She tried to force a smile so she can receive him smiling but she couldn't.

Finally, the train arrived. Its noise and its whistle broke the silence of the night. The hot air blew into her freezing face. She thought about standing up but she was too nervous to do that. She nervously looked in her bag for nothing. She lifted one foot from the other and sat up. Her heart started to beat faster. She wished she was waiting for her own man. How hard life for her would be without having a man to love her and she loves him too. Her childhood dream was to meet a man where she and he love each other for no end. But she found herself wasting her youthful years in order to support her poor family as she is their only provider in life. She doesn't see them much because the place where she works is a

long way from where they live but she loves them dearly. She is still young and beautiful and she is entitled to have a happy romantic experience but she lacks the courage and the time. She needs a man to kidnap her and put her in a castle and force her to love him. She is afraid of love although she likes to be in love.

The few passengers started to get off the train slowly. Some of them looked sleepy and lazy. She watched them all looking for the red bunch of flowers which her student, Dalal and the man agreed as the way to recognize each other. Almost all the passengers had gone but the man with a bunch of flowers hadn't appeared. Is it possible that he is not coming? It could be that he is also a liar and wouldn't come at all. She hoped that her guess would be right. Her nervousness was getting worse and she prayed to God that he won't come.

Finally the red bunch of flowers appeared. It was held by a man who is in his mid thirties wearing a hazel colored coat with a neat suit underneath. He has a slim body and a nice smile on his face and he was quiet as the night which he is coming to split. She stood up with difficulty. She moved a step forward but his steps were faster. Unconsciously, she started to groom herself as she felt more nervous. He came to her and shook hands with her and said: "Didn't I tell you that I'll recognize you? Those flowers are for you Dalal"! She took the flowers while her hands were shaking. She embraced the flowers but felt sorry for her beauty and the kindness of

her friend. She almost said that she is not Dalal but she liked the looks in his eyes and found it difficult to waste those beautiful moments. She needs him and he came looking for love. He didn't have a certain woman in his mind and her adolescent student doesn't want him, so it's easy. Why can't he be hers? Fate must have brought him here from a faraway place so they can meet.

She smiled: "You are exactly the way I imagined". She said. "And you are more beautiful than what I thought". He said in a male charming manner. He stretched his hand to touch her cold cheeks and said to her as if he had known her since childhood: "I am hungry, what about you"? She nodded her head fondly: "I am hungry too. I haven't eaten as I have been waiting for you". She said.

He put his arms around her and the bunch of flowers and walked together to the nearest restaurant in the city. The serenity of the night echoed their laughter. "I lied to you. My name is Mona and not Dalal". She said. He laughed uncontrollably: "I lied to you too. My name is Rashad and not Ali" he said. Again, their laughter got louder although it was overshadowed by the sound of the mid night train which was departing for a new trip.

## **A Newspaper Report**





She hates the desert because its harsh environment reminds her of her difficult life. She hates to be forced to travel a long way in the desert in an endless trip. She has to deal with the moans and the people in order to write a newspaper report about the Tuareg Bedouins in their home land. Her only consolation is that she'll receive a good amount of money, as the report will be published in a famous French newspaper which she corresponds with for many years. She needs the money badly to pay the fees of the lawyer who deals with her case.

She arrived late for her appointment at Tigmar land in the Arabian Desert because of her adjourned court case in the capital city. So, she has only four days to write her report, otherwise she'll be in a very difficult situation and the magazine will be in a dilemma as it allocated a big space for the awaited report.

Shalifa was the first woman she interviewed from The Tuareg after she arrived in the middle of the desert in an old car which travels across the sand with difficulty. She was told that the local religious leader, Sidi Al Taleb Rajab, is the one who asked for her to be treated as a guest and to stay in the only humble hotel which is close to the tribe's camp in the oasis. He didn't expect her to be happy staying in the Tuareg's tents.

That's why he asked that she would be welcomed in the old single story six bedroom building.

When she arrived at the hotel her body was sticky and laden with sweat and sand. She wished she could jump into a cold lake although she would be satisfied with a cold shower, but even that wasn't possible. The water supply was cut and she was only given ten liters of water to manage with.

She looked curious and resentful while she was asking Shalifa about her life and the social image of Tuareg women. Although she was only interested in finishing this report and return to the capital city more than concentrating deeply on the lives of individuals. She thought that they would worry about a camel with scabies than the life of a woman.

She could only speak French and Arabic. The interpreter who was supposed to be with her had disappeared after she was late for her appointment at the capital's airport. She was worried that she might become the victim of Nigerian migrants who falsely claim that they are from the Tuareg and provide misleading information for any tourist who would buy it from them. Shalifa told her that Sidi Taleb Rajab masters classical Arabic like those educated members of the Tuareg while the majority speak the local dialect only.

She travelled on a strong camel with a group of the Tuareg men towards Shalifa tribe's camp. Taleb Rajab was her target. On her way to her destination, she enjoyed listening to the

Tuareq men chanting praise to their desert while their eyes were the only contact with their women. Those men had slim bodies, smooth tanned skin and beautiful eyes. She could recognize those men from their eyes as they never remove their face covers while the women could show their faces which were saturated with the red sun of the oasis.

Finally her group arrived at the oasis of the Tigmars. Curious onlookers were waiting for her. The smell of Taleb Rajab's tea which has the scent of a famous wild plant was the first thing that she noticed there. Shalifa leaned towards her and whispered in her ear: "Making tea, erecting tents, doing the hard house work and transporting water are the duties of the Tuareq men." Shalifa said. "What about women? What do they do?" She wondered.

Shalifa answered fondly: "They love deeply."

She looked at Taleb Rajab. She gazed at his eyes. He got long eye lashes, thick eye brows and wrinkles under his eyes which can be seen above his face cover, but she wasn't able to recognize him. She asked: "Which one is he?"

She was sipping the heavily flavored tea which was offered to her by one of the young Tuareq girls, when a man came forward and took off his face cover and showing his face with strong features like prominent jaws and shiny eyes like an eagle. His body was like a cane on running water with slim waist and a chest protruding to the front. It was easy for her to

see his prominent throat. When he came close to her in order to greet her, his tall body blocked the light of the lamp which was illuminating in her face. Her face was left in the moon light so it was hard for him to see her quiet charming face.

He didn't talk to her much although he made her feel welcome. He seemed to have unlimited responsibilities. She was in his company for two full days. At the beginning her companions were many but their numbers dwindled to the point that the group was limited to her, him and the camera only.

She took photos for everything even his modest tent where she had moved to it after leaving the hotel where she stayed at the beginning of her visit because she thought that it was too far from the oasis. She was as close as possible to Taleb Rajab and to be precise to his tent. Soon she felt that she lives in that tent while the owner of the tent lives in her heart. She felt that her heart was beating hard and involuntarily to that tanned Bedouin who lives for others. He loves others and they love him in return.

She was afraid of his breath at night although he used to sleep outside the tent as a sign of respect for her. She was afraid that his hands may get to her although she knew that rape doesn't have a place in the Tuareg's culture. She wished that he shares his bed with her as the distance from him bothers her although he sleeps meters away from her.

“Coming of age” party was the first party she attended there. She borrowed traditional dress from Shalifa and wore for the party. She was the most beautiful woman in that party, at least in the eyes of Taleb Rajab.

Women honored her by making her the first one to put the make-up and adorn the girls with their silver jewelry as the “coming of age” party was held for them as they reach puberty. Each one of those girls will be considered a lady and she will have the right to love and marry once, twice, three times or hundred times as long as she loves the men she marries.

She wished there was a party for announcing her femininity to Taleb Rajab. On the way back from the party she felt like going to the toilet. She and Taleb Rajab walked away from the main road so that she can find a secluded spot for her to go to the toilet. She left for a while then came back while Taleb Rajab was waiting for her. He pretended that he was playing the flute. She approached him and asked: “Mr. Taleb, do you have a lover?”

He smiled and said as if he remembered a golden butterfly: “I had a lover and a wife”!

“What happened to her?” She asked in a curious manner.

“She went with another man after she divorced me.” He said in an indifferent manner.

“Does a Tuareg woman divorce her husband and leaves for another man?” She asked astonishingly.

He said as if he was reading from a book which he had memorized every word of it: “Tuareg follow the law of the

heart, when love ceases, there is no reason for staying in the marriage, so they divorce their partners and marry the ones they love with no problems and continue with their lives.”

“What about you?” She asked in a sad tone.

“I am fine. I am the leader of my people who believe in love, I feel that when she doesn’t love me any more that’s enough reason for her to leave.” He said.

“Where did she go? Did she disappear in the desert?” She asked with a disguised curiosity.

Taleb Rajab laughed and said: “No, she went to the tent next door. She fell in love with our neighbor so she divorced me and married him.”

She asked him again with a disguised wit: “What about you?”

He said in a kind and easy manner: “I am still the same. I am fully occupied with the affairs of the tribe. I divorce this woman from that man and marry off this woman to that man. I am the judge of love in this desert and my rulings are always in favor of the loving hearts.”

The word “rulings” reminded her of her permanent pain. She remembered her husband who sharpens his teeth, takes off his suit of famous global brand then attacks her like a beast, eating her body and steeling her desires then hits and insults her. She saw his image everywhere she looked. Her heart

started to beat fast. She wished the court would give him a death sentence rather than a ruling of divorce which she has been struggling to get for many years.

Her feminism sank into her body. She felt like nausea. Her seat was running under her eyes. She was facing the moon whose light reflected on her face which was overwhelmed by memories.

Taleb Rajab moved towards her and asked: “Are you alright?”

She replied in a distressed manner: “I am not alright. I am tired, let’s have a little rest.”

Taleb Rajab said in protest: “Here! No, that’s not possible. At night in the desert you have to be very careful as there are a lot of scorpions and poisonous snakes.”

“I am tired, please!” She begged.

Taleb Rajab said: “With this the solution is easy.”

She had a rest, not on a rock in the desert but on the back of the man of the desert, Taleb Rajab, who carried her like a spoiled kid and walked a long distance while she was living her dream. When he reached his camp and was about to enter his tent, a lot of women saw him. They whispered happily: “There is no doubt that Taleb Rajab has fallen in love.”

A week has passed and the newspaper report hasn't been written. The papers and the pens all but disappeared and the newspaper didn't know where they were. She received a telegram from the magazine protesting and conveying the editor's anger because of the delay in sending the report, asking her to reply quickly, but she felt that the telegram wasn't addressed to her but to a French journalist. She is staying away from a barbaric husband. That journalist she was has disappeared since she came to Tigmar. As far as she is concerned she felt that she is a Tuareg Bedouin woman who enjoys being in love and who is having freedom and respect.

She almost thought about writing a reply to the editor of the magazine asking him for forgiveness and to ask him for more time to finish that report but she was busy with a party for three women seeking divorce in the oasis.

As customary for the Tuareg, there were humble banquets where men and women gather around the fire. The women who were seeking divorce wore their best clothes as they will be granted divorce tonight. They will be presented with gifts which will be given to the needy people of the oasis. These people come to the party looking for joy and charity. There were also a lot of men at the party. That party means that a divorcee has disavowed her husband legally and socially and she'll be ready to marry another man when her period of waiting ends.



Taleb Rajab was one of the most important people in the divorce party. He is the local religious leader who is in charge of marriages, divorces and inheritance. Every one of the women seeking divorce came and kneeled in front of Taleb Rajab expressing her wish for divorce. He granted each of them her wish and conveyed that to her husband in the middle of joy songs which were sung by the female relatives and friends of the divorcee.

The party has ended, so she went to bed in the leader's tent. It was obvious that he was worried about something. He was staying up next to the fire while turning the embers with a stick in his right hand. She wore a traditional Tuareg dress. She put the makeup of Tuareg women and went outside where Taleb Rajab was sitting on a small smooth rock. She kneeled in front of him "Mr. Taleb Rajab, I love you and I hate my husband. Divorce me from him! And let me marry you?" She said in an honest and broken tone.

Taleb Rajab looked at her like someone who passed out. She could feel the emotions in his eyes as well as the heat of fire as if he didn't have the strength to give her an answer. After a long pause he said with difficulty: "But!"

She looked into his glowing eyes and said: "Dear Sir Taleb, I love you and I want to be engaged to you! Do you agree?"

Taleb nodded and said with a tear of love in his eyes: "I agree."

More than one telegram came from the magazine, before the telegrams stopped. Later on, a court in the capital city issued a ruling for a divorce of a female journalist from her husband after the daily newspaper reported that she was lost in the desert. No one wanted to take the trouble of looking for a woman in love who disappeared in the desert on a reporting mission.

*A heart for all men*



Repentance for the twentieth, the thirtieth or fiftieth time who cares? Even her enchanted knight doesn't care! She loved him hours, years or centuries ago, she doesn't know for sure. She knows that her love to him is good enough to be called an era of love in the human history. When she was a child in the pre adolescent stage, he was a devil in a man's body. She gave him herself without thinking. She is his gift from God. She was his, they were one. That night he was surprised as he was able to quench his thirst and fulfill his desires. How a religious girl would commit a sin like that. That night she laughed a lot and cried with sorrow because he didn't understand.

He disappeared and all these meetings stopped and the religious girl disappeared too but the sin and a violet thing called love stayed. Many times she wished she got the courage to tell him after a long break: "I still love yo!"! So often she wished she could swallow her pride and goes back to his strange world where all things look similar even the hearts but her pride let her down and the sin stayed with her.

Broken hearts usually give up easily to defeat and sorrow. He dominated her life in the past. She wasted her life in order to please him. She got out of her skin and entered his skin. She was the woman he wanted. She crept into his bed to please him. He doesn't believe in virginity. He'd rather get the

physical pleasure than falling in love. She believed in him and disbelieved herself but in the end he left her to bed another woman. He couldn't separate love from physical pleasure with the other woman either.

During the day she used to look for him in everything, in every person and between words. At night she used to look for his body and his gasping. What separated him from her were a few hours of travel, her pride, his cruelty and his treachery.

At the beginning she crept into the bed of every man who left his door open for her hoping to find him in another man's body but the flavor of their saliva was different to his, their lips didn't have the same warmth as his lips, their breath and their gasping were also different to his. She found their desires, their hopes, their quietness, their longing, and their moans were different to his. She has never felt happy when she was naked in another man's arms as she felt when she was with him. She never felt with anyone else that she was over the moon as she felt when she was with him. She has only felt sinful at the end of each night when she was with other men.

In the morning, she bathes and cries a lot. She looks at the body of the naked man she was sleeping with and feels like nauseating. She leaves his place for no return. The only thing she remembers is the sin and the pain of a missing knight. She raises her hands and asks heavens for forgiveness. She knows that heavens only take care of broken hearts.

She received presents, money and invitations from those men who spend nights of pleasure with her. Most of those men have a good standing in their community. She feels disgusted with their gifts and throws them in the rubbish bin. She looks at her face in the mirror hoping to find a fingerprint similar to that of her missing knight and from the distance she looks for the man she loved. How can she tell the world that she is looking for the man who left her a long time ago to end up in the arms of other men?

Again in the evening she creeps into the bed of another man who left his door open for her. Men describe her as interactive, delicious, submissive, and overwhelmingly lusty, that's why they like her. But she finds the man she loves in every man's body. She closes her eyes, sharpens her senses and let her imagination fly in the bright sky and falls to be picked by the arms of the man she once loved lustfully, but when she opens her eyes she finds herself with a stranger. She moves away from him after he fulfills his desires with her. Her desires have never been fulfilled and her search never ended.

Once again she asked God for forgiveness and she cursed love and sin. She is far from being herself. She is very far from repentance. Sin, hundreds of men's bodies and her heart separate her from them.

She was preparing for another night. She put on her clothes with humiliation, she put a mask on her face which is called makeup to disguise her sorrow.

The smell of her expensive French perfume hides the smell of her body which no man has learned its secret. She was about to leave when her phone rang. She indifferently lifted the receiver. She expected to hear the voice of a desirer but her millions of expectations disappeared when she heard on the other side the voice of her knight saying to her in a quavering voice: "I love you, let's start again, can I wait for you tonight?"

"How much would you pay?" She said to him in a sarcastic manner which had not known that before. Her knight was shocked as if he had lost the whole world in a silly adventure: "Wha??" He asked. But she repeated her question in the same manner: "How much would you pay?"

She didn't hear his answer. She laughed hysterically and hung up. She realized that she has totally lost her way. She didn't look at herself in the mirror as usual before leaving her house because she knows that from tonight she'll be a ghost without a body, but a heart which is suitable for every man. Along the way, she looked for herself everywhere but she couldn't find anything. That night she was interactive, submissive and lustful without looking for the man she once loved in another body. She was lost and she lost her way too.



## Tell Me a Story



“My lady, your heart wouldn’t take any more pain. You are an old woman in your thirtieth decade!” This sentence was said by the doctor of the company which I work for. He said that sentence in a hurry like someone throwing a stone into a lake. He said it while he gazed at what was left of the beauty in the eye which had disappeared early that forenoon. He gazed for a long while at my features. He seemed as if he was reading a hieroglyphic letter. He tapped me on the shoulders. He didn’t seem impressed as there was no expression on my face, that’s why he said that quietly with the tone of an upset person.

She rolled over a lot in her bed. She resentfully smiled in a meaningless manner while she was watching the hands of the clock which were approaching 8.00 am. For the first time in her life, she feels that the hands of the clock connect to her mercilessly with a hellish time wheel which drowns her every second in a cauldron of pain, anger and sad memories. Is she scared of death? Is she afraid that her heart will stop beating forever? Is she scared to imagine the ghost of her good old mother would be wondering around the house, lonely, miserable and crying?

No she is afraid that she will die without having him. She is afraid that she might die without fulfilling her desires. Again she smiled in a sarcastic manner about that verse “desires not fulfilled” and with difficulty, she managed to remember the rest of the verse but she couldn’t remember the name of the poet who wrote that verse. She closed her lips and rolled to the other side of her bed and said in a loud voice as if she was

talking to someone in front of her: “Damn that poet! What’s his name? And damn you, the man I loved!”

She closed her eyes and felt like she’s falling on the moon. She shut the window of the memories of the past and the present with pink streamers. Unintentionally she found herself checking her body flirt with it with the memories of the past and licking from its small mouth the honey of old memories and love. She jumped gracefully towards the golden framed mirror. She gazed deeply into her small shoulders which were shyly showing under her crimson dress. She wildly looked at the black lines under her eyes. She felt sad. She jumped in the lake of her grey eyes which were showing in the mirror and on a far away rock, she saw him sitting there staring at her with looks like those of the past. He approached her, kissed her and embraced her. That kiss, that embrace and that desire were what she has waited for, imagined and hoped for.

This body has been waiting for you for nine years. Even my husband couldn’t own that body or that love. He was a despised fate for nine years. He was a husband in the bed but not in the soul. I was for you and with you every night. I left my door open every night so your shadow will enter and embrace me madly.

Now, I am a free woman waiting and waiting for you personally. You don’t know the doubts, the confusion, the longing and the patience of a woman who has been waiting for a man for one thousand years, a man who creeps to her bed to embrace her and implants a child in her womb, a child who looks like her man, a child she doesn’t like to push

outside her womb when giving birth because he is a part of the man she loves and will love forever.

You are the one who rejected me. You are the one who exploited my youthful years. You were wise in a storm of madness. You were afraid to marry your young lover. You were afraid to embrace her with your ivory arms with the scent of great manhood which is forty years old. You were scared to embrace my youthful years with your older age and silvery hair and the staring of disapproving people. You were wise in the temple of madness. We were both the victims at alter. You have destroyed me with your wisdom. I am still waiting for you and you told me that you are leaving with no return.

The ringing of that mad phone disrupted the flow of her memories. She lifted the receiver and said in a hot tempered way which is not her normal behavior: “No, I won’t come today! I might not come tomorrow either and I might not come at all!” she ended the phone call without adding any other words.

For few seconds she felt sad for what she has said. “Why did I do that?” she felt very angry as she felt nine years ago when he said to her: “leave me baby and fly and start to dance the dance of life with a young person like you! Leave me here to wither in this office! You are twenty seven years late! My wings  
Are broken and I can’t fly with you!”

I got married and broke my wings instead of dancing the dance of life. What type of life I would have without you. I divorced 'Wissam', that good man who embraced my body for nine years, and then he got sick of me.

She felt a sharp pain in the heart. Her face went blue. She felt that her body was flagging with difficulty on a seat which was in front of her. Am I going to die? No, not now, not before reaching your arms.

That sharp pain got worse. She felt that her heart was about to stop. She closed her eyes. The warmth of the sun rays flowing through the window overwhelmed her. She felt the warmth of his heart and his love. She could feel him embracing her and saying to her in his deep angelic voice which was coming from the distance saying: "Bear up, sleep on my chest, my young lover, I will tell you a story, the story of Thumbelina!"

"Yes nine red roses please!" A voice sadly repeated these words inside her. "As many as the years of separation and longing." She continued to address the shopkeeper: "Can I use the telephone please?"

The shopkeeper nodded his head in agreement. She dialed slowly in a way she has never done before. His voice was on the other side, a voice coming from the halls of heaven, a voice she has lived for it for many years hoping to hear it and now he is in his office. She said to herself.

She embraced a beautiful bunch of flowers with the scent of jasmine and roses. She looked at the jasmines and hugged the

flowers eagerly. She could feel the warmth of his breath refreshing her soul. His moans are so close as if he was next to her. Deep inside her she despised two verses of poetry he has read when he said good bye to her:

Our love story has come to an end  
How harsh and sad it was  
It is nice to forgive  
But it's nicer to forget.

The hallway which leads to his office seemed very long, as long as the years of their separation. She started to run like a little girl running to her father's arms.

She entered his office trembling while her heart was beating madly as if it was asking her to jump at the foot of the man who was watching her with strange looks. The looks of a man who found his treasure in a place he was betting on. She looked at him, gazed at him, came close to him then stood in front of him. He gazed at her with the longing of someone who had been waiting for one thousand years. He pulled her head to his chest. He was silent as someone who was broken by his long journey.

She hugged him while telling him that she doesn't intend to leave him and she wants to stay with him forever. She swam in the sea of his loving eyes while she was fighting tears. She said to him: "Tell me a story!"





## **The Well of Spirits**



She didn't know that the darkness of the night is so frightening in that well. When she was young, she used to come and play with him around that well and listen to the sound of the sea waves echoing inside it, and when they both became adolescents; they used to go there for romantic meetings. They had never gone inside that well because of its scary reputation as the eternal resident for spirits especially those roaming spirits which didn't want to leave the earth as the earth is the world of spirits.

That well wasn't a normal well. It was a circular rocky hole with windings haphazardly and irregularly engraved in the middle of it leading to the bottom of the well. At the bottom of the well there is a tongue shaped rock which blocks the sunlight from entering the well and it also obscures the view. In the bottom of the well, the water is about half a meter deep extending through a huge canal leading to the nearby sea.

She heard someone saying in the past that 'Sea water rises in some winter nights to cause flooding and the spirits have to leave the well as they will be afraid of getting wet, which is something they hate.

She has never thought that she would enter that well alone and on an awful night like that night. She walked down the stairs towards the bottom of the well with difficulty. She sat on the last step. Her feet were submerged in the water up to

her knees. She was shivering with cold but she didn't care. She put the old oil lamp she was carrying next to the rocky wall and rolled the canvass bag she was holding in her lap. She tried to feel that bag with a strange mixture of fear and hope. She looked around the well with a feeling of eeriness. She wondered where the spirits would stay in that well. She felt that she was sitting under a huge rock which was almost going to crush her. The sea waves were hitting her feet and the silence of the night fills the place which made her more worried.

She empowered herself with some of her sad courage: "I want my husband's spirit! Oh well, I want his spirit! Do you hear me? I love him!" Silence prevailed again and she cowered herself even more but the bag she was carrying was a burden.

Again, her old plastic show unintentionally fell and hit the bottom of the well. She heard a rattle which she thought was caused by one of the coins people usually throw into the well when they make a wish. She recalled that she and her lover threw these coins in the past. Their wish was to stay together for the rest of their lives. She didn't know that death will be standing in the way of fulfilling their dream.

She took out a coin of the highest value from her pocket; she kissed it and hoped that the well will give her her wish. She threw the coin into the water. That coin fell close to her feet.

She looked at the small circles which were created on the surface of the water by the drop by that sinking coin.

She repeated what she had said before with more determination: “Oh well, I want my husband’s spirit! I want my husband’s spirit!”

The well echoed her words and answered with a voice which was as hard and rocky as its walls: “your husband’s spirit is imprisoned in this place and it can’t get out.”

“Please, I can’t live without him. I love him and I have brought his body with me!” she pleaded

She presented the bag she was carrying while her feet were shaking under her worried body. She hugged the bag: “I have brought his body with me!” she said. Silence prevailed again. She remembered how much fear she had endured to get that bag. She spent most of the night in the cemetery at her husband’s grave digging for his remains. She took what was left of his body and put it together. Many parts were missing. Where is his left hand? Where is his left eye? Where is his neck? Where? Where ..... etc.? What that predator has left from his body was very little. He gobbled the body of the man she loved and who loved her too and changed her world into a world of love and happiness.

Few nights ago, he left and never returned. Later on some hunters brought him in pieces and said: “A wild animal has

eaten him.” They buried him without letting her see his body. They said that seeing what was left of his body will make her grief more and could make her live in deep sorrow. When she collected his remains from the grave, she kissed every part of them even those pieces of flesh which she didn’t know to which part of the body they belong. She kissed the remains with a lot of longing and desire.

“Oh well, bring him back to me!” The well was shaking again. She suddenly slipped into the water but she jumped out in fear and freezing cold. She leaned against the rocky wall which was covered with moss, then stood in the water again. The sound of the well got louder and said deeply, monotonously and indifferently: “I can’t give you his spirit without his body! Go and get his body and I’ll give you your husband’s spirit back in that body.”

The grieving woman dreaded what she heard. She said in broken and worried voice after she opened the bag where some remains could be seen. Some of these remains started to decay: “But his body is here with me.” She said.

“This is not a body, but some remains! I want a whole body!” the well replied.

“Where can I get that body?” she asked in a broken and defeated voice.

“I don’t know!” the well replied.

The sound of the well stopped and the woman hugged her bag and kissed it. Her body felt the coldness of the remains in that bag. She fought her tears and her grief but she was defeated. She swallowed her tears and felt that she was powerless. She said with a soft voice as if she was talking to the bag and the well: “But these remains are those of my lover!” she carried the bag and left the well humiliated and defeated, but she decided to get her husband’s spirit by all means.

In the morning, the waves were washing the bottom of the well and washing its rocks tirelessly. It was also washing her feet while she was carrying her bag. She stood while hugging it as if it was her lost baby. The morning breeze flirted with her hazel hair and dried some of her tears.

The memories of last night’s events came back many times into her mind which was overwhelmed with the feeling of pain and loss.

She tried and tried to come back with the required body but to no avail. All the bodies with spirits which she saw secretly the previous night have already been loved by other people. She wouldn’t ruin their happiness; she wouldn’t dare steel their bodies. Her love for her husband stood in her way from taking their spirits. Anyone who experienced the taste of love couldn’t deprive anyone from the people they loved. She left

the bodies for the people they love; she went back to the well carrying her bag, her hopes and her weakness.

She called again with hope: “Oh well, I want my husband’s spirit!”

She breathed her voice and her nostrils were feeling the echo of her words. She opened the bag while she was standing above the well. She kissed the decayed remains and threw them into the well to be blown by the waves. She felt that her husband’s body will be very happy in the sea which he loved and told her about his endless love for it. She tore the tops of her clothes so that most part of her upper body was naked. She threw her black head scarf away. She took off her old plastic shoes and walked few steps forward till she was exactly facing the well and its hard rocks. She looked at the bottom of the well in a challenging mood. She smiled contentedly: “Oh spirit, Oh spirit of my beloved husband! You can have my body as a place of rest! It will be a sacred place for your breath! One body is enough for two loving souls. Oh my lover’s spirit defy this merciless well and respond to the voice of the one who loved you!”

The well was disturbed for a while; some of its walls fell. Its water dried and a lot of spirits escaped. Her husband’s spirit was disturbed. It reached her throat and entered her body strongly as if it was invading it. She trembled but her body was full of happiness as the new spirit entered it. The two



spirits were united and their area of joy was very large. One loving body was enough for both of them.

The cold breeze of the morning blew into her face, the sun rays flirted with her eye lids. She went back half naked carrying two loving spirits, they have both defeated the tyranny of the savage well.



## **His Amorous Cat**



I know that she was coming. Let's say, I was sure she was coming. To tell the truth, I wished she would come. I am looking forward to the moment she breaks free from my world as she is running through my blood and my body. The waiting time was my sacred chance in a world where it became almost impossible to find a time for day dreaming. But I was a dangerous thief as I was able to defeat the time and steal a brush to paint her. I planned to paint her in my mind for the future, and I have been waiting.

I thought of her as a woman who loved me madly. She looked like all the women of the world but she would be different to other women. In my mind she summarizes all the women of the world, white, tanned, yellow, short, tall, mad and revengeful.

I looked for her in all the women I know and the women I didn't know. I fell in love thousands of times but I hid my real love till she comes.

- "Has she come?"
- "Yes, she has but not the way I wished."

The young man asked with enthusiasm which he lacked for some time: "How?"

The man whose bridges were grey and baldness has swept the front part of his head answered quietly as if he was going to tell a sacred story of worship in front of the fire place: “A cat came.”

- “You mean, she came as naughty as a cat, is that right?”
- “Absolutely not.”
- “You mean, you loved cats instead of people?”

The man patted the young man on his legs affectionately and said: “Let me prepare the tea for you!” and stood up. He looked taller than what the young man expected, with a slim body and a skin like earth soil and eyes full of search and skepticism. He quickly disappeared with his big steps inside his hut; the young man looked at the place around him. He breathed as much as he can of the forest’s fresh air. He closed his eyes for a minute and relaxed in his cane chair. Then he opened his eyes and started to look at every part of nature with love and intimacy. He found it strange that he is like most people pass by things every day without paying attention. “Abundance makes people forget to thank God.”

Now he appreciates the value of every minute when he stops to look at the beauty of things we take for granted. Often we pass by things without looking at them because we don’t want to break our daily routine even for few seconds. There is no

doubt that the feeling that the end of that free show is coming to an end has prompted him to make an exceptional stop and look at his life's details.

The next morning, his doctor told him after a long period of tests, medications and operations that he is facing blindness which is going to happen soon and it will be decisive. He wanted to end his life but for a moment he felt that blindness will deprive him from the gift of sight.

He never felt the need to gaze at things and faces as much as he feels now. That's why he decided to stop in front of everything and it was Mr. Farah, the owner of the hut, to be the first person to watch. Because of his monotonous daily routine, he sees him a lot walking alone in the town's streets with his sports clothes and rubber shoes. He used to see him walking with pride and signs of intelligence and clarity dominate his features. He rarely smiles, he buys whatever he needed quickly, pack it gracefully, put it in his old car then disappears among the crowded trees of the forest which lies on the fringes of the eastern part of the town. He lives alone with his cats which lived around the place. He lives with his cats, his secrets and his past which caused a lot of curiosity around the town.

When he was young he was scared of the man of the forest as the students used to call him at school. His grandmother used to talk about him in a neutral way which he didn't like. Some

used to say that he was hiding in the forest because of a crime he committed, others used to say that he loves painting in the forest. His father used to curse him, for no reason, and used to call him godless every time his name was mentioned. The local butcher said that that man doesn't buy meat from him and that he breeds cats not because he loves them but because he lives on their meat which he particularly likes to eat. He crucifies them at the trees, skins them with his sharp knife while they are alive and mewling.

The place is packed with cats. The young man watched one of them chasing a colorful butterfly. He wondered whether there are, heaps of cats' fur inside the hut. He thought of asking the 'Cat Man' as he used to call him for a tour inside that little hut, but he didn't expect him to agree to that request. The young man found him well mannered, quiet with special magnetism and good taste especially, when he visited him unexpectedly and without previous acquaintance, yet he received him well. That prompted the young man to talk to him about the looming tragedy which he waits for it to befall on him.

The young man played with a red furred cat. "Do you like cats?" the man asked while he was coming with two cups of tea with wild mint flavor. The young man gazed at him for a while then helped him to put the two cups on a chopped tree trunk which the man uses as a table: "Yes, I do. What about you?" "I loved them always." Said the man



The young man asked in a meaningful tone: “Do they love you?”

The man went silent. He sipped some tea: “Why did you decide to visit me now?” he asked

“I don’t know, believe me I don’t know!” the young man answered in a tone which sounded honest

- “Please note that, I am going to talk about something which I have never told anybody before. I was afraid that people start to have suspicions about me or I might find myself in a mental hospital if I talk about my grievance.

I have a special intuition which tells me that I am not going to see you after this meeting and you are not coming back to this place. We humans feel relieved when we talk about our grievances to someone we feel that we are not going to see after. They will be laden with our secrets and the details of our private lives. “  
the man said

The young man nodded his head with interest as if he was encouraging the man to continue his story, unconsciously he moved closer to where the man was sitting. The man was sitting with one leg over the other; he looked into the distance which is close to his feeling

“I have a story with cats.” the man said

The young man rushed in a curious manner: “Do you eat them?” the young man asked.

The man stared at the young man with surprise and started to laugh. For the first time, he saw the nice smile of the man flowing like a running stream: “Off course not, I don’t eat them! Who told you these silly things?” The man asked.

The young man felt very embarrassed. The man patted him on the leg and said: “It’s up to you to believe what I am going to tell you, but I assure you that I am going to tell you the truth and nothing but the truth. Few years ago, I had a little cat which was about to die when I found her. I saved her from some naughty kids. I snatched her from their hands and gave her a lot of love and care to the point where I became like a mother to her as I used to give her the milk in a bottle. She was blond with blue eyes. I have never seen any eyes holding so much love like her eyes. She became my companion, she never left me day or night and for some reason I know myself, she became a part of me. Seeing her play, made me very happy and if I didn’t give her attention, she used to get upset. She didn’t mind me scratching her, didn’t I tell you that she became my companion.

We stayed like that till I met a girl and decided to marry her. The first thing that girl wanted was that I should get rid of that cat. She hated her and claimed that she is scared of cats but what I could see was a deep hatred for my cat in her eyes. So,

I decided to get rid of that cat but that cat turned into a wild animal every time my fiancé visited me in my home unit. I didn't know why getting rid of that cat meant like throwing a piece of me into nonexistence.

At the wedding night, I didn't feel happy. I felt that the whole world was going to leave with my cat as one of my relatives was going to take that cat and put her with his cats in his far away farm. I was getting ready to put my suit on, when that cat sneaked into my room. I tried to play with her but I felt that she was resentful, which was something I had never seen from her before. I hugged her against her will but I saw tears in her eyes. Suddenly she burst into tears, I was confused. How can a cat cry like humans? Those tears were her entry to humanity as her skin had gone and it changed into a friendly girl who kissed me, hugged me strongly and stuck to me. That was a frightening scene for me. I thought she was a devil or an evil spirit, so, I fled the house screaming and locked my cat girl in.

We had the wedding and I disappeared with my wife in one of the hotels in a capital city. I was scared to go back to my home unit. I wondered whether that cat girl would be waiting for me. I was scared that I might find her there. I was also scared that I might not find her. During the days which I had spent with my wife the human image of that cat wouldn't leave my mind. Damn me! Why did I flee her love? The love has given her life when I couldn't give her that. I started to

feel that she was my fictitious woman whom I had spent my life waiting for”.

The man went silent but signs of bitterness showed on his face as he became upset. “Please finish the story, what happened after that?” the young man asked with interest. The man smiled a dead smile: “I went back to the home unit with my wife.” he said

The young man jumped to his feet with excitement: “Did you find it?” he asked

“I found my cat dead and it had decayed” The man said with the feeling of someone who dissolved a treasure in acid. “After that I couldn’t stand my wife. I felt that she was guilty. I felt that she had conspired to kill my amorous cat, I left her unrepentantly and I left the town. Since then I have reared many cats for many years. I have waited for her spirit to come back into one of the cats. Oh God. How much do I need to tell her how much I love her! How hard it is if the ones we spend our lives waiting for, leaves us without us having the chance to tell them that we love them.”

The man went silent again. It seemed that he didn’t want to add anything to what he had said. Still he said indifferently: “You don’t believe me! Is that right? You are excused, But believe me, we only meet those ones once in a life time.”

-“Who are they?” the young man asked.

“They are the ones who are able to make us happy.” the man said.

Silence prevailed. The young man felt sorry for that unlucky man. He believed every word the man told him from that strange story, and why not: “Love is the prophet of all miracles.”

The young man crept from where he was sitting without looking at anything or saying anything. On the way home, he stopped tens of times to look at all faces and sceneries. He realized that the person we usually look for is always in front of us and life would have a different meaning when we stop for a little while to look at the smallest details, even if that stop was a cat’s mew.



## **The Rain Forecaster**





He closes his eyes, sharpens his senses and puts his index finger in his mouth till it gets wet with his saliva then raises it in the air so it can sense the direction of the wind. He looks at the western horizon then he says that the rain will fall in one hour, in one day or in a month. His predictions come true and the rain falls at the time predicted. Sometimes he shakes his head in a quiet showy gesture and says with indifference: “No rain for the present.” and leaves without waiting for a grant or a gift.

He knows that no farmer is going to give him a present after he tells him that there will be no rain in the near future. He actually doesn't worry about presents from the farmers which are no more than few eggs or a box of fruits and vegetables or a few pennies which they save cautiously and carefully.

At the same time he doesn't care about presents given to him by friends, acquaintances or relatives as they don't have much value. The presents are not usually an appreciation and a celebration of his exceptional talent rather an expression of joy when the rain falls or an expression of gloom when there is no rain. Rain is not a matter of interest for city dwellers, the only interest of rain for them is what to wear in the morning or how to organize invitations or weekend trips. The admiration of the audience or the praise he receives from beautiful women for his talent and his accurate rain forecast is enough for him.

Soon he became professional forecaster instead of doing that as a hobby. In this way he could keep himself happy and make

him believe in his abilities which they expand and make people believe in his ability as a rain forecaster.

He refuses to be called ‘Rain Forecaster’ as the people of the fertile region of the southern part of the island used to call someone with his talent which is acquired by practice and natural aptitude to sharpen his senses. He should also have the skill of listening to nature’s whisper, its changes and evolution. But he has a unique talent of forecasting rain. Although sometimes he likes the nickname ‘The Rain Forecaster’, other times he resents it as it makes him the centre of mockery and makes him angry when the going gets tough. He puts his hand into his pocket to find that it is empty with not even one penny in it in best circumstances.

He doesn’t know exactly whether he came here from the evergreen land and water looking for work or he came back empty handed from the evergreen land and after he went there looking for work. But he is sure of two things: Firstly, he has never been successful in earning living in a permanent and decent job. Secondly, he is the best rain forecaster in the world by the testimony of his teachers and the people of the evergreen land. His title and his great talent haven’t helped him to fill his hungry stomach or secure his daily food requirement.

He can claim that he doesn’t care about being poor or needy and about his misfortune. He could find who would believe in his claim even with some reservation. To be precise, he can claim that he is the happiest person in the world but his claims wouldn’t stop his stomach from aching from hunger and

biting itself asking for food. That's why it is wise to put a limit to his claims and continue his journey of chasing work, something made his feet sore and made his life full of worry.

He wished that his old teacher who taught him how to forecast for rain had taught him a different skill, a skill which would make him rich like telling fortunes, luck would come to him after long enmity. Or his teacher could have taught him how to predict death, so that he could take the life of his neighbor 'Nemet' who keeps betraying her old husband because of his weakness and inability. He also wished his teacher had taught him how to bring people back to life so that he can get his father's remains and bring him back to life to look after him and have mercy on him and his brothers after they became an inheritance shared by force and coercion by his uncles and his aunties after his father's death. His widowed mother left them and went to the arms of a man who lost his wife who did the opposite of what his mother did, by deciding to keep his children home with him and buy them a maid by the way of a marriage contract.

He wished his teacher taught him how to control love and compassion so that he can put them into 'Siham's, the girl with golden eyes, parents' heart as they wouldn't let him marry their daughter just because he was poor. He was forced to say good bye to her when she was leaving into the arms of another man just because that man had money and wealth. He wished his teacher taught him how to control fair trade and stop 'Abu Wassim' the money lender who sucks the debtors' bones as well as their blood in return for the money he lends to them and gets it back doubled or tripled, taking advantage of the debtors' circumstances and hardship.

He wished his teacher taught him how to control dreams so that they come true and become real in front of his eyes and give him his postponed happiness and quashed hopes, but in the end he has to forget about his dreams and wishes and live with the reality which is that he is a rain forecaster and nothing else. He masters this skill which many people are unable to master, but unfortunately he is unable to master what most people are able to master.

His circumstances are responsible for most of his poverty, failure, misfortune, despair and submissiveness. His circumstances are also responsible for his past and present miseries. The only good thing was his success in his school studies. He was first in his class after his uncle sent him to school ignoring his desire to learn his uncle's trade, and against his wife's desire who wanted to make him a servant for her children. In his last school year he achieved an average of 85.5 per cent and he was considered as an outstanding talent and the genius of his time in the eyes of his cousins and relatives.

His neediness stood in the way of his ambition again, His uncle's wife gave him the name of 'Ajwad the Fool' and was often beaten because he didn't call her 'Mum'. That nick name stuck to him. The hatred in that alleged mother stayed with her but it didn't kill her while he didn't have the chance to take his revenge from her and return that stupid nick name to her.

Once when he started to discover his talent, he could smell rain and he was sure that there will be a rainy storm coming

soon although the skies were very clear at the time. He almost told everybody that rain is coming soon, but he kept it as a secret to himself so his uncle's wife won't have the chance to store the beans and vegetables she spent the whole summer collecting them and drying them in the sun so she can store them. Rain fell in buckets and all the uncle's wife beans and vegetables were wasted. His uncle's wife was so upset to the point where she swore and cried while he rejoiced in a joyful dance. He didn't worry about her spitting on him or stressing that he is a fool.

He came back from the evergreen land with his neediness and rain forecasting talent. He spent a lot of time looking for work but to no avail, till he met an old man with the eyes of a falcon. He stood next to him and gazed at his calm face: "Oh man, why did you come to this land?" the old man asked.

- "I came to look for work. Do you have any work for me?"
- "I don't need workers but I can give you food and shelter if you learn from me."
- "What do you want me to learn from you?"
- "You will know now, if you accept the agreement."
- "But"
- "No hesitation."

He agreed that day to learn the old man's skills not because he wanted to learn from him as much as to avoid hunger and sleeping in the streets. Within few months of learning which suited his talents and aptitude, he became a rain forecaster. He didn't know where he could use his skills, although he could use them in a unique and strange manner. He could use them in magic and quackery but his teacher warned him against using his skills in that way to earn living and he asked him not

to follow that path as it will put a barrier between him and rain forecasting. He accepted his teacher's advice and he preferred to go back to his country.

As no one in the city is interested in rain forecasting, besides standing and gazing at the blue skies, so he didn't find any work which suits his exceptional talents. He thought that some advertisement could help. He spent the money he got from selling the pendant he received from his teacher to pay for some advertisements in newspapers and magazines about forecasting that rain will fall soon or when no rain will be falling in the near future, but no one gave him any attention. He carried a pendant with a card with the words 'Rain Forecaster' in neat writing and sneaked into students' clubs and political party conferences and national blocks. He even sneaked into animal welfare organizations and Calcutta reconstruction organization and Anti Sexual Harassment Directorate and Anti Violence against Wives groups and The Infertility International conferences and Free Opinion Association and Professional Studios. He spent hours following these organizations programs. He presented a lot of worksheets highlighting the importance of rain and rain forecasting in support of their programs. He spent many hours in debates about his assumed pioneering role in any organization which is willing to adopt him but to no avail. There was no place in the world for a sad rain forecaster who has a magic nose that could smell water even it was a light year away.

With a humble recommendation from the elderly chairwoman of an organization of small projects who showed a lot of

admiration for his round legs and the uniformity of his lower body, he was able to get a job as a newspaper distributor and with a recommendation from her too, he was able to get an old bicycle to ride it in the grand streets and between buildings with luxurious apartments, big mansions, palaces and stores with expensive goods which he doesn't even dream of being one of their customers. He pushed the newspapers in steel boxes which were especially installed for that purpose next to the entrance of the gardens of these mansions, palaces and luxurious apartments, then leaves without looking at anything.

His wage was very little but it was enough to pay for his basic needs and save him from sleeping with an empty stomach and getting stomach ache. He hoped that he would be able to save enough money to buy an old car so that he can put the newspapers in it instead of putting them on his bicycle which nearly broke his back and made him exhausted with endless pain in his legs. He knew that his small wish was not something to be realized in the near future with no rain falling soon. He is the newspaper boy for the time being and he is going to stay a newspaper boy after he almost forgot his nick name as rain forecaster.

No one wants the poor and vulnerable especially the ones with grim faces and pale features and weak bodies, even the sybarite women he saw in the city suburbs where he travels to and fro during his work hours, despise him. They wouldn't even smile at him or even give him a look of despise for all the admiration words he bestowed on them. He feels as ashamed of himself as they ignore him and tries to forget the way his manhood was being ignored. The only eyes who

looked at him were the eyes of the mannequin which was placed at the exhibition window of a ladies clothes store which was opened few days ago and a minister attended the opening as well many well known people whom he sees their images on the pages of the newspapers he distributes every morning.

The clothes store has an exhibition glass window, marble floor, and a big revolving door. At the door steps there are two marble garden beds with a lot of colourful flowers which he has never seen like them in his poor alley. He can hardly tell the difference between roses and jasmines.

The mannequin was made from plastic which was molded in a very accurate mould. Her hands and feet were in great uniformity. Her waist is so thin with belts and colours to match every dress she wears from the trendy dresses of the newest fashion. Her hair is wavy black, sometimes it can be straight and blond depends on the wig the designated employee chooses according to the clothes she's wants to exhibit. The mannequin stays in her spot in the exhibition window. She doesn't leave unless the employee carries her inside to change her clothes and her wig, then she is brought back to her spot as a crowned queen.

He is not interested in the mannequin's clothes or the colour of her hair; he is only interested in her beautiful eyes. She has the most beautiful glass eyes he has ever seen. There is love and passion in her eyes which he has never seen in any women. For this reason, he loved her. He loved her plastic



body with its hazel skin color. He loved her enchanting eyes and her heart which beats with his love.

He got used to watching her every time he passed by in the evening during his work trips and that became a rule which he followed. Every day after he finishes work he went to her. He parks his car near the store then sits on a wooden seat exactly opposite the exhibition window where she stands and looks to the distance. He eats his first pie after a tiring day of work while watching her. He tells her about everything.

He tells her about his poverty, his failure and about rain forecasting. She tells him about her plastic world and tells him about her dreams and wishes. He comes close to her and she shows him some affection. He wishes he can have her at the time she dreams of him. She talks to him about her world and he loves it and wishes he can get into that world. He talks to her about his world and she hates it and wishes she could get him out of that world. He decided to culminate their relationship by marriage. All the differences were sorted out and everything is agreed upon but there is still a little problem which they have to tackle and that problem is: which one of them is going to move to the world of the other. They got tired of thinking about it and silence prevails.

Every few days he sends her a bunch of flowers hoping that she would help him to make a wise decision but the store employees refuse to take the flowers to the girl he loves. They accuse him of being mad. How can a man be in love with a mannequin? He insists that the flowers should go to his lover, but he is kicked out like a little mouse after he was threatened

that they will call the police if he doesn't leave. He then settles for leaving the flowers outside the store next to the mannequin's exhibition window which separates him from the girl he loves. His girl's smiles and her passionate looks at him which break her world of silence, ease his sadness and his pity for his flowers which were trampled by the store customers who didn't care about the flowers. They step on them when they stop to see the latest trend in fashion.

One of the customers gazes at the body of his mannequin more than usual and he is overwhelmed by mad jealousy. It is not fair that anyone should share his mannequin with him. She is the only woman who loved him and he has forsaken all the woman of the world for her sake. That man leaves the place but jealousy is burning in the heart of the rain forecaster. His lover gives him a gesture that there are good news and gives him hope that relief is nigh. She found a permanent solution for their problem. She decided after a long thought that she would admit him to her world, where there is love and happiness and no pain and poverty. He found that his nick name would be one reason for him not to agree to that. She asked him in a soft voice laden with the plastic elasticity: "What's wrong with that? You will be a rain forecaster there as well. Just the opposite, you will find more respect and appreciation there than you find in your present world. 'But I am a rain forecaster.'" he replied.

She smiled and moved a step forward and stuck her mouth at the glass window and kissed the glass window which separates her from him: "Let us be that, I love you. We'll meet tomorrow." Then she quickly moved back to her spot.

An old lady was watching the mannequin's movement. She couldn't believe what she saw. She wondered whether there is something wrong with her brain. She took her glasses and looked at them to see whether there is a problem with them. She thinks that she saw a mannequin moving, talking and kissing.

He didn't pass by her in the morning as usual. He postponed that till he fixes some outstanding problems in his world, and they were only few. These problems were mainly, to ring his brothers and sisters and says good bye to them and curse his uncle's wife in a letter which he is going to send to her with the bakery worker who lives next door to them. He has to burn all his old books as he doesn't know anyone who wants to read them. He handed back the bicycle to the newsagent which he worked for without talking to him about the payment of his wage as the month is about to end, but anyway he wouldn't need any money in the world he is about to enter. He is happy to leave this world which deprived him of many things, even if he received his mean wage which he hasn't received.

He wore his best clothes, or to be precise he wore all the clothes he got for happy occasions which are very few. He wore clothes he inherited from his teacher. In these clothes he'll look like a clown who wants to look bad in Halloween

night. His clothes include a shiny tie and a blue hat. He stood in front of his girl who looked worried with her pale plastic cheeks. He smiled at her and she smiled at him too.

- "I miss you." he said
- "I miss you more! Are you ready?" She asked
- "Quite ready, but not before I give you a dowry which no woman has ever got anything like it." He said
- "What is it?" she asked with enthusiasm

He replied with pride and confidence: "I will give you the rain."

He hit the ground with his stick, closed his eyes and read a strange hymn. The skies became full of dark clouds within seconds, and then the clouds got thicker to the point where they blocked the sun and the whole place fell into darkness. There was lightning and thunder followed by heavy rain. The sudden fall of the rain surprised everyone and hindered their movement.

While everyone was busy looking for shelter from the rain, the rain forecaster looked to the right then he looked to the left, he adjusted his tie and pressed on his hat so that it won't get lost in the impossible crossing journey.

He rushed quickly towards the exhibition glass window and went through it with his body. Going through the window was painful, but she was there waiting for him. A spectrum of unknown colours was dancing in his eyes. He felt that something calling him to throw himself in to his lover's arms.

He was happy because he is a rain boss who is lucky with his romance and he is able to move between two worlds.

In the evening the city was flooded with unseasonal rain, which spoiled everything and hindered people's movements. It stopped many people from attending the funeral of the rain forecaster who died after a frenzy of madness, according to the doctor's report. That frenzy made him go through a glass window. He had a broad smile, but none of the mourners bothered to know its secret, as no one cares about a poor rain forecaster.



## **The Body**





He swore one thousand times that he will never love ‘The Body’. He doesn’t wish to put his arms around any waist and won’t be longing for the warmth of any body. At least that’s what he remembers of what has happened. But for some time he has experienced a special feeling inviting him mercilessly to partner a body which could take him out of his loneliness and make him feel the warmth of intimacy. Since he made his decision, he started to take deprivation as a career, but his threads and buttons beg him to forget, and they incite him to renounce that decision and scold him for the crime of desertion and infringement of its rights.

He was a linen pair of trousers. It has been through critical situations in his life. He participated in election campaigns which his political party has fought against the Hats Party. He doesn’t remember now the name of the political party which he belonged to, but he is sure the party’s headquarters was in a building which overlooks an important tourists and leisure site called the Night Warmth Club.

He sat for many exams and he doesn’t understand waiver. He mastered the language of the body. He is a pair of trousers which has fought a battle after battle and came back defeated time and time again and he was contended as they say: “Returning is a boon” but sometimes he doesn’t think that he returned with the win he likes to come back with. He stayed as an old and perforated pair of trousers for the language of the bodies which made him tired and exhausted, he couldn’t find its secret or tried to get to the depth of it.

Since he loved that body which deserted him, he felt that his sides were torn and its colour faded, its buttons are dangled and they are not strongly attached as they were. Its upper tabs were worn and its waist has become lax. He totally forgot glory and he lives on the memory of that waist which it encircled with pride and provocation. That was a long time ago, but he still loves the smell of the seat of that body which he embraced to the point of attachment and accompanied him everywhere. He was only separated from him at night to lie close to him.

He spends his nights in waiting and lust. He gave him everything, even when the body told him about his wish for him to renew himself, he didn't deny him that. He has dyed and shortened himself so that he can look more modern and able to follow the last trend in fashion which he hates.

But all of that did not lead to any thing. In the end, the body deserted him for another pair of trousers. The day he swore that he want adore any body and won't have pity for any naked person and will keep to himself and his curiosity and not to anyone else, but his soul begged him to get a body as it looked for a vessel to contain it and to create it.

He decided to extinguish his longing by getting cold and not by drinking. He left his house broken by his request. It was very hot. He went to the city markets where the exhibition windows of the stores are packed with bodies exhibited for sale, small and big clothes fill the streets. It is strange how the clothes allow their young to play in the streets in this weather.

One small shirt was nearly wrinkled under the big wheels of a speeding bus.

Soon, he arrived at the market, even faster than he expected. He stood baffled in front of the first store. The exhibited bodies were sweating and nearly dry from the heat. They didn't tempt him to look at them as he almost felt sorry for them but he didn't allow himself any feeling of pity. He reminded himself that he didn't come to the market to spread his feelings freely. The store owner urged him to come to the exhibition hall, but he looked at him with disgust and rejected his dubious invitation.

A lot of stores advertised for big seasonal discounts on the bodies, especially the big ones. He asked himself: "Which season do they mean?" Do they mean the season of cheap bodies? Or the season of marriage, or the season of heat?" He doesn't know. He shook his head and said in an indifferent voice, which he thought passersby have heard it: "Who cares?"

On the footpath there were exhibition stalls. Bodies were scattered haphazardly, coloured bodies, tattooed bodies, hairy bodies, smooth and hairless bodies. There were bodies of all sizes, first class quality, second class quality and third class quality. Some with defects like: burns, breaks or dislocations, that's why there were extra discounts on them.

He looked for a body to extinguish his fire, a body which he feels that he has been looking for him for thousands of years. A body cannot be exhibited or auctioned and not all clothes

would touch him, some would despise him others would auction him.

He was horrified by the slavery which he saw everywhere. He thanked God that he was created as a pair of trousers with respect and appreciation, and not a body to be sold and bought and to be brought at any time to the slavery market with no one feeling sorry for his ominous fate.

After he wished that the damned bodies would earn respect and their wellbeing protected and their status would be elevated. He thought that a strong revolt would give the bodies some of their lost respect back and put them at the same level of respect with clothes. Then his lost confidence in bodies will be restored and would open his threads to welcome a body. But for now he only has a feeling of disgust and pity.

He walked away from the bodies market. He walked towards one of the streets which leads to the forest surrounding the city. One of the shirts begged him to buy one of the bodies which he carries. He measured one of these bodies on the pair of trousers who was burdened by his ailments. The shirt confirmed that the body measure matches that of the trousers. He offered him to buy two bodies for the price of one, or even, three bodies for the price of one.

The pair of trousers felt that his feeling of disgust has surged, he turned his eyes off the shirt which was still tattling. He dreams of a body which he doesn't have to buy from the

slavery market or a body which he doesn't take by a stroke of luck.

His best wish is to get a body which is free from filth, a body which has never been exhibited in the market, a body which hasn't been handled once or has been looked at by anyone.

He is looking for a body, which can be loyal to him and would make him live a happy life forever, away from the market of bodies. Till then, he will live with his longing for a body which he hasn't met yet.

Again, he reverted to waiting.

*End of this story collection*



**Dr. Sanaa shalan in brief**

- She is Dr. Sanaa Kamel Ahmed Shalan, a Jordanian writer of Palestinian background
- She holds a doctorate in modern literature

**Qualifications:**

- 1- Bachelor degree in Arabic language and literature from Yarmouk University with A+ average in 1998.
- 2- Masters degree in Modern literature from the University of Jordan with A+ average in 2003.
- 3- Ph.D in Arabic from the University of Jordan with A+ average in 2006.

**Honorary Degrees:**

- 1- Awarded honorary doctorate in journalism and media from Cambridge in April 2014

**Literary memberships:**

1. Member of Jordanian Writers League.
2. Member of Jordanian Arab Writers Union.
3. Member of Jordanian Family of Future Writers. Ammoun Forum for Literature and Cticism.
4. Member of Jordanian Karak Literature Forum.
5. Member of Jordanian Literature Club in the University of Jordan.
6. Member of Jordanian Al-Mashreq Forum for Literature and Culture.
7. Honorary member in Dar Naji Nu'man for Literature.
8. A member of Arab Writers' League
9. Honorary member in the Mediterranean Centre for Studies and Researches
10. Member of Arab Linguists and Translators Association

11. - Member of the editorial board of the High Bank of the Tigris River
12. Supportive member of the International Institute for Women Solidarity
13. Member of the Jordanian Society of Critics.
14. Member of the Arab Organization for Electronic Cultural Media
15. Member of the Association of Arab Writers.
16. Member of a higher advisory committee in Aa'rar News Agency, Gate to Arabic Culture.
17. Honorary member of the Egyptian Translators and Linguists Association.
18. Member of the Association of "Al-Anwar" for Independent Humanity
19. Member of the World Press Council.
20. Member of the Advisory Board of the Journal of the Educational Community.
21. Member of the Association of Jordanian-Palestinian Brothers.
22. Member of the editorial team of the Journal of Health and Beauty Balm.
23. Member of the editorial board of "Mirrors of the Diaspora.
24. Member in the advisory committee in Al-Jasra cultural magazine.
25. Member in the administrative committee in "Al-Mashriq for Culture and Thought"
26. Judge in some cultural competitions.
27. Member of the Scientific Advisory Forum Maghreb narrative. Arabic literature Department, University of Skikda, Algeria
28. Member of Writers Without Borders
29. Member of the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference for the First Deans of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research of the Union of Arab Universities: Al Aqsa University, Gaza in cooperation with the Arab Council for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research of the Union of Arab Universities.
30. Member of the Iraqi Writers Association in Australia.
31. Member of the advisory body in the Arab Journal for Quality and best practice and excellence: AJQBPE
32. Member of the Scientific Advisory and Media for the cultural magazine Al-Manar TV.



33. Member of the Media Committee of the Conference of the Francophone Conference Second International Jordanian Al al-Bayt University, Jordan, titled: "Receiving a Thousand and One Night in the area of humanities globally."
34. Honorary member of the Council of the Regional Forum for Information
35. Member of the Center for Training and of Press Freedoms CTPJF and coordinated his official in Jordan.
36. Editor for the newspaper Without Borders of the Book Without Borders (RSF)
37. Member of the Iraqi Arab Story Publishers.
38. Member of the Golden Phoenix International Festival.
39. Member of the Scientific Committee at the Second International Forum marked by sociological novel in the light of contemporary monetary curriculum for the year 2013 / University of Xian Djelfa / Algeria
40. A member of the Association of Tunisian Writers.
41. Member of the Scientific Committee of the First National Forum on: The Algerian novel in the light of contemporary critical curriculum.
42. Member of the Immortal River Literary Association
43. Member of a consultative scientific organization arbitrator in the Arbitrated Scientific Readings issued by the Faculty of Arts and Languages, Moasker University, Algeria
44. Member of Senior Arab Critics Council.
45. Member and international representative of Peace and Friendship International Organization/ Denmark
46. Member of the Council of Arab Writers, Scholars and Intellectuals.
47. Director of Amman Office / Jordan, for the International Conscience of Human Rights/Sydney/Australia.
48. Chief Editor of "Wojhat", Scientific Journal, issued by Mlaitan for Research, Studies and Cultural Development Foundation.
49. Director of the Arabic Cultural House branch in India in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

**Academic Positions**

1. Full time professor in the University of Jordan-Language's Center.
2. Visiting professor for the Masters degree level /Contemporary critical syllabuses and teaching the Arabic language, Arabic Language Department, University of Mustafa Istamboli, Algeria, May 2015.
3. . A visiting professor for the Masters Degree /contemporary critique curriculums and Arabic language teaching. Arabic Language Department, University of Mascara, People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, March 2014
4. Lecturer of Arabic for the students of Prince Hussein Ben Abdallah The Second Academy for Civilian Protection 2012-2013
5. Part time lecturer in the University of Jordan-Languages' Center.
6. Part time lecture in Arabic Language Department-University of Jordan.
7. Part time lecturer for teaching Arabic as a foreign language at the University of Jordan/ Language Centre
8. Part time lecturer to teach post graduate studies at the University of the Middle East for the academic year 2011-2012.
9. Teacher of Arabic language for high elementary levels for 7 years.
10. Teacher of purposeful drama for talented and gifted Students for four years.
- 11.

**Non-academic Positions:**

1. Correspondent for Al-Jasra Culture magazine in Qatar.
2. A fixed weekly column in "Al-Dustor" Jordanian newspaper.
3. A fixed weekly column in "the Mediterranean Dimensions" newspaper in Morocco
4. General Secretary of the Warraq publication and distribution Foundation Award in 2009
5. A fixed column in “Al-Ra’ed” Sudanese daily
6. A fixed column in the of Echoes Astronomical magazine, United Arab Emirates.

7. A fixed column in "Ru'a" magazine, Saudi Arabia.
8. A fixed column in the Iraqi newspaper "Al-Hikmah"
9. Representative of the International Women Organization in Jordan
10. - Correspondent for The Stars, Al Anwar and The Telegraph Arabic newspapers in Sydney / Australia.
11. - Fixed column in The Telegraph Newspaper in Sydney /Australia
12. - Fixed column in the Palestinian Right of Return Newspaper
13. - Fixed column in The Home Builders and The Jordanian Contractor, Jordan
14. - Representative of the Swedish Golden Desert Foundation in the Middle East
15. - Weekly column in Al Ra'ed Sudanese newspaper.
16. - Official coordinator in Jordan for the Rehabilitation Center and Protecting Freedom of the Press, (CTPJF)
17. - Branch Manager of Writers Without Borders (RSF) in Jordan.
18. - Branch Manager of Iraqi Arabic Story Publishers in Jordan.
19. - Branch director for the Festival of the Phoenix Gold International in Jordan
20. - Supervising the cultural pages of (The Garden of Literature and the Orchid of Poetry) in the People's Website.
21. -Fixed column titled: "Sun, Light and Rain" in the Union Newspaper, the newspaper of the Central Union of Kurdistan (PUK).
22. - Chairperson of the cultural section of Karam News Agency
23. - Representative of the Immortal River Literary Association and director of its office in Amman
24. - Adviser for the initiative of "Your life is Important to Us) which was launched by (Bright Future) group in 2014.
25. - Fixed weekly column in "Al Najah" Newspaper titled "Light and Fire".
26. - Deputy Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian newspaper "Rai Al Umma" and chairperson of the literature and arts section and editor of the newspaper.

**Awards for literature and creativity:**

1. Salah Hilal Literary Award for short story in the 14<sup>th</sup> session in the area of short story for the story of “*The Dreams of the Sleepless*”, Cairo Egypt, 2015
2. The Free Pen for Arab Creativity Carnival Award in its fifth session in the area of short story for the short story of “Diving in Hell” and the first award for the Free Pen establishment, Al Fayoum, Egypt, 2014.
3. The International Gleam Story award in the area of gleam stories , for the gleam stories of, “took place somewhere” International Union for Poets and Creative Arabs. Cairo, Egypt. 2014.
4. Martyr Abdel Raouf Annual Literary Award, Martyr Day” session in the area of play writing for the play of “One Face for Two Wets”. Poets, Thinkers and Innovators Association, Cairo, Egypt, 2014.
5. - Naser Salaheddine Award of the late writer Mohamed Tomlieh in short story for 2014, for the story collection” The Hermit of the Hermitage” Municipality of Karak/ Jordan Appreciation Award for the best book in 2013 for the novel “Aashaqoni” , Phoenix International Establishment, The Hague – Iraq 2014
6. - Award of the (50) most influential personalities in Jordan. Ranked No. 19, for the year 2013, (Alliance of Jordanian Training Organizations Union (Juthro), Jordan, Amman.
7. Golden Phoenix International Award for Outstanding Women in 2013, Golden Phoenix Festival, The Hague – Maysan -Prize for Arab Women Conference in 2012, Excellence Award, academic and creative influence on the overall production of creative and critical works, the Arab Women's Conference, Center for Creative Thinking, Amman, Jordan.
8. Award of the Book Without Borders / Middle East cultural cooperation with the Iraqi National Business Council for the year 2012 in the field of short story, first prize for the story "Lost in the Eyes of the Man of the Mountain," the book Without Borders, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran.

9. Claweez Award for the Appreciation of Creativity in 2011 for the overall creative production, Festival Claweez, Center Claweez Cultural and Creative Work, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
10. Dubai's Cultural Award for creativity at its seventh session in the novel of the year 2010/2011 for the novel "I Adore Myself (Ashaqoni)", Journal of Cultural Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
11. Ahmed Bozfor Award for short story at its ninth session / first prize for the story of "Facial" for the year 2011, Red Star Society for Education, Culture and Social Development Project Blgosaira, Morocco
12. - Crossing the Strait Award at its fourth session in the field of short story / first prize for the story "Where the Sea Does Not Pray" for the year 2011, the Education Foundation and the community of Spanish, in collaboration with the Department of the Alhambra and Khneralev Foundation Albesen and the Assembly of UNESCO for the Advancement of Morality
13. Philadelphia University Award in its Ninth Arab University Theater for the best text for a theatrical play "It Has Been Said That" for the year 2010.
14. - Sheikh Mohammed Saleh Bashrahil International Award for Cultural Creativity in its third session in the field of novel and short story for all my works in the areas of novel and short story, in 2010.
15. Young Writers Award / Abdul Mohsen Qattan, Encouragement prize in the field of theater Msrahitha "Search for Frisp" for the year 2009.
16. "Saqyat El Sawy" Cultural Award for the creative short story, Cairo, Egypt, the story of "Galatia Again" for 2009
17. The Eighth Award of "Baseera" "Martyrs of the Revolution" in short story, Jordan, for the story of "The Details in the History of Ibn mahzoom and generosity of Science" in 2009.
18. Sphinx's for Translation and Publishing Literature Passion Award, Cairo, Egypt, the story of "Nafs Ammara bel Ishq" 2009
19. Sharhabil Ben Hasna Award for creativity. Irbid Municipality, Jordan. First prize. For the children story "Zeriyab" in 2008

20. Culture and Arts Association Award / Ministry of Culture in Jeddah / Saudi Arabia 2008. First prize for the play: "An Invitation for Dinner" in 2008.
21. Cultural Features Magazine Award in 2008 in the field of the stories for the manuscript of: "The Year of Ants" in 2008.
22. "Saydati" Magazine Award for writing the best love letter, first prize of a letter entitled "In the Name of My Love to You" in 2008.
23. Hazaa' Al-Nahian's Sons for children literature/ children's story category in its 10th session, for the story "The One With the Golden Heart' for the year 2007.
24. Al-Harith Ben Omair Al-Ozdi Award for creativity in its 6th session, the first prize for short story, for the story "A Tale for All the Tales" in 2007.
25. Hashimaite university Award in play writing, first award for the play "It Has been Said" (Once Upon a Time) in 2007.
26. The Young Author's Award/Abd-Al-Muhsin Qatan Association, first prize for the stories " Khader's Eyes" in 2006.
27. - Al-Naser Salaheddine Al-Ayoubi Award in its third session, first prize for best play script for the play: "Evening Guests" in 2006.
28. - Anti- Shooting Society's Award first prize for the story "Urgent Message'.
29. Al-Shariqa Award for Arabic creativity for the collection of stories: "The Nightmare'. First award in: 2006.
30. Dar Naji Nu'man award for culture for biography for children titled: "Zeriab" in 2006.
31. University of Jordan Award for first place for the playwright of the university' for the best play script for the play titled: "Six in a Crypt" in 2006.
32. - Saqiat Al-Sawi Award for short story for the story:"The Back Room" in 2006.
33. Al-Bajrawiah Award for the best scientific research in 2005 for the research: "A Comparative Study Between Al Maari's Message of Forgiveness and Dante's The Divine Comedy".
34. University of Jordan Shield for outstanding student academically and creatively in 2005.

35. Al-Naser Saladin Award in its second session for the collection of stories: 'The Land of Stories' in 2005.
36. Dr. Suad Al-Sabbah Award for the collection of stories: "Tell Me a Story" in 2005.
37. The State Award of Youth Innovation in short story in 2005
38. The Award of the Jordanian Universities' story writer for the story titled: "A Tale" in 2005.
39. Moa'tah University award for short story for the year 2004 – 2005, Deanship of Students Affairs, Moa'tah University, Jordan
40. The Cultural Contest Award plus the Cultural Shield of the university chancellor in 2005.
41. Al-Naser Saladin Award for the novel titled: "Falling in the Sun" in 2005.
42. Future Writers Award for the story titled "The Hexagonal Deprivation" in 2005.
43. The of Islamic Literature Award for the short story titled: "Khader's Eyes" in 2005.
44. The award and the title of the University of Jordan in the field of short story for the story titled: "The Tale" for the year 2004.
45. The award and the title of the University of Jordan in the field of 'Thoughts' for the thought: "To You" in 2004.
46. The award and the title of the University of Jordan in the field of 'The ending of the short story for the story titled: "In An Evening" for the year 2004.
47. The Award of the Arabic Language Department at The University of Jordan in short story for the story titled: "The Carnival of Sadness" in 2004.
48. The Government Youth Creativity Award in short story in 2004.
49. - Future Writers Award in short for the story titled: "Tell Me a Tale" in 2001.
50. Play Writing Award, University of Jordan, Secretariat of Students affairs, Jordan 2005/2006

**Literary and Creative Awards I didn't accept:**

1. Didn't accept the nomination for the award of the best intellectual for 2013, Jordanian South Association, Jordan 2014

**Merits, medals, shields and honours:**

2. Shield of "The Stars" for creative and media excellence from the newspapers and magazine of Annojourn (The Stars), The Telegraph and Al Anwar in 2010, Sydney / Australia.
3. Shield of University of Jordan for creativity and academically outstanding faculty member for the year 2009, within 'the Harvest of the Deanship of Scientific Research Ceremony.
4. Received the title of "one of the 60 most successful Arabic women in 2008" in a survey conducted by the Arab magazine "Sayedati" (My Lady) which is published in Arabic and English.
5. The Shield of the University of Jordan for the faculty member who is distinguished creatively and academically in 2007, during the Deanship Harvest of Scientific Research Ceremony .
6. The Shield of the University of Jordan for the faculty member who is distinguished creatively and academically in 2006, during the Deanship Harvest of Scientific Research Ceremony.
7. Shield the Chancellor of the University of Jordan for the students who is distinguished academically and creatively for the year 2005.
8. Shield of the Iraqi cultural attaché in recognition of my support for the Iraqi and Kurdish Literatures for the year 2012. 'Fuheis' Festival Shield at its twenty-second session in 2012. - Shield of the Cultural Forum of Khalid Shafiq Almnazel for the year 2012.
9. Shield of the Iraqi Minister of Culture for Excellence and Innovation in 2012.
10. Shield of Claweez Festival for excellence in its fifth session in 2011  
Shield of Claweez Festival for excellence in its sixth session in 2012
11. The Honorary Shield of the Iraqi Embassy in Jordan for good cooperation with Iraqi institutions and the great sense of responsibility towards Iraq in 2013.



12. Received an honour and a letter of thanks from the Bulgarian Ambassador in Amman "Alexander كوفاتشيف" for my efforts in supporting the Bulgarian culture and keeping in touch with it.
13. Honorary carnival for me at Al Fuhees Girls High School / Jordan with official participation from the Ministry of Education in Jordan as a recognition of my creative and cultural role and for receiving so many awards for creativity, 2013
14. Honoured by "Staff and Stars of Arabic in the Jordanian capital, Amman under the banner of "The Most Prominent Jordanian Literary personality for 2013 in Queen Alia Hotel , 2014
15. Honoured by the chancellor of the University of Mascara, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria as a recognition of my distinguished academic and creative role, 2014-03-15
16. Honoured by the University of Mascara, Popular Democratic Republic of Algeria, for my leading feminist role during the activities of the University's celebrations of women's day on 8/3 /2014
17. Honour and shield from Egypt Future Party in its 2014 carnival in recognition of my role in service and social public work and my constructive contribution in enriching political science.
18. Awarded of the Star of Peace in 2014 from Peace and Friendship International Organization.
19. The Woman of the Week in (My Lady) Sayidati Program / Rotana Gulf Channel (January 2015)
20. Honoured under the royal auspices of Princess Aya Bint Faisal in Zaha Cultural Centre for Mothers Day 2015.
21. Awarded the title of: The Selected Ideal Woman by the Board of Arab writers and intellectuals for my distinguished and effective role in building new generations and working for the advancement and superiority of the country.

**Conferences participated in:**

1. The National Forum of University of Mu'askar themed " *The Arabic Novel and History*" Asia Jabbar and Sanaa ", Arts and Languages Department, University of Mustafa Istamboli, Algeria, 18 May 2015

2. The Second National Forum of University of Mu'askar themed “*The Arabic Novel and History*” , Arts and Languages Department, University of Mustafa Istamboli, Algeria, 17 March 2015
3. The forum of the Arabic Language and the child: challenges and Experiences” Participated in a discussion paper titled: “The Arabic child and the Arabic Language” at the University of Noura Bint Abdel Rahman in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia 28/04/2015.
4. “The Influence of the novel of “Don Quixote” on international science, literature and arts. Participated with a discussion paper titled “The Influence of the novel of Don Quixote on the novel of Almutashael by Emile Habibi”, University of California, Los Angeles, USA from: 15-17 April 2015.
5. The Eleventh Marbad Poetic Festival, The Poet Lamia’a Abbas Amara Session, participated by signing ceremony of the novel of “Ashaqoni” Basra, Iraq, Iraqi Ministry of Culture and the Iraqi Writers Union and Basra Writers Union- 22 on 25/10/2014.
6. First national meeting conference titled: Experiential Features in the Contemporary Algerian Literature: Existence and Borders , Participated in a discussion paper titled: Experimentation in the Jordanian Novel, Fantasy Narrative as a Path in the Novel “Ashaqoni” as an example of the scientific imagination: Narrative witness for Sana Shalan, Directorate of Culture in Borj Abou Oreirej sSate, People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, 29-30 April 2014
7. The First National Forum about novel in the light of contemporary critique curriculums, participated by a work sheet titled: “Taqaseem: Testimony on a creative writing experience” University of Mascara, Mascara, People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, 16 – 17 December 2013.
8. Participated and was the master of ceremonies at the Conference of: "How to Achieve the Visions of His Majesty the King in Building Modern Jordan in the Area of Sustainable Development, the seventh session. Amman, Jordan, 03/12/2013
9. Participated in Claweez Conference at its 17th session, Clauaz Cultural and Literary Centre, Sulaymaniyah, for the year 12-25/11 / 2013.

10. Participated in the Preparatory Forum for Businesswomen Conference and the International Women's Leadership, with a discussion paper titled: "Creative Women, Social Obstacles and Taboos", Amman, Jordan 16 +17/11/2013. The
11. Participated in Claweez Conference at its 16th session, and presented a discussion paper and I was the spokesperson for the Arabic delegations participating in the conference. Claweez Cultural and Literary Centre, Sulaymaniyah, in 2012.
12. Participated in the Conference of Arab Women: The Power of Influence Towards Leadership Change, by a discussion paper titled "My Experience With Success". Center of Creative Thinking, Jordan, Oman, 2012
13. Participated in the Conference of "Women cooperation circles and Participation in Culture and History of Latin America and the Caribbean" with a discussion paper titled: " Script and Art production of Women: A Comparative Study between Creative Woman in Latin America and women in the Arab World: Oneself, Other and the Conflict": Comparative study using the Biography of Fadwa Toukan's "A Mountain Trip is a Difficult Journey" and the Biography of Isabel Allende's Paula " as an example. Casa de Las Americas, Cuba, February 2012.
14. - Participated in the Conference on the protection of journalists in dangerous situations, at its first session, Participated in drafting a plan for an international campaign to gather support for the adoption of the recommendations of the conference. National Commission for Human Rights, Doha, Qatar, January 2012.
15. Participated in Claweez Conference at its 15th session, presented a discussion paper and made a speech on behalf of the delegations participating in the opening ceremony, Claweez Cultural and Literary Centre, Sulaymaniyah, for the year 2011.
16. Participated in "Reality and Realism in the Cities of the Middle Ages" conference in its 57th session, with a discussion paper titled: "Congruity of Sex Stories in the Thousand and One Nights and Alvabello stories in the Middle Ages" University of Trieste, the city of Trieste, Italy, 2011.
17. Participated in the Second International Francophone Conference in Jordan "Receiving a Thousand and one Nights in the field of

- humanities globally” Presented a discussion paper entitled "Using A Thousand and One Night in the Play of: " The King is the King” for "Saadallah wanos, " Al-Bayt University, Jordan, 2011.
18. Participated in the sixth Educational Scientific Conference under the banner "With Education and Science We Can Build a United Iraq" by presenting a discussion paper titled: "The area of tension between the wait and the disappointment with Iraqi story writers Faraj Yassin", Tikrit University, College Girl, Tikrit, Iraq, 2011.
  19. - Participated in the Festival of the People of the Sea in 2010, Organization of the Cultural and Athletic Group of the People of the Sea , Lattakia, Syria, 2010
  20. - Participated in Claweez Conference at its 14th session and presented a discussion paper titled: "Fantasy is a Tool for Enlightenment in Muhyiddin Zangana’s Anecdotal Experience” The Ministry of Culture in Sulaimaniya, in 2010.
  21. Participated in the Conference of “The First Cities: One Archipelago with Many Metaphors," Workshop of the Arab Thought, Fez, Morocco, Presented a paper titled: "Pain is a Leading Character in the novel of" My Tormentor" by Bensalem Himmich" for the year 2010.
  22. Participated in the Third Dahouk Cultural Conference in Kurdistan, Iraq with a Discussion paper titled: "My Experience in Writing Short Stories as Well as Sharing Short Stories" for the year 2010.
  23. Was the guest speaker in the First Conference of the Teachers of Arabic in Australia and participate with a discussion paper titled: "The Teacher is the Last Godfather of the Arabic Language" for the year 2010.
  24. Participated in Claweez Conference in its 13th session with a discussion paper titled: "A Soul Commanding Love", the Ministry of Culture in Sulaimaniya, in 2009
  25. Participated in the Conference of “The Centennial of Ali Aldo’aji with a discussion paper Titled: “Ali Aldo’aji the Cynical”,
  26. Union of Tunisian Writers, Tunisia, in 2009
  27. Participated in the Conference "The Novel in Jordan" and Presented a discussion paper titled "The Fantasy Worlds in the Novels of Ghassan Al Ali in the Novel of Ahramian as an Example", Greater Amman Municipality, Art House, Jordan, Oman, 2008.

28. Participated with a discussion paper titled: "The Biography of Our Lord, the Water" in the Conference of "The Sea and the Resistance" in its third session which was organized by the Syrian Ministry of Information in partnership with the Family of Sea Festival, Baniyas, Latakia, Syria, 2008.
29. Participated in the Conference of "The Short Story at Present" by presenting a discussion paper titled: "The Marginal Character in Ziad Abu Laban's Stories". Jordanians Critics Association, Jordanian Ministry of Culture, August 2008
30. Participated in the Conference on "Narrative in the Contemporary Arab World Scene, and presented a discussion paper titled: "Fantasy in the Arabic Novels and Short Stories", Sharjah, United Arab Emirates in 2006.
31. Participated in the Conference on "Creative Woman" in 2005 by presenting a discussion paper, "Between Dante and Abu Al Alaa Al Maari" Sudan, the Sudanese Women's Union.
32. Participated in a Conference on "The Narrative Scene in Jordan at the Dawn of the Twenty First Century": by presenting a discussion paper title "The Narrative Structure in Gaiip Abdel Nasser Rizk's Novel" .2004, University of Al al-Bayt.

**Writing and Directing Plays:**

1. Wrote the play "*Once Upon a Time*" 2009
2. Wrote the play "*Six in a Crypt*", in 2006
3. Rewriting and editing the scenario of the play "*Almaqama Al Madeiriah*", an educational play, in 2003.
4. Writing and directing the play "*Isa Bin Hisham Again*", an educational play, in 2002.
5. Writing and directing the play "*The Perfect Bride*", a comedy – and purposeful play, in 2002.
6. Writing and directing the play "*The Happy Prince*" comedy-purposeful play, in 2000.
7. Writing and directing the play "*The Land of Rules*" educational purposeful play, in 2000
8. Writing and directing the play "*Without Intermediaries*", children's play, in 2000.

**Plays Presented on Stage:**

1. Play "*Once Upon a Time*" presented on stage 2010, by University Laboratory Theatre Group, in the Hashemite University, Jordan. It was directed by Abdul Samad Albesol. It was presented also at the Ninth Philadelphia Festival of Arabic Theater and it won the award for the best theatrical text

**Published Literary Works:**

**1- Criticism Oriented Books:**

2. Participated in a chapter titled: "*Abdelkarim Gharaybeh, the giant who illuminates the way for everyone*" in the book "*Abdelkarim Gharaibeh , Arab Historian*" published by International Islamic Studies University, Jordan, Amman, 2014
3. Participated in writing a chapter titled: "*The Area of tension between waiting and disappointment in the Iraqi novelist Faraj Yassin in his collection of short stories " A Shiny Frontage"* in the book "*in the prospects for the narrative text: Approaches about the identity, the text and formulation in Faraj Yassin works*", "published by July for publication and distribution, Damascus, Syria, 2013.
4. Participated by writing a chapter titled: "*The Leading Character in the stories of Ziad Abu Laban*" in the book "*The Short Story at the Moment*" published by the times for publication and distribution support of the Ministry of Culture of Jordan, Jordan, 2011.
5. Participated by writing a chapter in a book titled "*Those Who Don't Die*" in the book about late Mohiuddin Zangana written by his friends, 2010, published by Sardam Printing and Publishing Company, Sulaimaniyah, Iraq.
17. Participated by writing a chapter titled: "*Fantasy is a tool of Enlightenment in the Anecdotal Experience of Muhyiddin Zangana*"

in the book titled "Critical Reviews in Creative World of Mohieddin Zangana" 2010, issued by Claweez Foundation in Klaweez Festival at its fourth session

18. Participated by writing a chapter titled: "*For the Literary Creativity Certificate for the Jordanian Writer Sanaa Shalan*" in the book "*Critical Studies on Kurdish literature*" 2010, issued by the Kurdish Writers Union Publications, Dohuk, Kurdistan, Iraq.
- 19.- Critical book "*The Myth in Najeeb Mahfouz's Novels*", published by Al-Jasra Cultural Club/Qatar in 2006.
- 20.- Second edition of the book "*Oddity and wonder in the narrative of the novel and short story in Jordan from 1970-2002*", published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar in 2006.
- 21.- Participated by writing a creative chapter in a collective literary work in a series of "*Culture free of Charge*" from Maison Naaman Cultural Publishers", 2006, issued by Dar Al-Noman Cultural Publishers
22. Wrote a critical book titled: "*Oddity and Wonder in the narrative of novels, and short story in Jordan from 1970-2002*" published in 2004 by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture .

### **2- Books:**

1. Wrote a book titled: "*The Role of His Majesty in Fighting Terrorism: The Explosions of Amman in Stories*", published by Dar Al-Khaleej-Amman in 2006.

### **3 - Textbooks:**

1. Wrote a book titled: "*Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages*", a joint effort with a group of authors, a publication of the University of Jordan, Jordan, 2011.

### **4- Creative Productions:**

1. A no A story collection titled "*Once Upon a Wall*", 2016 , 1<sup>st</sup> edition , Amwaj for Publishing and distribution, Jordan, Amman, 2016
2. vel titled "*Ashaqoni*" third edition , Amman, Jordan, 2016.
3. A story collection titled "*The One who Stole a Star*", Amwaj Publishers and distributors, Jordan, Amman, 2016

4. A story collection titled “ *The Palestinian Solo*” (Taqaaseem Al Phelestini) 2015, first edition, Amwaj for Publishing And Distribution, Jordan, Amman, 2015
5. A joint story collection with other Arab narrators titled “ *Stars of the Free pen in the Skies of Creativity*”, 2015, published by the free pen for press, printing and publishing, Cairo, Egypt.
6. Story Collection titled: “The year of Ants” 1st edition, Salma Cultural Publishers, Tetouan Morocco.
7. Novel of “Ashaqoni, second edition, Amman, Jordan, 2014
8. “Convoy of Thirst”, a collection of short stories translated into Bulgarian titled "Керванът на жаждата" translated by Khairy Hamdan, issued on Fanar Press in partnership with Dr. Haidar Ibrahim Mustafa, president of Bulgarian university graduates Club, Amman, Jordan, 2013.
9. Collection of short stories in partnership with Jordanian female writers, titled: “From the speaking Womb of the Desert:Short Stories from Jordan”, translated into English by Dr. Rola Kawas, Azmina Publishers and Distributors, Amman, Jordan, 2013.
10. Collection of short stories with other Jordanian novelists titled "The Novel in Jordan , Texts and Studies" 2013, issued by the Jordanian Writers Association, Amman, Jordan
11. Collection of short stories titled "Lost in the Eyes of the Man of the Mountain", issued by the Writers Without Borders (RSF) with the support of the Iraqi National Business Council, Baghdad, Iraq, 2012
12. A novel titled: "Aashaqoni" (I Love Myself) 2012, issued by Warraq for Publishing and Distribution Establishment, Amman / Jordan.
13. Collection of short stories titled: "Hymns of Water", 2010, issued by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture and Warraq for publication and distribution Establishment/ Jordan.
14. Stories written with two other Arab novelists titled: "About Love" 2009, Published by Sphinx Agency for Translation and Publication / Egypt.



15. A collection of short stories, joint effort with other Jordanian novelists titled: "A Selection of Jordanian Short Stories" Published by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture, Jordan, 2008
16. A collection of stories titled: "A Letter to God" published by the Lebanese House of Arts, with support from Qattan Foundation.
17. A collection of stories titled "The land of Tales" published by Al Jesra Cultural Club, Qatar, 2006
18. A collection of short stories "Maqamat Al Ehtraq", published by Al Jesra Cultural Club, Qatar, 2006
19. A collection of short stories titled: "The Hermit of the Hermitage" Published by Al Jesra Cultural Club, Qatar, 2006
20. A collection of short stories "Convoy of Thirst" published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.2006
21. A collection of stories titled: "The Nightmare" published by Secretariat of Greater Amman,2006
22. A collection of short stories titled: "Escape to the End of the World" published by Al Jesra Cultural Club, Qatar, 2006
23. A collection of short stories "An Infant's Memoirs" published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar. 2006
24. A collection of short stories "Falling in the Sun" ,published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.2006
25. A collection of short stories "The Glass Wall" published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar. 2006
26. A novel titled: "Falling in the Sun" published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar. 2006
27. A collection of short stories, studies, and articles in Jordanian and
  - a. Arabic newspapers.

#### **5- Creative Productions for Children:**

1. The story for children titled "*Zeriâb: The Teacher of People and Generosity*" in 2009, second edition, issued by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture / Jordan.
2. A children story "*Ibn Taymya*", 2008, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.

3. A children story "*Haroun al-Rasheed*", 2008, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
4. A children story titled: "*Al-Khaleel Ibn Ahmad Al- Faraheedi*", 2008, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
5. A children story titled: "*Al Laith Ibn Saad*", 2008, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
6. A children story titled: "*Al-Iz Bin Abdisalam: the scientists' Sultan and the Seller of Kings*", 2007, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
7. A children story titled: "*Abbas bin Fernas: the Wise man of Andalusia*", 2007, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
8. A children story titled: "*Zeriab: the people's teacher of chivalry*", 2007, published by Al-Jasra cultural club/Qatar.
9. A children story titled: "*The Man with the Golden Heart*", 2007, published by Haza' Ben Zaid Al-Nahian's Sons for children literature.

**Writing introduction for books and creative publications :**

1. Journey of giving and the journey, When it is Immortality”
2. Introduction of the story collection titled “*I Was There*” by Majdoline Dahiyat. An article titled “*I Was Also There, O Majdoline*”
3. An introduction to collection of poems Divan “Jars of Fragrance” by Albert Wehbe, with an article titled: “*Which one of them is the most beautiful?*”
4. An introduction to the book titled “ Meetings Under the Rays of Bright Letters” by Serdar Zenka, “Titled: “*Opinion ... They said*”
5. An introduction to the story collection titled “The Card” by Sami Hamam
6. Introduction to the book of Researches of the Sixth Scientific Conference for the Girls College in University of Takrit”
7. Introduction to the story collection titled “ Daughters of Hopeless Women” by Ali Sibaei
8. Introduction to the story collection titled” Women with the Scent of Jasmine” by Osman Ben Ahmed Aba Khalil.

9. Introducing “The Free Arab” (Diwan) collection of poems by:  
Mustafa Rashed

**Participating in writing illuminations about the background of books and creative publications:**

1. Writing illumination on the background of Divan “Street Lamps” by Dr. Ali Al Moamny
2. Writing illumination on the background of Divan “ Ranim of The Spirit” by Said Yaqoub
3. Writing illumination on the background of Divan by Shaker Sivo
4. Writing an illumination on the background of Divan “Egypt Talks” by Dr. Zein Abedine Al Cheikh
- 5.

**Linguistic Review of the following Publications:**

1. Linguistic review of the book “My Journey with the University of Kufa”, Professor Abdel Razzak Abdel Jaleel Issa, first edition, Jordan, Amman, 2015

**Specialized studies about the creativity of Sanaa Shalan:**

2. Masters degree thesis titled “ *The Imaginative Narrative in the “The Hymns of Water”*” story collection for Sanaa Shalan, prepared by researcher Hala Dowadi under the supervision of Dr. Rovia Boghnout, Faculty of Arts and languages, University of Larbi Ben Mahidi, Um Al Bawaqi, Algeria, 2012
3. Masters degree thesis titled : “*The Imaginative Narrative in the novel of :Ashaqoni” by Sanaa Shalan*” , prepared by researcher Karima Baaloul under the supervision of Dr. Rovia Boghnout, Faculty of Arts and languages, University of Larbi Ben Mahidi, Um Al Bawaqi, Algeria, 2015.
4. Masters degree thesis titled “*The Ego and others in the plays of Sanaa Shalan, the play of one face for two rainy as an example*” prepared by the researcher Breiza Swaedieh under the supervision od

Dr. Mohamed Zaataei , Faculty of Arts, University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Al massila, Algeria 2015

5. Masters degree thesis titled "*The Ego and the others in the plays of Sanaa Shalan*". prepared by the researcher Breiza Swaedieh under the supervision of Dr. Mohamed Zaitari , Faculty of Arts, University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Al Massila, Algeria 2015
6. Masters degree thesis titled "*Forming the narrative atmosphere between Self and others in the novel of Ashaqoni*". prepared by the researcher Fatima Alzahraa Zaarour under the supervision of Dr. Mohamed Zaitari , Faculty of Arts, University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Al Massila, Algeria 2015
7. Masters degree thesis titled "*Personification in the plays of Sanaa Shalan, the play of an invitation in the honour of the red clour*". prepared by the researcher Asmaa Mazouz under the supervision of Dr. Mohamed Zaataei , Faculty of Arts, University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Al massila, Algeria 2015
8. A Forum was held about the Sanaa Shalan Novel writing experience at the university of Mutafa Istamboli / Algeria, under the theme "*the Arab Novel and History: Asia Jabbar and Sanaa Shalan*" faculty of Arts, University of Mustafa Istamboli, Algeria, 15 May 2015
9. Master thesis titled "The Narrative Novel and its Components in Sanaa Shalan Narrative Experience" prepared by researcher Mohamed Saleh Masha'leh, supervised by Professor Bassam kattous, Faculty of Arts and sciences, Middle Eastern University for Higher Studies, 2014.
10. Master thesis titled "The Character in Sanaa Shalan's Novels", prepared by the researcher, under the supervision of Dr. Ghannam Mohammed Khader, Department of Arabic, University of Tikrit, 2013.
11. Master Thesis titled "The tendency for Myth in Sanaa Shalan's Novels: A Critical Study of Myth," prepared by researcher

- Wannassa Ali Massoud Kahili, under the supervision of Dr. Walid Buadelp, Department of Arabic, Specialization of Comparative Literature, University of Skikda, in 2010
12. Full file on Sanaa Shalan's creative experience titled: "Sanaa Shalan, is a case of creative youth which is an exceptional phenomenon" in the Journal of Jasra, No. 19, summer of 2007, issued by the Social and Al Jasra Cultural Club in Qatar, and was attended by a large number of Arab writers and critics.
  13. A chapter on the experience of Sanaa Shalan creative experience in the book "Meetings under the rays of the bright letters" by journalist Sardar Zangana, publications of Cord Writers Union, Kirkuk branch, Iraq, 2011.
  14. Some of Sanaa Shaalan works were included in some academic curriculum such as: "Mad Halima" in the Arabic language text book level 100 of the University of Jordan / Language Center, 2011.
  15. A book titled "Space of illusions, approaches to the formation, vision and significance in Sanaa Shalan's creative fiction: by a group of critics, prepared and presented by Dr. Ghannam Mohammed Khader
  16. A chapter of information about Sanaa Shalan in the dictionary of female scholars and writers in Jordan by Mohammed Al Mashayekh 1, Amman, Jordan, 2012.
  17. Two critical chapters on Sanaa Shalan anecdotal experience in "Water Hymns" and her novelist experience in (*Ashaqoni*) "*I Adore Myself*" in a book titled: "Narrative Concerns Critical Studies About Story and Novel", Dr. Zia Ghany El Abboudi, Tammouz Publishers and distributors, Syria, Damascus, 2012.
  18. A chapter introducing Sanaa Shalan in the book "Guide of Jordanian Writers," Mohammad Al Mashayekh, Amman, Jordan.
  19. An Introductory chapter about Sanaa Shalan in the Dictionary of Jordanian writers, Jordanian Ministry of Culture, First Edition, Amman, Jordan, 2014

20. A large number of articles in magazines, newspapers, periodicals and websites about Sanaa Shalan's creative and academic Experience.
21. Large number of academic researches was presented in international and Arabic conferences about the creative work of Sanaa Shalan, such as:
  - a. Professor Nourddine Saddar, the dean of the faculty of arts and languages in The Algerian University of Moaaskar has presented a research titled "A Semiotic of the Narrative Discourse in the Novel of Ashaqoni as a model" as a participation in the activities of the International Conference "The horizon of the discourses between the verbal analysis and the semiotic interpretation" which was hosted by the University of Ahmed Ben Bella in Oran over three days on 11,12 and 15 November 2014
  - b. Professor Dr. Khaled Yaaboudi of Mohamed Ben Abdalla University in Fez has presented a research titled "The dimensions of the universe in the novel of Ashaqoni by Sanaa Shalan" as part of a seminar titled the "Science Fiction in the Arabic Novel" which was held in narrative laboratory in the faculty of Arts and Humanities in the University of Ibn Amsik in Casablanca, Morocco on 23/11/2012.
  - c. The Egyptian literary critic Farag Mojahed Abdel Wahab has written a study titled "Ashaqoni Zetraten the two sides of the equation between fantasy and letters of love and sex" at Cairo's sixth international conference of the Arabic novel in Cairo, Egypt, March 2015
  - d. Iraqi literary critic Dr. Hassanein Ghazi Latif presented a study titled "*The oppressed woman in the novel of "Ashaqoni"*" by Dr. Sanaa Shalan" at a special symposium in Al Masar Iraqi TV channel, Baghdad, Iraq, June 2015 .

- e. Iraqi literary critic Dr. Hassanein Ghazi Latif presented a study titled: “*The sexual Scenes and the letters in the Novel of Ashaqoni*” at a special symposium in the Psychology Department at the University Mustansiriya, Baghdad, Iraq/May 2015
- 22. A Forum was held about the Sanaa Shalan Novel writing experience at the university of Mutafa Istamboli / Algeria, under the theme “ *the Arab Novel and History: Asia Jabbar and Sanaa Shalan*” faculty of Arts, University of Mustafa Istamboli, Algeria, 15 May 2015



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