



Dr. Sanaa Shalan  
(bint Na'imah)

Translated by  
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# Oblivion Saved Her

Novel

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## **The First Forgotten Chapter**

**Dahhak Saleem**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Now, I may say that I lived life to the fullest as I felt love."**

**"Still reaching for a hold of me. Exhausting and Confusing!"**

**"Certain of nothing except you."**

**"How tempting is that which has not yet arrived, that which has not yet caused me distress."**

**"It is love, not our moms, that gives us life."**

**"The ultimate expression of love is trust."**

**"In the Land of Love, even our sins and our guilts are made sacred."**

Despite his age of sixty-seven, he still possessed his youthful vigor, power, and charming smile. The small amount of lost youth was hardly a cause for mourning. In fact, he had gained even more happiness, knowledge, and brilliance over the years due to his busy schedule of work, accomplishments, travel, waiting, and writing. He tried everything he wanted to, and even some things he didn't.

Whenever he was feeling especially happy, content, or slightly drunk with his four loyal friends, he would confidently proclaim his life's motto: "I declare I have truly lived." Aside from the joy of having female companionship, his life was filled with achievements and enjoyment. Lacking, disturbing, and difficult love from women tore at his spirit, body, goals, and accomplishments. He had nothing but heartache, grief, and abandonment from his three beautiful wives throughout his life, and never a dime. His three ex-wives, who had filed a lawsuit against him, divided his wealth three ways. They abandoned him, and he has no children to keep him company or address him as "Dad."

Even yet, he lacked nothing except the company of ladies and the sweetness of their love. He was gorgeous, successful, happy, and at ease with himself because of his abundant wealth. He had achieved literary fame by becoming one of the most well-known authors in his cold country, to which he was fiercely devoted. After his mother spat him out of her womb when he was just a lean piece of meat wrapped in a filthy tattered blanket, and after the orphanage where he wasted his early childhood years kicked him out to a pathless road where he lived a life of poverty and oppression, he became attached to his new country. The cousin discovered that the orphan was homeless like a mangy cat after losing his parents in a

tragic kerosene heater accident on one of the coldest nights of the year. He was confined to one of the I.C.U. Beds with a severe cold that nearly cracked his tender lungs, which had only a few days previously welcomed the breaths of life.

After being rejected by his own family—who had already spent his meager inheritance—and by his neighbors, who had no interest in adopting him, he was eventually taken in by an orphanage. His years of naivety and happiness were destroyed at a miserable state orphanage, where the nurses were enraged when he ventured to speak out for the first time and punished him severely for it. Following that, he became the focus of their ire.

They, the alleged spinster matron and her barren witch aide, sent him out into the night, saying that he had stolen money from the orphanage's safe and fled with the loot. The juvenile police were on the lookout for him at this point since he had turned to a life of crime and was a wanted man at their dreadful detention facility.

After his identity as a thief was exposed, he was forced to live on the streets alongside strays and weird creatures of the night. He turned into a human scavenger, brawling with others over scraps of food they found in dumpsters and dumps until fate reluctantly began to look favorably upon him. His paternal cousin rushed out to help the little savage



as the angel of heaven descended. The wealthy uncle offered to whisk him away to a land of frozen lakes, frolicking squirrels, cozy log cabins, exciting adventures, herds of reindeer and polar bears, the scent of wood smoke and lavender fields, and so on. He took the offer without a second's hesitation. He was not accustomed to the luxury of ambivalence. The wealthy uncle paid the bail for the alleged robbery, took full responsibility for any future attempts at theft, and repaid the orphanage for the small sum of money the young orphan had taken from it.

The ward of the state was granted his freedom. His wealthy uncle graciously adopted him. He accepted him as his son, treating him like his first adopted son George Saleem. The rich uncle doted on the orphan and ensured he had a good existence. The orphan finished his first year of college with honors. The rich uncle could hear the dice of fate jingling on the table as time passed. It sounded like the trumpet call to eternal torment. Death! He deserved it, so he left the orphan a respectable sum of money so that he could turn over a fresh financial leaf.

Dahhak was capable of such a selfless act of frugality. He carefully invested some of it in furthering his education in Comparative Literature and Cultures at one of the country's most prestigious institutions and purchasing a small home near the city's historic cultural district. Since he was still a relative newcomer to the literary scene then, publishers

were reluctant to print his debut work at their own expense, so he self-published it.

His literary career took off after publishing his debut novel, and he soon found himself among the most recognized novelists in Scandinavia, the Balkans, and even across Europe. He penned his works in the icy nations' native tongues. He focused his energy on examining the intersections between Eastern and Western current literature. He continued to use his bonuses on extravagant vacations and new, more enormous mansions. Like his library, which he maintained by renting a historic structure in a historic cultural district in the heart of Scandinavia, he always remembered to feed. It included an infinite amount of information; you name it! As a never-ending present to humanity and trump card against death, he compiled a library of books, manuscripts, references, CDs, maps, and featured films. To ensure the integrity and authenticity of his collection, he went to great lengths and expenses to acquire books from around the world. He designated it in his will as a government-administered endowment for anyone who wishes to use any language to write on behalf of the human race. The library was appropriately named after him: "Dahhak Saleem Library."

He abandoned all ties to the country that had once smothered his parents and left him to a life of squalor and misery at the hands of his greedy relatives. But he couldn't

give up his passions for preparing and eating exotic Asian cuisine, collecting antiques and instruments from the region, and displaying them proudly throughout his home on the walls, corridors, corners, and atop hand-made Oriental rugs and cushions. His walls were lined with framed examples of Arabic calligraphy, which he hung to show their reflections in the room's tall mirrors. Every chamber and corridor is illuminated by massive, glittering chandeliers that dangle from the ceiling. Their antique brass holders shook with the movement of their glimmering lights so that the onlooker saw nothing but an infinite number of tiny flickers.

Barbara, all of his friends, his students, and guests would find enjoyment in his home because it was a mashup of the East, which he despised, and the West, which had become his haven. It had a Western layout, construction, and finish but an Eastern feel. An antique brass surmadani with a peacock lid, a brass shaving kit, a wooden Damascene dice table, and several arabesque artworks are some of the sensory treats that may be found there. Above all, Dahhak did not think to give up his name whatsoever. He had been given that name by that charming redhead girl he had known at that hideous orphanage, where his childhood was stripped away from him, leaving him with disfigured lurking memories. She was a few years younger than him, yet to him, she was family, home, and happiness until he

was expelled from it and left a prisoner outside it. She was left there, a thing that tore him up as he had given her his word to get her out of that horrible place as soon as he could. Frenzied upon the knowledge of the little boy's plan to get the beautiful redhead out of her prison there, the spinster matron locked the little girl up in a murky dungeon after cutting off her beautiful long hair. After that, the little boy realized the futility of his attempts and stepped back, fearing that these savages would go too far in their revengeful grudges.

The name her parents gave her was never revealed to him. Why didn't they give her a word before leaving her at the orphanage? She was a stranger in a strange land with no past to call her own. Her estrangement was compounded by the fact that she looked like a perfect hybrid, the product of a marriage between numerous racial kinds, each of which had a spectrum of exciting beauty attributes, making her the incarnation of beauty itself, despite her lovely rose skin and forest green eyes.

Violets had been placed on the matron's balcony, and their scent wafted to her. Her uniquely pleasant body odor set her apart in that foul environment.

The nurses' hidden envy of her vitality and natural beauty drove them to call her "the damned redhead," but they never bothered to give her a proper name. After reading

about a mythical redhead heroine renowned for her bravery, nobility, and strength, triumphing over evil, defending the defenseless, and refusing to surrender to the adversary, the small boy finally gave her a new, less ominous name. "Bahaa," her new name, means "glowing beauty" in Arabic. Thankfully, no one in that horrible place noticed how the little girl's name perfectly reflected her innocent charm and beauty.

His tiny sweetheart would join in his joy by singing the cartoon theme song: "Bahaa, the lady of all ladies." The children, the trees, the sky, and even the daisies praise her beauty with songs. That "Bahaa" was meant for the delicate soul whose exquisite beauty and ethereal voice entranced everybody who looked at her and took the small boy many years in Scandinavia to learn. Bahaa would sing heavenly arias in imitation of him. His tiny sweetheart would join in his joy by singing the cartoon theme song: "Bahaa, the lady of all ladies." The children, the trees, the sky, and even the daisies praise her beauty with songs. That "Bahaa" was meant for the delicate soul whose exquisite beauty and ethereal voice entranced everybody who looked at her and took the small boy many years in Scandinavia to learn. Bahaa would sing heavenly arias in imitation of him.

No one else's human spirit could enter her abyss like his could. When she felt overwhelmed by life, she could lay her weary soul against him at night and cry hysterically till

morning. She would timidly bury her face in his young, shirtless chest. She would wail about her suffering, isolation, frustration, and the harshness of existence. He would even offer her some of his food, hoping it would strengthen her eroding frame. He would tell her stories about exciting adventures far from the cold orphanage to keep her entertained. Every night, without fail, their dreams would return to that prohibited place they called "home." When he hugged her, she saw a motherly figure rather than a miserable boy. She felt at ease in his company, as though his friendly spirit were being warmed from within by the presence of a soft female butterfly. She found comfort in his arms more than she ever had in the lap of her biological mother, who had denied her daughter and her very existence. The child was so adamant about caring for her that he refused to budge from his decision to give her his meager ration of horrible food and his only ragged blanket. They were bound by a dream. He solemnly promised to get her out of that filthy place one day. Then they would be living together in a natural home full of love, warmth, and joy and freely enjoying the significant wants of humankind as well as the pleasures of life, namely the forbidden ones—dancing, singing, drawing, partying, tasting delicacies of food and drinks, and wearing the finest clothes. One day, after escaping that abhorrent place, they would author a novel about their ardent love together. At death, their beings would rise into heaven and become two eternally

bright stars whose flickers would guide lovers and orphans to the happy valley where their final resting place would be.

Because she was the most attractive person in the facility, the nurses and even the orphans turned against her. Her generous nature was unparalleled. Doctors and nurses would call her names to make her feel worse. Whenever she impressed the orphans with her skills, especially her rhetorical ones, they would call her that, a term they had stolen from the vicious nurses. She had an incredible memory and could easily commit lines from TV shows and movies to memory. The little girl's Arabic teacher was so impressed by her oratory skills that he kindly singled her out from the rest of the class. This stoked the flames of the other students' jealousy, and they exacted their vengeance by treating her with the utmost disdain and isolating her from the rest of the class. He would pick fights to ensure that all the orphans called her "Bahaa," her new name, even if it meant breaking someone's face or teeth. But he couldn't impose his will on the nurses, who were so notoriously authoritarian that nobody dared challenge them.

His birth certificate had been lost among the orphanage's paperwork, and he had long since forgotten his real name. After being abandoned by the robbers, he could not get his birth certificate. He didn't mind as the name Bahaa had given him suited him well. She dubbed him "Dahhak"

because he frequently laughed too much. His spirit, like hers, was bursting with happiness and gloated over his sufferings. She would grin sweetly anytime he tucked her tiny body inside his hulking frame, pushing her gentle face against his broad chest. He wanted her to feel as close to his very essence as possible. Sometimes he would even ask her to read him a few of the poetic phrases she had stored in her head.

He was given the name "Dahhak Saleem" in honor of his great-grandfather, the "Agha", during the era of Ottoman control, whose proud descendants proudly carried his name from generation to generation. Agha Saleem had a lot of money and a lot of friends in high places. His heirs squandered much of his vast cash over the years, but they only spent some of it. Dahhak's father, his three brothers, and seven sisters, who plotted to inherit his wealth after his tragic death and erased all traces of him by sending his kid to a squalid orphanage, were left with a meager amount. After being kicked out of the orphanage, the small boy asked his devoted uncle to adopt him under his given name legally. Even after becoming famous, he didn't try to hide his identity by publishing his writings under pseudonyms. He had too many happy associations with his name to give it up: his last name reminded him of his parents' spirits, and his first name brought back images of a stunning redhead. And how could he ever forget her? When he was in her



company, he finally felt content. Before he lost her, he had no concept of what it meant to be grieving. She stayed inside while he made it outside. In that cold land, she was a prisoner, while he was a free bird soaring above her. He tried to save her from her ordeal but to no avail. For fear that she would be subjected to the same degrading existence he had to face on the streets amid crooks, robbers, and murders, he suddenly gave in when he became more robust and had his criminal folk about him. He would have rather seen her deprived of her independence in an orphanage than an easy target for the savages who lurked around every corner. Although his Greek wife wanted to adopt a daughter, he tried unsuccessfully to persuade his wealthy uncle to take in the little girl. The pain of his uncle's rejection was magnified for the little kid because he hadn't seen her ethereal glow in fifty years. Despite their physical separation, she always had a home in his heart.

He spent the next half-century trying to find her in every redhead in Western Europe, Northern Europe, the Balkans, and Siberia. Alas! Her flaming beauty was unparalleled, and he never did. While he had a penchant for redheads in the past (and married no less than three), no one could compare to Bahaa with her lavender-like scent and delicate countenance. They quickly dispersed from him. He returned to the wild area that had thrown him away many times, hoping to find his Bahaa, but he never did. The boy's

enormous body was a prison he couldn't escape. Only the scent of sandalwood from a shop selling exotic spices in the middle of the city and his lost love's flaming hair, forest green eyes, and lavender-fragrant physique drove him back to her. He tried to find her via social media. He thought she must have made her dream true to be a novelist. She always thought of being born for words, which she knew how to unleash, liberate, and channel through her bold soul and tender rosy lips.

He had always assumed that her lifelong commitment to the written word was predetermined, much like a purebred horse's tendency to return to its owner despite hardships. She had the charm, speed, and devotion of a racehorse. She is a product of and for the written word. He concluded that she had changed her name and could not be located. He never tired of reading the works of female authors, whether they were written in his tongue or another. He had a habit of examining every redhead he came across. His entire being was on fire with excitement. He relentlessly looked for her. He knew he'd run into her again, so he went out to become famous. In the realm of literature, he was on the rise. Dahhak Saleem was the name that preceded him. Like a star whose glittering halo flickers in a pitch-black sky, his name would continue to shine brightly forever. He pursued

fame without relenting, hoping she would eventually find her way to him. He requested that his publishers feature his likeness on the books' covers in the hopes that she would recognize him despite his little cosmetic makeover. His silver curls fell loosely over his shoulder and halfway down his back, and his white beard was scattered over his face and chin in an exceedingly exciting masculine way, lending an air of mystery to his already alluring appearance and adding to the allure of his boyish good looks. His perfectly crafted glasses, a horrifying memento from his barbaric homeland, were always on display in cover shots to shield the wounded eye. He did not want Bahaa to see the wound or inquire about it, nor did he want to think about the agony that had shattered his spirit just before his joyful departure. When he included his numerous contact details (including addresses and phone numbers) in the back of his books, it was with only her in mind.

All for nothing! After 50 years of crushing disappointment and fruitless waiting, he finally gave up on hearing from her. He still awaited her appearance so that they could write their manuscript together. Their love would go on forever, and their story would be told in a book. They both like to

talk and read. He remembered every lyrical line spoken or written by his favorite actors and actresses. He was confident that she cherished words more than he did.

He wanted her to be proud of him and his accomplishments. Their story was the most beautiful of all the ones he wrote about. She had retreated into the darkness. God had a plan for her. Still, she followed him around like a shadow. Meanwhile, he did everything he could to prepare for his lady's arrival: no one but her.



## **The Second Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Beautiful Redhead**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Only the most fragile hold out hope that we will all meet again in the hereafter But, Alas!"**

**"How many times should our dreams fail us?"**

**"How quickly is time running through our hands?"**

**"The sweetest love is that we never live, though."**

**"Love reigns above all, while everything evil lurks beneath."**

**"There are no potions to cure love, only more of it."**

On his visit to the resort, Dahhak foresaw everything but meeting Bahaa. The resort was situated in an ancient fort far away in the heart of one of the Scandinavian dense thickets, thought to be enchanted by sedating tales of lone winged fairies, missing princesses, and outcast witches going through the woods and haunting the place with their enigmatic presence. At the gate A granite sculpture of a stunning woman, fully naked but her nipples veiled upright,

was receiving coming guests with her bewitching femininity. He spent much time staring at the statue, soberly pondering over her face and body like his woman, Bahaa. She had the same deep look as Bahaa's. As if in a state of turmoil, her motionless body was curling tightly under a scant raiment, with her bare hands timidly reaching out to squeeze the skin under which lay her fragile heart. He kept wondering whether the statue initially the same charming red hair as his woman had had. Could she share his Bahaa's gruff voice in any way?

Upon his arrival, he handed in his luggage to the servant boy, who hurried to receive the guests under heavy rain. He slowed down to earn time to stare at that statue while his company hustled into the lounge. He came closer and closer and looked upright to see the upper part of her body, neck, and face. He stood right next to her. He carried his body upright on his tip toes as he felt helplessly inferior to her lofty body and huskily whispered to her right ear: "Do you know where my Bahaa is?" Defeated by her silence, he repeated his question again but got no answer. Losing hope of any explanation, he shifted to her eyes and asked her again: "Do you know where is my Bahaa?" The sculpture remained still, as if sucked into an endless abyss of stillness. Still, he beheld a grin in her eyes and nearly felt her slow nod across the area as he stood amid the untamed trees that had grown up around the square, their branches

intertwined to form a natural barrier around the fort. The only thing he saw when he peered across the yard was a battered bench that had taken a beating from the rain. Nothing existed. The lengthy journey to the location made him realize he was in a haze. Alternatively, he may have begun to feel the effects of the vodka on his senses. He kissed her on the cheeks, hurriedly took off his baize coat, and wrapped it around her stony body, softly uttering words into her ear: "be warm!" Afterward, he left the silent statue, staggering towards the lounge before collapsing in the square under the drizzling rain.

While he sipped his coffee the following morning—hoping it would help with his persistent hangover—he peered out the window and saw a woman's silhouette seated on the same bench, set against the backdrop of the dark, untamed trees. That woman was Bahaa! And next to her sat a young blonde nurse. Then it hit him: the statue was grinning at him, and he hadn't been drunk or exhausted!

What he saw was enough to convince him. He rushed down to her without showing any surprise at their inevitable meeting; instead, he glanced at the stone sculpture, which appeared to be smiling at him slightly, with her eyes filled with tears. As he made his way to Bahaa, he stepped over his baize coat after it had slid over the statue's smooth shoulders down to the ground the night before. On his approach to the bench, he slapped the muddy puddles. He



wasted no time getting to the spot where he stood mouth-gape before the two ladies. A flutter in his chest. It was Bahaa! The woman!

As gleefully as a nomad who has just drunk from a well after being deceived by a debilitating sensory-dimming mirage, he examined her face. Her mystical forest-green eyes, beautiful rosy lips, and blazing red hair remained unchanged. However, there were subtle alterations; her eyes became melancholier and more enigmatic, and her red hair was a mixture of red and gray, with the gray tending to fade into her cheeks. Her hair was well-combed and gathered up in a way that unleashed the purity of her whiteness down her neck and shoulders. Regrettably, her physical form appeared to give in to excess. She flung her lifeless body upon the bench, her shattered spirit leaning against it. Across from the seat was a wheelchair.

She had not changed much, still a little girl in her early sixties wearing an elegant black attire, completely unlike the ragged blue garment she wore throughout her terrible childhood; little had changed since then. Once so firm and ripe, her body had grown skinnier than he would ever expect her to be. Despite the little food provided at the orphanage, she topped her female peers in femininity - her prominent breast, which blossomed earlier than her peers, and her lustrously plump rounded hips that seemed to shout, "Here I am."

As they stared at him, the two generations of ladies seemed perplexed. The second one was staring intently into his. Half a century passed, yet he could still recognize her forest-greenish eyes amongst all green eyes; they were Bahaa's! The former set her sight a little higher, with her sea-like blue eyes overflowing with beauty, youth, and astonishment.

He felt victorious. He had finally triumphed over life. His image in her eyes was fading into the jungle in her eyes, where primitive lovers had just set fire to their temples, preparing to receive him. He bent down towards her little body but got up at once as the young nurse, perplexedly gaped-mouth, did not know what was really going on. He was worried about her reaction to him breaching their solitude. Hesitating for a moment, he embraced her little body to his thought. Her weak body fully surrendered to his. He could feel the warmth of her body against his cold, rugged body. He could feel her agitated breaths on his troubled chest. "It is you, Dahhak Saleem," she whispered softly before uttering his name. You are it. My darling. Of course! "It is you!" she said, losing her composure.

"Yes, it is me, Dahhak Saleem," he answered, murmuring and sobbing. At the same time, the blonde nurse was mesmerized in her place, saying nothing and amazed at Bahaa's ability to remember a person as she had lost her memory recently.

A sudden, severe snowfall befell them. With a joyful yell, she exclaimed: "It is you, Dahhak Saleem!" She then added softly, "I will never forget your face." You are it. My darling and the woods murmured back: "It is you, Dahhak Saleem. I will never forget your face. It is you. My love. Yes! It is you!" The statue's smile went wider, letting her tears slide down her smooth cheeks out of her stony eyes.

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After long years of supplications and pleas, he realized that his visit was a divine gesture. The blizzard had imprisoned them in that old fort, and he sat next to her that cold winter night. Accompanying the hissing of the burning wood, the only sound was that of their gentle piling on a plush carpet next to the hearth. Reminiscent of her days at the orphanage, she lay her head on his chest and gently closed her eyes. It didn't matter to her whether she was lying on a plush, comfortable carpet or the chilly, filthy floor of the infamous orphanage.

As in old times in his arms, she kept taking deep breaths. Her warm breaths brushed over his luxurious silk shirt, a sensation he could not deny. She seemed to be tightly gripping him, as if she were on the verge of losing him again. Then again, maybe she was terrified that this whole dream was just a dream that would soon turn into a nightmare tearing the remnants of her soul apart, waking up

alone and finding out that she was still locked out away from him and stuck in a savage world full of the bitterness of unwanted enemies. The thing that had kept her from getting a good night's rest for so long wasn't her illness or anything else; it was her life apart from him. Everything he had ever desired—her scent, hair, and breath—was finally at his fingertips. Now, he had what he always asked for, her breath, hair, and fragrance. Her memory failed her most of the time, but she could recognize him. His epic journey to find her was over then. He had been a Gilgamesh who fought his way through and won over gods to get the potion of immortality. His Bahaa was his potion for immortality. She became all his now, and he did not want her anymore.

Life, however, continued to disappoint him. On that particular occasion, he held her lifeless corpse in his arms, yet he could still feel the strength and memories that remained within her. Was it life's cruel game that he won, or did he really win? By the time she managed to beat the cancer out of her breasts, it had already ravaged her womb and sneaked into her brain, where it had done most of the damage. A rare form of brain cancer was her diagnosis, and it destroyed her physically, financially, and spiritually. It lethally got revenge on her indifference towards his power on her body by shattering her life-long memories with all their details and leaving her crumbs of chaotic memories that only pushed her into the void; in her mind piled up the

rubble of unruly and unrelated memories and ideas. She ended up a lost woman, wandering in her mind with no guide or map. She knew just little about herself. As for him, he knew perfectly knew that goddess, whatever old she became.

Its initial impact was on her limbs, rendering them completely uncontrollable. She began to stutter as a result of her impaired speech abilities. After that, it dove headfirst into her memories, consuming them all in a vicious loop until she could no longer know her people or herself from the shreds she had. Doctors said that she would entirely lose her memory and know nothing as an extinguished cinder. She would be stuck in the present with no past to remember or a future to think of. The sickness would eventually disable her limbs when it had taken over her brain. At last, the disease would settle on her weak chest and choke her to death.

How much longer was she going to live? In the range of a few weeks to a couple of months at most. Her physicians had warned her that this was it. As she deteriorated into oblivion, the doctors stopped informing her about such complications. Her doctors in the resort were puzzled at her ability to recognize Dahhak Saleem though the couple had not met for half a century. She did not acknowledge him but approached him and said his name too!

According to the doctors, she identified him and miraculously preserved him somewhere. He, on the other hand, was aware that she recalled him because he had always had a permanent home in her heart, where she could never forget him. A person's heart has a better memory than their brain. Even if she were to forget her own name, the guy she loved would always be there in her heartbeat.

What really hurt him was that she would never be able to know how much he had done for her. It was always for her. She would never be able to rejoice in his successes. She had nothing to tell him now. His thirst to know her life's details would never be quenched. She would never be able to tell her life stories as sweetly as she used to do in the past.

She would never allure him with her questions, loaded with her great curiosity about everything having to do with him. Her descriptions of her womanhood, which he had a glimpse of before their paths diverged when he was just starting out in life, would never elicit a warm response from him.

He has always been longing to listen to her passionate talks, to him turning into alluring hymns to his ears. Her voice has been created to tempt men into thinking of the heavens. As for now, he should be thankful for being blessed with her presence. For the time being, he ought to

be grateful for the blessing that is her existence. Now that he has finally triumphed over this cruel world, he is content to remain deep in her heart, comforting her weary spirit. He will take her to his home, where her room has been waiting to receive her for decades. Everything there has been waiting for her. She is the queen now. His talks will be only with her and for her, and so is his whole life. There will be no more frantic crowd searches for her, and he must now refrain from traveling. He dedicates his life solely to her. Her grin, which cancer was unable to eradicate, and her eyes are his blessings.

He took her back to his true homeland, where they would happily live until they left that bitter world. He asked her friend, Huda, to accompany them to Scandinavia, but the latter turned him down as her life was in the other city, where her husband, children, and grandchildren were waiting for her return. He did not press on her further for approval, for he was seeking everlasting solitude with his long-absent love, unbroken by any partners or intruders. Huda handed over to him the last thing that Bahaa had before their destined reunion, a huge manuscript with her own handwriting, a small velvet box in which there were two gold wedding rings, a big dark blue address book, her apartment key, medical files, health insurance documents, a passport, an old photo album, a box of exquisite origami stars of different colors, and a crystal ball music box inside

which a couple dancing surrounded with snowflakes falling all over. How little a fortune was that for a giant woman as Bahaa! He paid little attention to it. He instead shifted his attention to Huda to know everything he missed in his beautiful redhead. Huda was Bahaa's lifetime companion. She had known everything about Bahaa since they met at the orphanage. Their sisterhood continued even after they got out of that rusty place. He did not realize Huda as she came after his expulsion, yet she knew everything about him, the gallant lover, whom Bahaa talked to her about all the time.

He spent all night knowing every detail of his beloved's secrets, buried in Huda's chest. He asked all the questions in his mind over the past years. Huda's answers were long and satisfactory most of the time, yet, he was burning upon shortened answers- valuable, though. Whatever related to his redhead beloved meant the world to him. His heart felt peace upon the knowledge that Bahaa had loved him all her life, looking for him in every man she met in her way and that she had been living for one and only one life-long dream- that's, meeting him, living with him, writing their novel together about their ardent love, and forgetting the past to live the epic of their invincible love. As for her life events that had nothing to do with him are to her doomed to be incidental.



He listened to Huda to dawn. Time was approaching to set off for his life-long plan, taking his beloved away to his home country. He packed his luggage in no time. He had Bahaa and her small bag with her little things inside,

Along the snowy, treacherous path, they encountered a cab whose driver occupied himself with classical music, clearly enjoying himself. She pressed her delicate frame against his. A sound slumber enveloped her. He ripped up the paper on which Huda had written her phone number so he would never have the opportunity to bring her along. In spite of Huda's desire for regular updates on Bahaa's condition, he insisted on keeping Bahaa to himself. The fact that they were still together, a million light-years apart, was all that mattered to him at the moment; he knew enough about his beloved.

## **The Third Forgotten Chapter**

### **The River House**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Everything I see is a manifestation of him."**

**"Who said that dreams can't come true in a single enjoyable moment?"**

**"As soon as my love talks The world becomes more pleasant, kind, and merciful."**

**"How desolate are those who have little love!"**

**"Gain wisdom in matters of the heart and witness the agony."**

**"Sacred are the pursuit of love, even mundane utterances."**

**"He is different from all, As his heart is a home for all world, Seas, mountains, and plains."**

The most picturesque place in the city, in the ancient cultural district, is where he calls home-his wooden house. It sits on the river's edge and doesn't appear to care about people strolling past. On the east side, the shutters open to boat trails, where lovers flock every summer searching for a peaceful getaway from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Visitors to the bazaar and flower girls fill the historic granite street on the west side. Across the street, he proudly displays his endowed library, welcoming anyone who seek knowledge and the truth. Across the street stands high his endowed library, available for all searchers of the truth and knowledge. It is generously facilitated with whatever is needed for knowledge seekers, warmth, sanitation, and the internet. A large table in the lounge offers a variety of hot beverages, juices, and pastries.

Bahaa must have been fantasizing about moving into such a luxurious river house as he had been dreaming the same since his arrival in this city. He always felt connected to her as his other half or as a reflection of all his dreams, hopes, and aspirations. Yet, life would not allow them to live such a life together.

Like the gallant princes and knights of fairy tales, he escorted her into the house. Yet, reality fell short of his expectations. She is in her wheelchair, paralyzed, and powerless. She was joyful in his arms though, leaving his soul perplexed with the gaiety of her smiling eyes as of a soft hermit the moment he comprehended the divine presence in everything. As the shimmer of chandelier lights danced across her face, a smile spread across her face.

A persistent question circled within his thoughts: "Has her soul wandered through this place before?" His conviction remained steadfast, as her fragrance permeated every corner, and the essence of her soul, a stream of warmth and cheerfulness, enveloped him. He had a habit of attributing her name to every beautiful thing, be it a day, the weather, or any other delightful encounter.

Her name morphed into an adjective preceding each thing that elicited a delightful sentiment in him. He established a well-defined routine to ensure her well-being. Swiftly, he washed her body with closed eyes to preserve its dignity. He clothed her in one of his cozy cotton pajamas, meticulously combed her soft red hair, and served her dinner. Following that, he unpacked her bag and neatly hung her limited collection of dresses in the wardrobe. On his expansive desk, he unfolded her manuscript, preparing himself to delve into its contents. He placed the small velvet box in his pocket; within it, Bahaa stored two gold rings, each bearing their names meticulously engraved. Turning the key to the music box, he seated himself and listened to the melody. His gaze fixed upon the scene within the music box—a portrayal of two lovers gracefully dancing under the descent of snowflakes.

With a myriad of thoughts occupying his mind, he twirled the key to her apartment between his fingers. The idea of perusing her mobile phone to read the messages sent to her

briefly crossed his mind, but he quickly dismissed it. He discarded both the key and the phone into the trash bin conveniently placed beside his stylish desk before easing his fatigued body onto his sumptuously upholstered chair. He pulled out the dark blue velvet dress book, ran his idle eyes over its pages, abruptly slammed it shut, and began tearing into pieces all of her belongings- the address book, medical files, insurance documents, and the album he hesitated to examine. Setting them ablaze, he experienced a sense of catharsis. Fatigued but content, he eventually fell asleep on the couch after a long day. For Bahaa, there was no turning back.

When she opened her eyes on her first morning there, he greeted her with a wide smile. He held a silver tray filled with dishes. She reciprocated the smile. Placing the tray beside her, he reached into his pocket while kneeling before her deteriorating body. He removed the velvet box, opened it, and took out the two gold rings. The rings rested in the palm of his shaking hand. He reached for her left hand, gently slipped the ring on her finger, and dropped the other one on his with a swift victory. He grabbed her body to his, approaching her lips, and pressed them tightly against his twitching lips.

He didn't hesitate; after all, he felt like a mythical semi-god who had successfully captured the most beautiful goddess. No guilt lingered, for he had attained what he desired.

Swiftly, he headed to the university where he held a teaching position and formally requested unpaid leave. He displayed no concern for the protests or surprise expressed by his superiors. Without delay, he returned to Bahaa, who was being looked after by his private secretary, Barbara. Savoring life with her and co-authoring their novel occupied his thoughts. He placed the crystal ball beside her bed and wound its key. Bahaa smiled at the melodic transmission, gently moving her head with closed eyes, as if transcending to the ethereal realms of dreams. Her eyes widened when the music ceased. She weakly stammered a few words, urging him to turn the key repeatedly to relish the music. He began to hum an oriental song he used to sing.

Placing the colorful paper box on her lap, he opened it for her. The name "Leen Badran", a friend of Bahaa's as mentioned by Huda, adorned its cover. Leen engaged in her own origami business, a passion she developed since creating a heart-shaped origami for her handsome lover, now her husband. "I love you," she whispered while handing the origami to her lover, "You are in my heart. I am entangled in the haze of your bright eyes, and I adore that." Leen crafted a box filled with origami stars, each bearing a statement provided by Bahaa for a specific purpose. "She got them shaped for me," he deduced. That explained why she had been clutching the box the entire

time. She was aware that she would meet him one day. He took a handful and placed them in Bahaa's hand—there were seven stars. Each would unfold when he pressed a certain way in the middle. He began to open them one by one and read to Bahaa:

"Cursed are those who live their life at all costs."

"You should not settle for a life less than you deserve; otherwise, you will receive the opposite."

"I am only the child within me."

"Be out of tune if the chorus is crowded with crows."

"One is loved by those who love their deeds."

"Denying, faking, suffocating yourself Nonsense!"

"Betray yourself, things betray you back."

\*\*\*\*

He smiled and adjusted her scarf around her neck to shield her helpless body from the cold air. Seated in her wheelchair, she appeared delighted while listening to him, and he carried the wheelchair. He fed her a bite of an Arabian sweet that he made for her in his own way. Taking another bunch of origami stars, he recited to her:

"I can not recall where I have hidden forgetfulness."

"What we must not forget is what we must not remember."

"He gave his life away for others' sake, written on his gravestone."

"Only love can give us a reason for living."

"The only truth I believe in is my love for you."

"You will know the real me when I truly love you."

"Making love means coming closer to the greatest truth of existence."

"My paradise is my love for you."

"The loving soul can be as wide as the galaxy."

\*\*\*\*

He had three, and only three, objectives in his mind: caring for his beautiful red-haired woman, writing their collaborative novel on her behalf as she was unable to do so herself. He would exert every effort to publish it at the earliest opportunity. With the aim of having their names engraved on the wall of eternity, he planned to title the novel after them, "Bahaa and Al-Dahhak." All lovers would read about their love, a rarity bestowed by life upon transient humanity. The third sacred commitment he had was to read to his beloved from her manuscript, serving as a draft for their novel. This act was envisioned to potentially revive her memory and halt its ongoing degeneration. Her doctors assured him that reading and



engaging in conversation might prevent her from further descending into absolute oblivion. He was resolute in preventing her from drifting away with the swift currents that swept through her memory, leading towards the profound void of nothingness.

To his surprise, a note was written on the first page of her manuscript: "Memoirs good to be a draft for a novel." Apparently, she had intended to use her memoirs as the foundation for her own novel. However, her aspirations were thwarted by the treacherous illness that had befallen her. He sought clarification regarding Bahaa's intention to write her own book. Did she simply aim to pen a novel detailing her challenging life, or did she plan to weave her hardships into the narrative of the story she dreamt of creating? He didn't delve into deciphering her motives; what mattered most to him was her initial desire to undertake the endeavor. Within that manuscript, he had an abundance of her memories recorded. He held onto hope that these memories might stimulate her brain to recollect and resist the tyranny of the illness ensnaring her within the intricate web at the heart of dark forgetfulness. At that moment, she desperately needed to remember, as she was meeting her lifelong lover, whom she had been waiting for almost half a century. He smiled broadly and, like a diver, took a deep breath, filling his lungs with fresh air before plunging into a vast ocean, unsure of where the currents

would carry him. Seeking strength, he gazed into Bahaa's green eyes before delving into the recesses of her buried memories. He observed that she hadn't indexed her manuscript; she had only titled some pages and left others untitled.

On the first page, she wrote in a feminine, tidy, but not particularly beautiful handwriting: "I don't know a name for myself after his disappearance, yet I will call myself 'the lover' until I find him in one of the men I meet."



## **The Fourth Forgotten Chapter**

### **Illness**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Madness is the logic of this witless world."**

**"Love is the only valid madness there."**

**"To fall in love means we have won over loneliness."**

**"There are no truths other than love and misery."**

**"Dead ages ago, they had never taught us love."**

**"Why does his fragrance linger in my soul whenever you come into my mind?"**

**"Only a kiss from your lips can open the gate of my soul."**

The female lover wrote:

"Today, I have decided to start writing my memoirs to be a confession novel for Dahhak. I want him to know the whole truth about me and my perdition before I lose all the clues to my trodden roads. How arduous and humiliating has life been to me without you? You let me get lost. My

face is still the same, yet you will not recognize my soul anymore. My body festers with men's stinky lust and lechery. Upon seeing me, he will surely know that Bahaa – as he used to call me- has been cracked with sins and faded away.

It is not the lethal illness that has made me write but rather my desire to redeem my soul of the abominable filth accumulated upon my soul while fumbling my way through the ring of life retaliating its savage jabs.

I neither fear cancer nor death. I only fear losing my memories, my only precious memory that I called once "Dahhak" that dark night back in the furthest past, Strangely, I cannot hide my joy. The joy of having my memories totally erased. It will overtake me. My soul will be saved by its tyrannies. Oh, my lover! I am sorry, but I must admit I was the one who has been longing for the day I wake up cleansed of all miserable memories killing me every day. I am lost. Illness has had the lead. I have left it to take the best meat for itself. Why to be sad! I need to be overcaught by oblivion. What a generous cancer is! It is the only that dared to take up the mission to cleanse my soul of filthy memories.

It is the time for me now to take a rest and cherish for once the little remained for me. Don't I deserve such a precious opportunity? Cancer, I am all yours. You have the right to

know who I really am after I could not know myself and to believe in me after I brutally disbelieved in myself.

Do you feel emasculated before my seemingly arrogant self, soaring over your would-be territories, my body and my mind? I don't mean to offend your mighty. No doubt, no doubt! you are ruthless, I must admit. I am sincerely grateful as you are the first to kindly have mercy on me by unburdening my soul of my past, whose torture seems never to cease. You are restlessly persecuting me to kill my heinous past, and thus you are the most merciful of all.

Recently, after a long search the last fifty years of my life, I got his address. Cancer, I want you to slash it with your indefensible spears. Leave me clueless and strip all my dreams of meeting him away out of my mind. Surely, surely, he will spit me out once he knows a life as scandalously profane as mine.

I just happened to know the path to him by one of my friends, a publisher, who wanted to translate Dahhak's novel into Arabic. On the back cover was his picture. How wouldn't I know his face? It was him, Dahhak's face! Still, he looks as he used to do. No changes, except for fifty years of weariness, artistically brushed on his lovely countenance. His head is covered with white hair, smoothly running down to his shoulder and draping halfway his cheeks to hide his dimples. As far as I remember, his

dimples used to add more charm to his face and swallow the mumblings of his laughs.

He did not change his name either. His name is elegantly printed in English "Dahhak". He has become one of the most celebrated novelists all over the world, while I am a carcass, still sinking down in the lands of waste, misery, and abatement.

At that moment, I dared not profane his book with me fingers, longing to feel its almost uttering papers. I did not ask my friend any question about the novel or the novelist, yet my perplexed looks urged him to elaborate on Dahhak, his life, writings, reputation, and his academic as well as literary projects. He bent down to open a drawer and got out a paper in which Dahhak stated an approval for my friend to translate his novel into Arabic. On the bottom was his signature followed down by his address, phone numbers, and email address. For the first time in ages, I saw his elegant handwriting with its remarkable bends and curves.

I knew where he was eventually. He was a call away. It needed me just a click to hear his voice flowing through my ears. Had I done that, my torturing quest would have been ended then. But, No! I don't have that bigger-than-life strength to do that. I can't stand his looks of perplexation or denial.

The female love wrote:

That night, I slept with just one wish – escaping life to him. It came to my mind that romantic scene of the movie they once secretly watched together at the orphanage. The scene was about a beautiful blonde woman in her forties on a boat being steered by some celebrity's bodyguard. She was to be transferred to a beautiful island faraway in the middle of the sea. There was a handsome man wearing a silky outfit, which made him seem taller and sexier. As the boat was approaching the small wooden harbor, the handsome man hurried to receive the beautiful lady, who seemed swaying with wind. He reached out to her and bring her body down to his. He whispered to her: " Don't fear anything anymore. I will take care of you." The lovers grabbed each other's hands and walked up to their elegant island house. The sun was going down the horizon, and two silhouettes were merged into one. In another scene the blonde woman was dying. When she realized that her end was so near, she asked to be taken to her faraway love. She wanted to die in his arms.

I always dreamt to fly to Dahhak's lap to live what was left for me with him – despite the hounding death. Yet, cowardice is taking over every inch of my body. I would add to my agony if he rejected me or denied me.



I have been getting myself ready for such a moment. It has never come to my mind that we will be far between. He is gloriously soaring in the majestic grandeur of literary world, while I am wallowing in the mud of shame.

Oh, malignant but merciful disease! Haven't yet I told you that you have overcaught my body just in the right time? Please, devour my mind so that I forget Bahaa and her stupid aspirations. Now, I desire death. I want to vanish away. I want to forget who I am.

Oh, cancer! Have the all of me. You have my word. I will not even try to resist you or to curse you. I surrender. I have no desire to face you anymore as I did before when I expelled you out of my breasts and my womb. I am bestowing the whole of me to you. Come and relieve me.

## **The Fifth Forgotten Chapter**

### **Oblivion Saved Her!**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Doubt unites truth seekers."**

**"If I write you, you die."**

**"To love means we are not alone anymore."**

**"How fair is the shade, Under which pretenders are  
fated to lay."**

**"Satisfaction will never be a friend of creators, sophists,  
and dreamers."**

**"They rebelled ,Rose over their weak Selves."**

**"In vain, you verbalize you're your love to a heart that  
has never felt you."**

He felt as if madness was leaping to slit his throat. He couldn't just believe that Bahaa had known the way to him for many years yet did not approach him; she's rather surrendered to illness and forgetfulness. She denied the truth of him. She sentenced their love to death. Outraged and defeated, he cried, hitting his thighs and calling her

"Bahaa ... Bahaa", who was lying on her bed in her room. She heard nothing though. "How foolish you are, Bahaa. How foolish! ", He cried out, "How could you do that to yourself? How could you doubt me? How could you imagine me rejecting you or pushing you away for any reason? I have been waiting for you, foolish girl! "

Troubled, he spent the whole night playing sonatas on his expensive piano, which he bought at the auction held annually in the heart of the city, where antiques and artifacts were brought from all over the world to be sold to art collectors like him. He played whatever came into his mind in a disorderly manner, ignoring his secretary's calls for dinner. He was angrily hitting the piano's keys every time he remembered Bahaa's wretched delusions.

Drunk and exhausted, he dragged his body into his room, loosely grabbing the bottleneck, swaying left and right just like his body. He shut the door behind him and locked it. He swigged the whole bottle at once and tossed it off. He threw his body on the bed and fell into deep sleep.

The day before, before reading the first pages of Bahaa's manuscript and her one-sided plan to surrender to her inner demons, he had felt as if stuck in a maze of thoughts and events. He was entangled in the middle, where he had no clues which path to take. Was it a biography or a would-be novel? or it was just a fragmented text reflecting his

woman's fragmented memory. When did she write that manuscript? He wondered. To him, it sounded like a giant forest with so many interlocking narratives. He felt suffocated. When did she write it? He repeated that question nonstop. Was she writing all of these to confess to him the despicable things she did or to manipulate him? Was she dragging her memories to a place where she would be able to remember? or was she making fun of the tyranny of her disease by making up misleading stories that never really happened?

The professor of Comparative literature realized that he had in his hands a labyrinth of narratives, which he might have no place in. He decided to continue reading for her though, hoping that might wake up her abraded memory.

If it had to happen, if she had to die, he needed to write the novel as fast as he could. For her sake. For their sake.

He resolved to write it even if it would cost him to stop his life to finish her project. She never published a novel. He did. Her dream was still somewhere in her mind. If it happened that the dreamer forgot her dream, he, who considered himself to be her life-long guardian, would take the whole responsibility. To him, it was fate. Unavoidable.

He started a new day. At dawn, he went for a morning walk, the sport he loved. He did not want to slip the hour Bahaa woke up to have her breakfast and her pills after. For

years, he had had the habit of walking by the riverside in early mornings. He had always thought of her having her as his sole company.

She came in his world, yet they could not live such a dream as she is totally paralyzed, incapable to do the least things without his help.

He was talking to her while walking: " I love you, Bahaa. I will write your novel. I will have your dream come true. I will choose the sweetest fortunes and bury the ugliest in your fading memory. I will read you what you had written, yet I will write the brightest only, the things that you had always been craving for. I will bury your secrets deep down my chest."

"Your sins are deemed sacred into my heart. Your sins will add to your coy charm in my eyes. I will pick up only the prettiest, the noblest, and the most virtuous. Our novel is just ours, the others are just passers-by, who I will deny their existence.

You will not be just a wandering memoryless woman but rather a semi-goddess, whose name is gloriously carved over the brow of immortality – despite all.

How could you do that to me. I need you by my side now, asking me to buy you some roses. I almost hear your tender girly voice saying, "have me a rose. You know I love

roses". I almost see your legendary smile showered with raindrops channeling their way through your lovely face features.

He placed the pineapple juice on the table and wheeled it next to her bed. She leaned on his shoulder. She wore a calm smile, yet he could feel resentment and doubt simmering beneath his turmoiled mind and heart. He slightly lifted her body up to keep her back straight. He grabbed an origami star, a green one, out of the colourful box. He carefully opened it; it read: "Deprived lovers' tears are their wails". He handed another green star to her. Slowly, she opened it and stuttered: "Stand helpless before love, never see the face of love again". He artistically drew a smile on his face while listening to the fragmentations of her tender voice coming out through her crimson lips. He hurried and caught a third green one. "Love is never a coincidence; rather, it is fate". He sighed and turned to her: "It seems that you had good sleep last night?" She nodded her to confirm. Her short straight hair graciously sloped over her face. Affectionately, he adjusted her hair up and tucked some clumps behind her ears. "Today, I am going to

read you some of your manuscript. You wrote it. It is just a novel about a woman in love, who seemingly lived a miserable life. It has nothing to do with yours as you have lived a sweet life. I will read it for you as doctors advised, hoping that it might stir your sleeping memory. He looked deeply at her eyes to see how she handled his lie just landed into her soul. It landed easier and more peaceful than he imagined as he saw a couple of eyes so pure and so believing, a thing that encouraged the more of it!

He quickly and passionately reiterated, "This manuscript is a draft for your novel. You were the one who brushed the characters on the manuscript's pages and sculptured its love-smitten heroine. No doubts, it makes a beautiful novel. It is not about yours though. Your life had been totally different. Most probably, the heroine is related to you in that it is a foil of your lovely self. She is inflected by a disease that left her brain corrupted."

He paused for few seconds to catch his breath and went further and further in his lies. A smile blossomed on his face as he felt that he carried out such a too much difficult

mission so successfully. He stamped a kiss on the palm of her hands. Carefully, He helped her drinking the pineapple juice and tenderly saying: "As for you, you are not sick, and you remember everything. You remember me, don't you?"

Her eyes shone with mysterious joviality. "You are Dahhak. I know you. I love you", she murmured. She was watching his manly hands opening the manuscript wide and turning the pages until he reached the last one that he read last night. He could feel her excitement to enter the forgotten world of the female lover. He was excited too though he knew that she would never recall any of it.





## **The Sixth Chapter**

### **The Woman, The Female Lover**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"The wider your heart is, the more pain you feel."**

**"True light comes out of good conscience."**

**"Only a great love is a genuine creator."**

**"Those who never dreamt of love cannot be beautiful."**

**"The maleficent around you are the salt of success."**

**"The poor choose bread over love."**

**"Can the content of a lover's heart articulate what  
"Home" means?"**

He had already started outlining their novel, which he named "Oblivion Save Her". He needed to work on names, most importantly, the name of the heroine- that was, "The Female Lover". He renewed determination to compose it the way he always envisaged Bahaa to be in his dreams of her and the way she wanted herself to be too, contrary to what fate had arranged for her. He constantly reiterated this desire to do that in his mind.

Before the sunrise, he wrote the first lines. It was freezing outside.

The female lover would be the incarnation of Bahaa's beautiful soul. She was a beautiful blue blood woman of a royal family dedicated to make its country increasingly prosperous. Deep down his memories, he buried that miserable image of Bahaa, the rootless bastard girl left by her savage mother at the threshold of an orphanage, where she met her life-long lover who called her Bahaa before he was forever deprived of his angelic presence that ugly winter night.

Bahaa had been through a lot at the orphanage. When she turned eighteen, she found herself again on streets, where she had nothing but her extraordinary beauty and her rarely gettable writing talent, which she sharpened with the little she could get at the orphanage. Yet, she could not make any of her dreams come true. She neither attended a university nor became a popular figure in the world of literature. She had not published a novel or had her fans around her as she dreamt of. She was kept caged where she was and never flew around the world. To sum up, she had lived a life of long falls and constant disappointments for the sake of honorable living amongst greedy souls never satisfied unless she gives away her delicious body to them. Being a bastard was her curse; she had never been blessed with a genuine love, a thing that pushed her to sell her body

to the elite. The society denied her humanity and could not embrace her “bastardness”. How could such an illegitimate being be a mother for anybody’s children? She only met hungry human wolves that aspired to devour her white delicious body.

As he learned from Huda, Bahaa ended up with nothing but shame, a small apartment, some fancy dresses, and few joyful dreams that she never really lived but, in her imagination, damaged by forbidden fantasies and often delayed dreams. She lost everything, honor, soul, aspirations, pride, health, and most importantly her dream to author a novel. She was just a cheap commodity in the hands of savages poorly investing her in the prostitution market. That was not to say that she had not tried to get decent livelihood; she rather tried hard. Yet, hungry perpetrators kept pushing her to an impasse, where there would be nowhere to go but to step into grosser vices. Helpless, she sold her body and soul to the devils in return for crumbs until her delicious body was consumed by them. She shunned away from people then, except for Huda and her clients, who used her to write them golden lines to be published in journals and magazines signed with their names. Fed up with savage adulterers, she became a mercenary in the world of literature and creative writing. It felt the same to her as she was then prostituting her pen instead. She then had a job in the public sector, where she

got little pension that helped her abandon her roles as a prostitute and a literary mercenary. She ended up self-hospitalized in one dark corner of her small apartment, eaten out by loneliness, illness, and some stinky memories.

Cancer attacked her twice; once in her breasts and womb, which she aggressively confronted and fought back until she cleared it out of her body but leaving her breastless and wombless. The other one was in her brain. Cancer could sneak out up to her brain as if taking a revenge for her daring resistance. It spread out as fire all over her brain and artistically made its maneuvers all around until she waved the white flag, as white as her soul and sweet complexion. Cancer took her hand walk into the void of nothing. She had no other choice.

At the time, she became a quasi-permanent patient at some public hospital. Her health was getting worse and worse, so she chose to travel to one of health resorts in the heart of that Scandinavian Forest, where the reunion happened. She spent almost all she had, savings, small old car, and apartment to afford for the trip to the resort in the land of snow and ice. Bahaa had to do that as one of her clients whom she used to buy her words dismissed her pleas to fund her treatment -after having her business done- though the client had the power to do that. She could help Bahaa, but why would she do that after having her business done? Bahaa's muses had no more been singing to her; they all

perished at ruins of shrine of memories. It was over for Bahaa. Illness had taken over her body and mind.

Bahaa did not recover, and her health were uncontrollably deteriorating as doctors expected. She collapsed in a wheelchair waiting for the end to come. Nothing could save her. She was fading away shrinking more into an easy target for the never satiated ghost of death. At that tragic point of her life, she met Dahhak as an angel coming to embrace her with love and care to die peacefully with no more suffering, with no more loss.



## **The Seventh Chapter**

### **The Scent of a Sweet Kiss**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Writing gives me a reason to breathe."**

**"Passing time makes a sworn enemy for the deprived."**

**"Love never just happens to be; it is a fate to be."**

**"Love saves my children unborn into this savage world."**

**"In hatred lies the vilest."**

**"Time can never be renewed, but always consumed."**

**"Love is the only entity, aethereal though, we can conceive in our savage world."**

Bahaa kept a lot of painful secrets in her depths, and Dahhak fully realized that fact as he listened to her stifled moans struggling to lob our their way out of her corrupted throat. He had nothing to do for her, except for summoning a doctor specialized in cases like hers. On all occasions, the doctor examined her and prescribed stronger painkillers hopefully to relieve her constant pain and to help her make up an appetite, which had recently been dead almost.



One day, she declined food, laying in her bed all day as a worm crushed by a gigantic rock. She kept lying in the same position, to the window's side, watching rain hitting the glass. Noticing her interest in rain, he opened the window wide so that rain would be in her range of view. Some raindrops flew and gently dropped on her face and lips. He sat on the floor and opened her manuscript to read her some.

He read few lines then paused. He knew she was not listening to him as she was immersed in playing with dropping rain with her eye lids. He looked attentively at her, inquiring her with great interest: "You want to dance under the rain, hah? She nodded her yes. He came nearer, held her weakened body up, and stepped out on the balcony to wash their bodies with the cleansing rain. She choked out a gasp of thrill and breathed in the scent of rain. Slowly, her arm struggled its way to reach out for some of it just like a happy kid, whose play was interrupted by the teasing summer rain. Rainfall grew stronger as if it wanted to make her more pleased with its presence. It seemed that the clumps of her red hair were dripping with thrill. While the rain was clearing its way out to the corners of her lovely face, he noticed some freckles scattered harmonically on her rosy cheeks, a thing that heightened her charm and bordered out the roundness of her delicious cheeks, inviting his lips to touch them with helpless kisses. His lips felt

unsatiated with her tender features until they settled down on her rain-wet lips. Raindrops were dripping down, mixed that time with heightening desire. He recalled that day when he sneaked out of boys' award to girls' and invited her for a dance under the rain. She accepted the invitation and dared to breach the rules. They did it. They danced under the rain to dawn, indifferent to what might happen to them. They did not care about standing under sun to noon to dry out their clothes, which danced with them the night before. Yet, this time he would not let the cold hurt his beloved. He took her inside the moment he felt her full satisfaction with rain. He took off her clothes and gently dried her body with a towel. He put on her new clothes he recently bought for her with a help from Barbara, who grudgingly did that as she always aspired to be his wife and had all of him for herself, his popularity, money, and tender heart. Why not? They had sex a few times, which were significant to her but not to him. He always saw her as a passerby and never gave her a hint of marriage, love, or cohabitation even.

He lit the fireplace and softly carried her to her bed. He helped her drink a glass of milk sweetened with aromatic orange honey. He kept rubbing her brow until her eyes sank into deep sleep. He kept awake, mediating on her facial features that were overflowing with happiness and satisfaction. He tried to quit her room but the rainy kiss was still lingering on his lips. He decided to write a new chapter

of their novel. That night, he wanted to elaborate on their rain kiss in that chapter, which he named "The Scent of a Kiss":

"How close would that kiss be if we kept kissing in the dark uninterrupted by anything but our moans? I missed a lot and so did you. Our hands have not yet touched, our heads have not yet been thrown on each other's chest, our fingers have not yet felt each other's body or got entangled with waves of our hair, our noses have not yet breathed in our entangled bodies' aromas, our ears have not yet heard our moans going up and down as our bodies would do, and our mouths have not yet drunk the taste of our entangled tongues until satisfied."

He battled against his nodding eyebrows until he finished the whole chapter narrated by the female lover. The dark was not fully consumed unlike his soul that was keen on winning another kiss from her still lips, which he pitied to stir. He got out a bunch of origami stars instead, and headed out to his room, taking off his shirt on his way. He tucked his naked body under the blanket, getting out his hands a little to open the origami stars before sleeping. He read:

"Coward are those who have not lived as they wished."

"Do not abuse words with your anger."

"Confessing is just like getting naked, which you do not do but before yourself or a mirror"

"Love is a vast nation not enough but for two people"

"I love those who said "No" and those, whose "No" hinted for a "Yes".

"A rebel to the last breath... that's me."



## **The Eighth Chapter**

### **The Homeland**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Females I write about and for are less miserable than I am."**

**"Can I draw my dream as a man?"**

**"Can I draw the beats of a heart?"**

**"A Heart becomes an adolescent when it falls in love."**

**"An ugly truth... A man is beautiful just on paper."**

**"The man I love is too prettier to be true,**

**So I need to be the expert when writing about him."**

**"Love that comes at the end of your priorities is a burden that you need to put down."**

**"The worst habit is to freeze love in our heart."**

This morning, he did not go out to walk. He did not take calls either. His attention was totally turned totally to her. He did not want any kind of interruption. He made her a gourmet breakfast, thus disregarding his meeting with Barbara to tie up some loose ends. She kept calling him. He

did not take any of her calls though. He was completely engaged with cooking, humming happy oriental songs.

He went into her room and found her awake. Contrary to his expectations, her face lit up with vividness he could not understand. He – the master of pure clairvoyance- could not figure out her smile. "Are they the kisses he stamped on her rainy face yesterday?", "Does she even remember them, or did they diminish as all things passing by her?" As for him, the taste of her delicious lips was stuck over there in his mind for eternity!

He came closer to her and placed the tray on her lap. To add to his accumulating perplexation, she even came closer to him, rising a bit, gave him a little peck on his lips, and stuttered: " You are Dahhak... I remember you!"

That kiss left the all of him pleased and happily perplexed, dripping the sweat of desire – just like those wet kisses under the rain. He made up his mind to escort her out to stroll in the old bazaar, where countless vendors happily sell their miscellaneous goods like flowers, ornamental plants, love birds, and colourful fish.

"No parasites!" he insisted. He did not want any other company, even Barbara, who kept relentlessly asking him to get closer to his Bahaa, that beautiful redhead who set the fire of desire in his wild heart for a decade, while she failed to tame his heart and got few intimate meetings with

him before he shunned away from her and bordered their meetings within just an employee-boss relationship.

He held up Bahaa's body and carefully placed her on her wheelchair and cautiously wrapped her body with a soft blanket to keep it warm. He also put on a cashmere beret on her head to keep her ears warm then pushed the wheelchair heading to the bazaar. They strolled in. He talked about every corner with great details. He took a picture of her smiling in front of the building of his huge library.

He rushed to buy the flowers she wanted. He could understand her gestures and nods. The flowers were big enough not to fit his many vases he had at home. He did not care as he could use kitchen wares for that purpose. They came back and fitted the bunches into the vases and kitchen wares that his mansion looked as a garden, and the atmosphere was soaked with the different sweet aromas.

At dinner, he sat next to her bed to read some of the manuscript for her. First, he waited for her to finish her dinner, which she ate up with great appetite. He has not seen her eating that way since her arrival. Her lips welcomed every bite he gave her. He awarded her by reading for her. He read two pages only before he noticed that she sank in a pleasantly deep sleep as he gave her night sedative pills so that she would sleep with no pain. He watched over her for some time, but he was startled with



her eyes opening wide as a clear summer sky crowded with stars. She seemed as if she saw his face for the first time in her life. He was intimidated by her look. "Is she saying goodbye to him? Or she is just having an epiphany? They exchanged looks for a while, then he timidly pleaded for her: "Do you really remember me now?"

She made a little smile, not typical to her wide smiles. She was still, slowly casting her eyes upwards and beholding the countenance of him carefully as if copying the lines of his face somewhere in her brain where cancer cannot reach. She reached out to feel his hair. Her slender fingers made their way down his hair, rippling as his hair like waves in the sea. He shut his eyes and send his soul out with hers. She was then Bahaa, the innocent orphan girl he used to know – the girl who knew nothing of love but rubbing his hair and brows whenever it was just him and her. He felt his eyes glowing with her redness.

It was almost midnight; she was still firing him up with her stares. She must be on fire like him, but silently. They were both on fire, which he did not have any desire to extinguish. He struggled with his miserable childhood memories, fearing that they might interrupt his boundless joy. His soul endured a sting after another. He felt the poison channeling its way through his veins to drip finally into the core of his heart. He felt with the depth of his heart that she would not recall any of those memories. He was

praying God that forgetfulness would nipple every inch of ugly memories they had.

"Did cancer maliciously volunteer to erase her all such memories?" he wondered. "Did cancer loosen her weaved memories a thread by thread to save her all pain?" or "They were just the sores on her soul that had created cancer to unburden itself of all the pain it endured!"

For her sake, he had become the master of deception. He poured as many happy fabricated memories as he could to seal the holes scattered all over her soul, hoping that she would feel – even for few minutes- happy with them before they filter their way through holes somewhere in her mind and fall into the void of nothingness.

After a happy long vigil, she fell asleep, yet he could not. He kept recalling that savage city that devoured his childhood, chewed it, and then spat it out. His was haunted by his frightening memories, so he decided to go out for a walk in the ancient part of the city, choked with the drunken and the homeless loitering for some forbidden pleasures.

He flung his gray jacket on his exhausted body, put on his Siberian beret on his head, and hurried outside, heading to the ancient alleys, wishing to let his ugly memories get lost there – his ugly memories when he was a little savage who lived in the god-forsaken streets. Those days, he felt

frightened and alienated. He felt fear gnawing at his bones then. He used to lonely loitered on those streets, yet tonight he felt no fear as he felt at home, and to him home was that one which embraced him and felt the love in. As for those ruins, they would never be a home for him. They were just a home for thieves, rats, mercenaries, and bandits, who came out of the womb of the past to blunder the present. He was just a little wretched being, but in that country, he became a popular writer and a respectable professor, who could succeed in everything he wants to do. At that moment, he wanted to drink the toast of his true homeland.

He glimpsed a small bar in the far corner at the end of the street. He slipped his hand into his pocket looking for his wallet. He found it! He rushed into the bar. He was drinking a glass after the other celebrating his true homeland and spitting at his past home where he lived as a tailless mangy cat. Done with his toast, he got out swinging his way back to his house, shouting then humming sacred hymns about humans, paradises, and his homeland that most welcomingly wrapped its arms around him filling his soul with joy and warmth.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Bahaa-like Beings**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"How many times has my mum delivered me to this life to face the same destiny?"**

**"Only the greatest have swigged from the jar of the prolonged pain."**

**"God drove villains out of the land of love."**

**"Our fate is our curse."**

**"We truly know our Selves only when in love."**

**"The man whom I love is the centre of the galaxy."**

**"The most guaranteed way to vanish is to stop loving."**

He woke up beaten with fatigue and a lot of anger inside. His ancient country and his homeless days and nights kept filming over and over his eyes. He frowned upon any previously erased memory involuntarily popping up in his mind. He freed a prolonged groaning voice under his breath, pushing his lips outwards that he could see them protruding under the tip of his nose. He checked the time.

It was still 7:30 p.m. Still, he had some time before Bahaa's wake-up time. He turned on his laptop and started writing his weekly article for the city magazine, the most read one in his warm-hearted homeland. Swiftly and gracefully his fingers were hitting the keys, sipping the cold coffee left on his desk yesterday. He scanned his text, corrected the typos as suggested by the automatic editor installed on his device and with a hit sent it to the chief editor. Instantly, a welcoming message sent back to him promising to contact him as soon as possible. He shut his device and threw his body on his fancy leather chair, struggling to open his sleepy eyes as he had to take care of his sick woman, Yet, he felt drowsiness perching over his chest and crippling his body. The last thing he saw before shutting his eyes was Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

He sank into deep sleep, snoring, slowly throwing his head over his right shoulder as a support. He jumped out of his chair feeling exhausted from that nightmare. He checked his legs; they were still the same! They were not transformed into big bug's legs as happened to Gregor. He patted his body as if dusting off the nightmare and thanked God it was just an ugly dream. Hardly could he move a limp but struggle his way to the library to move the book up the shelves so that he would not see it ever again. He went back to his sleep after he found out that Bahaa was soundly sleeping after she stayed up for long last night. He

went back into his room and slept until noon. He then woke up and rushed to Bahaa's room. She was still sleeping! He whispered her name a couple of times, but she did not wake up, so he left her room to make for himself a cup of coffee. He entered her room carrying his hot coffee and sat, waiting for her to wake up and have their breakfast, which it became a lunch unless she woke up in an hour. The aroma of the coffee spread out in the room but could not get into the sleeping princess' nose. She looked like the sleeping beauty who would never wake up unless deeply kissed by her long-awaited prince.

She looked healthier that day despite her drowsy eyes. She could not also swallow but few bites of the delicious breakfast he made for her. What would be more delicious than the Arabian food. He still loves it though he unreluctantly disposed anything that would link him to the Orient world but its delicacies. He adored Arabian cuisine and his adoration increased as his father's Greek wife mastered most of its dishes alongside with pickles, vinegar, wine, and desserts.

“There is nothing tastier than a meal eaten with your beloved on the table”, he talked to himself. He could not help it but to think how much he loved her and how much happy he was when with her. Why did he love her that much? He never knew the answer. He just wanted to live the rest of his life with her. His four friends kept ringing

but with no answer as he did not want to her any other voice but hers. Few words could be freed out of her weak lips but those were more than enough to make his soul flying with ultimate happiness as her soft, but hot as red velvet, voice was still ringing in his ears. After having her lunch, she went back to sleep, and he strangely had an urge to draft another article to that magazine as he was informed that they wanted to release two issues before New Year's Eve. That time he perfectly knew what he wanted to write. He had the desire to write everything roaming around in his mind – everything that seemed just Bahaa-like!

## **The Tenth Forgotten Chapter**

**Afrah Ramli**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"If I were not his beloved, I would be the breeze that played with his hair."**

**"One suffers several deaths subsequent to the biggest death- death of love."**

**"Whatever we define love, one performance unites all definitions, that is love!"**

**"Whenever he spoke love, he meant her love to him, not the other way around!"**

**"Love requirements: a man, a woman, and passion, unbridled."**

**"Pending love is death pending."**

He perfectly knew that Bahaa was always longing for her mother who denied her baby girl and rooted her out of her life and tossed her to the waste land. When flown off in an uncontrollable fit of rage, Bahaa used to curse her name, but she would cry her name longingly every time they sat



together in the dark nights at the orphanage. When her talent with words blossomed in her young mind, she got herself busy in learning. Words to her were just like a true mother who would never give up on her child.

Yet, it never crossed his mind that life would tax Bahaa for her talent and love of words. He would never imagine that the devil could ever sneak into Bahaa's life embodied as an Arabic teacher to impale her innocence in the stead of his fleshy lethal lust.

He knew that Bahaa fully embraced her low circumstances and never thought even for a fleeting moment neither of her reuniting with real parents one day nor of them returning to get her out of the rusty orphanage. She did not run after unrealistic dreams like being of a royal blood family, who out of fear of some villains hid her at the orphanage. She was too realistic to assume her end to be like those of classical ones. However, she had not known that her dream to be a descendent of words, and that she had not expected that her passion would lead her to stumble over the lusts of her Arabic teacher, who never hesitated to exploit innocent flesh even if of a weak redhead girl like her whose passion was only to weave her magnificent ideas with powerful words.

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While sitting peacefully on the balcony overlooking the river, he read her the first lines of her story with her Arabic teacher, Afrah Al-Ramli. He paused when he felt her body shuddering, a thing that interrupted his reading and made him of carrying her inside. "It is the cold", he guessed. He got her inside and turned on the heater. Her face was turning into blue, and her body was icing. He laid her cold body on the bed and slept next to her, trying to blend in with her body to give her some of his body's warmth.

Next day at noon, he planned to read the same story of Afrah Al-Ramli while Bahaa was sleeping. He took a deep breath and skipped the first page to know what exactly froze Bahaa's body to near death upon hearing that man's name though her memory was almost dead as her doctors assumed.

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The female lover wrote:

"I had spent months in a dungeon after my several attempt to run away with Dahhak. I was not aware of the matron's hidden purposes. That is not to say that I did not questioned them as I knew that she would never care even if all orphans escaped the orphanage and lived on the street!"

When she cut my beautiful red hair, I realized that she was punishing the innocent love bestowed upon our young

passionate souls while her ugly soul never tasted men's love but disaffection instead. They all shunned away from her until her soul dried up and filled up with grudges and unjustifiable desire of taking revenge upon all humans.

By the time she gave her permission to take me out of the dark dungeon, I had lost the desire for everything that I loved except for two things: seeing sun rays and chalking on the board, most particularly in Miss. Sabah's class, whom I learned later that she retired and left the orphanage while spending my long sentence, during which I expected her to plead for me to the matron, but I was disappointed she had not."

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The female lover wrote:

"A writing course can be suffocating to the mind and soul if taught by a hellish teacher like Al-Ramli, who used to refer to himself as "The Great Qalqashandi" for a reason I did not grasp. Upon his arrival as an alternative Arabic teacher, he decided that I would be the target of his lust. He was in his late fifties, yet he had the lust and the strength of a young jungle hunter, whose prays would usually be as young as I was. That is not to say that he did not get his lust laid into women at the orphanage, and I mean here all women, literally, even that old cleaning lady, who always smelled like trash, was not out of his lusty calculations. He

attacked her in her low room far away in the kitchen. He got her lust for sex fully satisfied that she became like an obedient dog running behind his person. As for nurses, they kept covering for him after having gotten their share of sex that they had been longing for before his arrival at the orphanage, which he turned into his own brothel.

How could I say "no" to his approaches? How could an orphan stand up for herself before such a sex beast? Had Dahhak been there at that time, I would not have been such an easy target for Al-Ramli. His absence made it easier for that beast to rob away my virginity.

In our first class, I made sure that he knew about my enthusiasm and passion for words and writing. I had thought that he would be the best to sharpen my writing talents as Miss. Sabah used to do for me. He of course exaggerated in praising a piece of writing I wrote about my imagined mother. I could see his eyes fixating on my fully rounded bosom under my tattered uniform which I had no alternative for. Next day in the morning assembly, he asked me to read it before all students. I perfectly remembered how proud I stood as if I had the magical potion of language in my pocket. In front of the poor orphans, I recited my lines of glorification about my imagined mother, who blessed my life with her unmatched love and did not throw me away to bawds to trade my body as well as the other orphans' the way they wanted. I spoke up. I was as

powerful as the word muse residing deep inside my soul. Orphans kept yawning out of boredom as literature was not their niche! "

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The female lover wrote:

“All what he needed was to pull me from my hair and push me inside any room he would favour and put his load inside my body as he used to do with all orphan girls there. But, no! he wanted to fashion it his way. He wanted to take over my body and take me over from the inside in an artistic way that would satiate his lust the right way to make as much sinful as his fantasies were. He set me up to his thorny bed through insinuation. He made use of my enthusiasm about writing to do so. He started to weave me illusions about a brighter dream, erected in my mind phantoms of impenetrable towers, and paved flowery baths that would lead me out that rusty orphanage to a shining life of fame and money.

He chose the right entrance to my mind and heart and then to my body- that is my love to language. He kept praising my language despite the little provided at the orphanage, a few books poorly ordered in a worm-eaten wooden cupboard called a library. I cornered me with his exaggerated admiration that I was filled with fake pride like dumb skylark illusioned that it was a domestic peacock

strutting around the orphanage aisles. He insisted to read every single line I wrote and gave me a pile of old books all in the field of writing. Then, he started to spare time for me to sit and talk about creative writing skills in the classroom or in the schoolyard. My writing skills had started to improve, indeed! I spent many sleepless nights to follow all his instructions and stylistics he taught me in all my writings. I wrote an article after another to gain his admiration as he became my writing guru, the master of words, and the wizard. I myself started to call him "The Great Qalaqshandi". I turned a blind eye to the stories told about him raping the orphan girls, and I did not give much thought for the name "Lolita", which he never called me with unless he gave me that wolf-like look which I never comprehend. My close friend, Huda, kept telling me a lot of his pervert gestures and suspicious behaviours with girls and nurses, but I deafened my ears to her warnings too and even insisted on how honourable and inspiring he was to me. I just could not believe that such a lover of words would let evil sneak into his pure mind and heart?

I ignored all signs I had already seen it with my own eyes. I kept daydreaming about fame life to into believing which he spared no chance to push me. I did not even pause to cast doubts on his intentions to do so. Why was he pushing me to the world of fame while he could be there himself? Why did he want me to rise up to fame towers and

preferred to be in the bottom, unknown, and low life at the orphanage?

One dark night, Huda woke me up, putting her hand on my mouth as a silent gesture for me not to make any commotion. She then led me through the dark aisle towards the faint room up in the second floor. We climbed up the steps carefully until we reach the matron's toilet where a small little slit was made to supply a sort of ventilation for her bedroom. We rose up to peep into hers to see Al-Ramli, fat and naked as wild brown pig, riding and kissing the matron's straw-like body back and forth restlessly as a raven pecking a straw on a street.

I was not shocked, and I did not meditate over its details; instead, I ran away, fearing that they would feel our presence in the middle of their dissolute moments. I turned my back heading to the award, tucked myself under my blanket so that nobody would hear the sounds of my accelerating breaths. I shook my head to get the scene out of my head and made up my mind to focus on one and only one thing -that was to learn how to write and get out the orphanage whatever it might cost me.

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The female lover wrote:

Next morning, I talked to him as if I saw nothing last night. I ignored the scene which kept recurring into my mind, him riding what was counted as a woman. I ignored Huda's secret love for him. She told me that they had had multiple orgasms on the same night few weeks ago, when he gave her firm promises to marry her and get her out to the beautiful worlds outside and to make her a mother of his children. But then, he started to shun away from her and approach other ugly girls that he had the ambition to ride one after another as if a rooster proudly erecting his figure on a junk yard with his stupid hens around him. When it came to sex, he never bothered himself with details such as his preys' femininity or age. He did not even for little count for work ethics or conscience. He concerned himself in one sole thing, that's- thrusting his male thing into any female's womb. He would seize whatever chance to throw his body over his female and toyed his thing over her body. He gave himself the permission to use any girl, whose traces as a human being were rooted out from history.

I despised Huda for slandering Ramli and rushed into a conclusion that her accusations were as a result of her traumatic rape episodes repeated in her childhood by her uncle, who used his niece's body just a day after her father's dead body was buried underground. She had no mother to defend her as she hurried to get married to a



widower and then travelled to one of those far away petrol islands. Her young uncle kept I did not hesitate for a moment to throw it all on her face.

Her young uncle took her body into his hand and repeatedly did her until she got emotionally attached to him. Both were pleased and enjoyed their incestuous deed. Surely, the more sinful, the more enjoyable. They kept doing it in secret until their cover was blown by some cousin who - once discovering their unnatural bond-informed the police who in turn handed her over to the orphanage and threw him in prison. Since then, she never heard of her uncle lover. Since then, her body would shudder at the word "uncle", and she would go into an elongated episode of uncontrollably weeping until her body laid erected on the floor thrashing around due to an epileptic seizure. Frightened orphans would look at her helplessly waiting for somebody to come and save her.

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**The female love wrote:**

Then, I could not tell whether Ramli were really praising my writings or making fun of them, yet I realized that my writing talent started to become sharper and sharper, honestly speaking, owing to his good guidance and advice. I thought highly of him though he was a degenerate bastard and pusillanimous traitor of knowledge, education, humanity, and ethics in all measures. He was just a hungry

fox, smoothly slinking into the vulnerable bodies of orphan girls, left them a pile of well-sucked bones.

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The female lover wrote:

I desperately wanted to win the writing contest held by the bureau of orphanages in the city, where Ramil offered me to go for a round so that I might be inspired by its beautiful sights. That was my first time in my life to walk freely and enjoy the surroundings. I kept imagining that I would meet with Dahhak by chance. Had it happened, I would have spared no chance to take his hand and ran away to one of its hidden alleys to hide from all. It did not happen, so I gave in and grabbed Ramli's hand. He was dragging me as a criminal behind him as he his steps were wider than mine. My little being was shaded by his gigantic figure.

Trying hard to catch up with his pace, I noticed he was wearing a wig perhaps to hide his baldness, yet he could not hide the patches of vitiligo running beneath his scalp under his head down to his neck and back. I also noticed that his belly was two or three inches ahead of him and that his giant shoes looked like a boat floating on the sea surface. The day was too fine to be intimidated by fears of being taken by that ogre to some room in this crowded city to rape me. I was busy thinking of winning the prize foolishly hoping to impress all at the orphanage. I wanted to prove to myself and to others that I was born to be a

writer, and I was not only a cursed and desolate redhead creature as they used to call me at the orphanage.

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The female lover wrote:

Ramli was my only fan at that miserable ceremony. I took the fifth place. After the first four delivered their speeches came my turn to read out my text in front of the careless crowd. He looked proud while listening to me reading my text in which I elaborated in describing a city, which I never knew. I was reading it aloud as if revisiting my feelings and tricking myself into believing that I had lived the happiness of living in that city which never knew anything about me, and I knew just truly little about, except for what I recently wrote about in my essay. That city did deny me as one of its citizens, and it existed only in my imaginations.

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The female lover wrote:

"Ironically, Ramli had become my only supporter in my miserable life at the orphanage after Dahhak let me down and stopped even daring to come closer to my place. He completely disappeared the time the matron filed a complaint against him for robbery. He was afraid to get arrested and chose to give up on me. What had left for me was just a faint light through a crack called Afrah Ramli,

who kept promising me of help and protection as long as I showed obedience of the loyal student. I could not push him away the time he dragged me as a little goat to the room next to the matron's and started to take off my clothes a piece after the other. He got naked too and thrust his thing inside my body to break my virginity, my childhood, and my little dreams. I was as silent as a frightened crow, whose legs tied together to be smashed under the railway by the accelerating train. I moved no muscle and waited him to finish his sacred mission. That night, I smelled his stinky body odor. Thanks to his greasy belly helped his thing to slide smoothly into my organ saving me a lot of pain. The friction grew stronger and took him few minutes to reach orgasm. Few minutes felt like a life. His drool covered my face, and I could feel its gross taste mixing with mine and dripping down my stomach. That night, I saw my mother's face for the first time in my life. She was peeking from a crack in my nightmare. I saw her collecting my ripped clothes, crying over my broken hymen. I did not pay attention to her tears and turned my back to her so that I would not see her staring face which I used to draw. I could not tell whether she was beautiful as I was told by that ogre whenever I talked about my mother to him or not. Yet, I remember that through that crack was not coming a ray of light as pure as mothers', but instead there was absolute darkness that pulled me into more darkness, loss, and horror."

The female lover wrote:

Before meeting that ogre, I was engaged in constructing a consciousness for myself of what Dahhak called it the "National Street" as he was immersed into educating himself about politics, literature, and culture, surely without making himself noticed by that hag, who wanted to make sure to get the orphans away from watching news. I had a fragmented consciousness, and I was struggling to construct an image about my childhood, my world, and the world the social studies teacher used to give us glimpses about, referring to its inhabitants as "citizens of our great country." Since I became Ramli's easy target that he could summoned whenever he felt like, nothing seemed as it used to be. Nothing mattered to me, neither homeland, news, destinies, my roots, my identity, nor who I was. Everybody let me down, and I was left alone, having nothing left to me except for some air I felt forced to breath for the absence of death. I lost my faith in everything, in something called mother, home, Dahhak. Everything! I was drifting away with the currents of Ramli's lust.

The female lover wrote:

I narrated the rape episode to Huda, but she did not pay the least attention to it and kept quietly scrubbing the floor with some dirty rag. She deafened her ears to every word I said. She was in denial as she kept talking about his love to

her and promises to marry her and make her the mother of his children. She kept blabbing her delusions even after that ogre retired and left the orphanage. He left the orphanage leaving behind him a powerful ghost, haunting the memories of his young sheep and sucking their tearful eyes.



## **The Eleventh Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Coma**

**On Origami stars was scribbled:**

**"How trivial is love that is resented!"**

**"God's great deeds are vividly manifested when He chooses the beautiful for us!"**

**"The divine earthly justice is amply felt only when we love and when are loved."**

**"Does love have a final stop? If so, then how absurd it is?"**

**"Very close grew the sky to my earth when you loved me."**

**"True love is an unconditional one."**

**"A smart taker is not a lover, but a good giver is."**

Bahaa has been in a coma for the whole week. She seemed to be sinking into unknow worlds, God only knew what. She fell into absolute silence since that night I read her that part of that lusty ogre. As I was reading her the story, I did



not see her radiant smile usually drawn on her face whenever I read her manuscript to her to express her joy and astonishment about what she listened to as if living the text, word by word. However, that time I saw nothing reflected back from her eyes; they were as dumb as ice. That night, he saw a tired face and a cold body of hers, shuddering and sweating. He thought then that she just wanted to sleep and did not know that she was searching in the rubble of her damaged memories to ditch a cave in one brittle wall behind which lied nothingness.

A doctor interested in such cases as hers insisted to take her, his special case, to the hospital to be taken care of by a specialized staff of doctors as that might be her last stop before leaving the world of the living, and that hospital would be the best place for her before her eternal departure.

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He felt at wrong by sending her to the hospital as he should have insisted on her staying at their home, where he would take care of her until she woke up from her long slumber. He did not buy the doctor's nonsense about her departure and the last stop the doctor went on and on ranting about. He had belief in her, who would never let him down or leave him alone. She would soon wake up to finish what they had already started. She loved him reading for her from the giant manuscript, which still needed them a lot of

time and strength to finish. What about their love novel which they planned to confer to all lovers? To him, she was just taking a nap after which she would up to charm him again with her endless beauty and sharp memory. He would be waiting to receive her. She is braver than what they thought. He knew her very well. He knew his Bahaa!

She was just disturbed by her pain caused to her by that devil, who liquidated her pure soul and her dreams to be the writer that she dreamt to be once. That devil was just one of many lurking all around in the hellish life she was pushed into by her parents who dumped her as piece of meat for all to share.

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Despite all doctor's urges for him to leave her room, he stayed there lying on a couch next to her bed. Failing to convince him of the futility of waiting, they did not say more about it. He continued to read her the next episodes from her manuscript. Next to that ogre's story came the story of that old thing called Wahdani Ful, who snatched her after she was forced to leave the orphanage at once after she turned 18.

That old thing sneaked into the orphanage through philanthropy, the perfect façade for greedy people like himself to mislead others about their illegitimate ways to gain money. He made sure to put his only son, Ashhab, in

the front every visit he would make to any place he offered charity for. He was the best in covering for his corruption and washing his money dipped into the blood of the weak and the poor. His son's deformed body was burdened with all forms of physical and mental disabilities he took after his parents' marred blood due to centuries of inbreeding in the family, or he was just flesh nourished with his father's dirty money. Wahdani had been in his early years of the seventies. His old hag accompanied him too in his charitable visits. She was of sharp facial features and walked with a limp, a thing that did not least take away a bit of the great deal of the pride in herself and she always swaggered in her steps. She would not stop boasting of blue blood she claimed to have that she thought that her eagle-like nose protruding over her face marked her royalty. That hag, proud of her superficial charm and grandiose of self-worth, hated Bahaa the time she first met her and liked it whenever she called her "the damned redhead" as hateful nurses used to call her at the orphanage. That hag with dark complexion felt attacked by the purity of Bahaa's and intended to take her unjustified revenge against beauty itself.

In turn, that old husband wanted to take his revenge against his old hag whatever it cost him, even if it was through the body of Bahaa. His small lips, hanging down below his rabbit-like whiskers, dripped with saliva as he watched her

jumping before his eyes as a winged horse flying in the heavenly skies. He implemented his plan carefully. One gloomy autumn day, her last day at the orphanage, he stood near waiting her to go out the gate. He offered her a small apartment of one room, a small kitchen bar and a bathroom and secured her with a little job at one of the charitable places he ran to get her tied to him and have nobody but him in her life. She was like a honeybee at work and kept doing her best until she got the best position at that place. He took notice of her unmatched writing talent, with which he expressed his fascination to her by showering her with his precious gifts and promises to send her out to study at the most prestigious universities in the country as long as she showed her absolute loyalty to him.

She foolishly bought his promises as she thought of herself as a good daughter for that old thing, and it had not really occurred to her silly mind that his promises had just been the dangling carrot that would make her proceed further and further into her attempts to please him until she would end as a mistress of his. She showed little rejection but then accepted his offer as she thought she had no choice but becoming his totally; otherwise, she would be thrown to streets once again. That chance might give her some rest, care, and hope for a brighter future. Still, he was weaker to get all of her even if she showed willingness to. Passing years made him much less than one-tenth the man that he

was and took away his masculinity, leaving him vulnerable with nothing to feel but to crave for the freshly grown meat of virgins like hers. He was faking a feeling of pride inside him by taking off her clothes, piece by piece. He paid a lot to get her body and enjoyed the very feeling of it. He felt the remnants of his manliness tingling a bit upon watching her, fully naked, moving here and there around the room as a maid in a queue waiting for her turn to be sold to her new master in a slave market. He would ask her to turn around or bend so he would see the hidden parts of her body, which would not be revealed without some swaying and bending. He could not completely take over her femininity but could at least burn it enough. A eunuch became her next master! She had to please her master the way he commanded. She took the mission of making him content with his non-existing masculinity. With time passing, she mastered the role of a slutty courtesan throwing herself into her impotent master's lap. Her pocket was flooding with his money for her services. She acted her role subtly that she could convince him that he could make a thousand virgins lose their virginity to him in one night. She learned later that he had lost his organ in a prison camp, where he was tortured for treason and got out wearing the mask of righteousness and virtue to cover for his impotency and acts of betrayal.

She did practice living with her double selves, one attached to her body and the other attached to her soul, a thing that made her think that manliness was only just words on paper and that she was just a cursed redhead puppet used to relieve the lust of half men. She was foolish as she thought to take over the old man's fortune, but fate won the race. A brain stroke left him totally paralyzed on a wheelchair, making him his wife's prisoner alongside with his teenage disabled son, whose sex appetite grew aggressively active turning him into an untamed beast. The old wife caged both, the father and the son, behind the walls of her mansion and kicked Bahaa out to the street. The 20-year-old woman found herself alone again, penniless and desolate, nothing left for her except painful memories and an immense talent to seduce lusty beasts.

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Dahhak's looks sank into her face, the only survivor out of her life's holocaust; it still had the same timeless purity despite all the defilement caused to her soul by men's wicked bodies at the time when she was alone with no supporter. But with him, she was safe and no one could hurt her or desecrate her body anymore. He had taken an inadmissible decision to rip these pages into pieces to wipe out the pain caused by those ogres forever. He hoped that Bahaa's coma's episode would erase them totally, and thus

ogres called Ramli and Wahdani had gone away with no return.

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A couple of weeks had passed. She was still sinking into her mysterious coma. It felt like he had been waiting at the threshold of her life, staying next to her door days and nights, and drafting their novel. Nothing could steal even little of his time with her, except the column that he would write for the city's magazine. This evening, he could not think of anything but the idea of love, so he wrote about hearts that lives in and for love and even disobeyed their persons to win over life that would hate to unite lovers. He read her the article before he emailed it to his editor friend.

## **The Twelfth Forgotten Chapter**

### **Wafa Deeb**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Our deep Selves are scared shrines to which glorious pilgrimages should be made."**

**"True love has not come yet."**

**"The prettiest has not come yet."**

**"Love is the new history for loving hearts."**

**"Nothing keeps the same after love come's."**

**"Love is our condolence when all let us down."**

**"Life is always the best trickster, except in the time of love."**

**"It grows the weakest in the face of lovers."**

The female lover wrote:

One upon a time when I was just a little naïve girl, I used to have that foolish view about world and its inhabitants. I thought there were all good, and that the good always would win over the evil. Yet, when I grew up, I was lashed



by the truth, that was, earth was haunted by semi-humans, savage humans, beasts, and vermin. I learned that the only rare species is the true human being and that true stories end sadly ever after. And I surrendered. I did not even give it the least try to fight that ultimate truth. I decided to search for rare creatures I read about in fiction because it would sound easier for me to search there than to search in real life. Far in the world of dreams, I soared over like a free little bird foolishly thinking of itself as embracing the highest skies above. It felt like I could touch the sun.

I could not believe it when I met one of those rare human beings, a 44-year-old man called Wafa Deeb. When I met him, he was a man full of life that he looked as if he was still in his thirties. As for his energy and potentials, he seemed in his twenties. His heart was one of an innocent kid's, where there was no place for cruelty or mischief. It felt to me as if I had had known him before, I had read his articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers on aesthetics, my favourite subject. I read him before I met him, most particularly when I read his book, *Beauty's Ugly Side*. I tried to approach him by all means. I sent him a message to the hotel room where he stayed during the conference, asking him for some paper editions of some journal, which I already had most of handed to me by the very editor of that journal, and inviting him for a cup of coffee. He turned down the latter request, as it was unusual

for him to meet a completely strange woman while in his official visits to the city but left me all the editions I asked for at the hotel's reception. I faked an attitude of carelessness about his rejection; I told myself that I did not need to know a man too engaged into his work, thoughts, and writings and that that I really wanted to get the missing editions in the collection. I made up my mind not to contact him again and got myself busied with my endless work. Our common friend, the journal's editor, kept insisting on me to meet Wafa Deeb, But I would turn his pleas down as the man did not have the least desire to meet me, saying: "What could I do for a man who rejected to know me? Should I kidnap him and force him to talk to me? A woman has nothing to do about a man running away from her but clearing the way for him to run even further and further?"

The editor would usually end the conversation with one teasing laugh of his.

Fate would never cease to surprise me. Fate drove him to me. Deeb was appointed a president of the Association of Women's Aesthetics. I made a visit upon the request of our editor friend, who insisted that there was a lot of heart and mind in him behind his cold temper.

As it was not easy for a person like me to meet with true humans, I made up my mind to give it a try, but I wanted to fashion it my way, that was standing at his door with no

appointments set or calls made. He saw me standing at the threshold of his office holding a copy of his recent book. I knocked the door, came forward, and handed it to him to get his autograph.

Confused yet impressed by my daring move, he threw one question upon my perplexed being: "What's the perfume you are wearing?" I wore a smile and answered quickly: "Siren Chants." He Surrendered and showered me with words full of elegance and courtesy. After the occasion, I learned that he asked our editor friend about me. He even invited me to several events held at the association. He laid the first flower upon my thwarted soul when he gave me the chance to be the spokesperson at one of the events. When he let me in his world, I opened a magical door behind which I found a true human that I found out to be a character escaping out of my novels that I wanted to write. When I knew him, my dreams resurrected out of the interspace where they had been slumbering for ages. I was happy I met the first real human in my entire life.

He let me in his worlds. He kept silent upon my endless curiosity. He even did not mind showering him with questions about his experiences, pains, and determination to win over life's subjugation. I enjoyed our talks about life. It felt to me as if I turned into his protective godmother, guarding his soul against the ugliness of life,

and he was my moral compass towards myself and humanity as a whole. I learned that he was born to an emigrant family, coming from the cold mountains of the East. He then got out his conservative city to see new worlds. He travelled to Paris where he pursued his higher studies and then to Australia where he had lived two decades before coming back to his Eastern homeland to die there though it always referred to him and his family as foreigners. His great grandfathers escaped the unjust done to them by their country but ended up living as aliens though they considered it as their homeland, immersed into it, and learn its own language- out of the frying pan into fire. He let me wander freely in the vast of his soul abundant with peace and happiness. He was quite a human! He was a folk of good people in the time of ugliness, apostasy, and misery.

To me, he represented a beautiful thought, a vast field, a present humanity, bestowed upon my forsaken soul. Because of him, I grew a big woman in whom love was running through veins again. Because of him, I knew more about myself and regained my faith back into men and they really exist somewhere in that world.

Frequently, I would ask him about the reason of his big love to me, to which he wore a quiet smile on his bright face and said: "God always helps the good". I would feel God whereupon.

He taught me how big could be our bodies, souls, hopes, and dreams regardless the lack of everything. He taught me how generous and loving a human could be despite misery. He could conjure up the prettiest of all goodness and guided me do the best I could to serve humanity. To him, malice, despair, fragility, and discrimination were beneath the true human, and nothing in the world would hold a human back on his way of building and serving humanity.

He had a great love for me, yet he never asked for my body though I saw it in his eyes. He must have been yearning to press my naked body against his, a thing that I had been waiting for, I must admit, but it did not happen. Had he asked for a little of it, I would have given him all. He had not though, so I lost the hope of asking me, I fashioned it my way just like that when I first met him. I teased him, and I felt his manliness filling all of me.

Had not death stolen him from me, it would have been the most magnificent love I would ever had after I lost Dahhak. Deeb was my new Dahhak. A cardiac arrest took him to a world of darkness. He died in my lap. It seemed that the joy he felt with me was more than he could handle. His body was crushed under my lust that never stopped until it got over his body. I did not bereave his death as I was sure that he died the way he loved, that is, to die in the arms of his beloved. He died while making love- the only deed of our existence. He left a vast number of pleasurable moments to

recall and a huge amount of money too! That was very typical of him. He wanted me to live a luxurious life and to achieve all that I was planning to.

In the true soul of his, I did my best to live as happy as he always wanted for me. I felt his soul watching me, flourishing every time he saw me rejoicing his eternal love for me.



## **The 13<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Hospital**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"I disbelieve in the body that cages the soul."**

**"His heart is an ocean, in the depth of which life's secrets have been dissolved."**

**"I cherish the love God has bestowed upon my life."**

**"Words of wisdoms are cowards' single strategy most of the time."**

**"Wisdom grows meaningless when it needs us to give up the happiness we deserve to others."**

**"My love was born out of the womb of dreams."**

**"As for me, I was born to a stubborn love."**

After a month at hospital, Dahhak decided that Bahaa must be moved back to her house as she did not wake up, a sure sign that she would never wake up, a plea which doctors did not mind, considering the results of tests that showed how much cancer had eaten most of her brain.



He lived in a denial to that truth though. He believed in one thing, that was, she would win the battle against death, and he never lost trust in his intuition.

It seemed that he would never get weary of taking care of her. He even allowed his four friends to visit her whenever they wanted to, hopefully that she would feel their company even if she fell in a prolonged coma that took her to a place, only Gods knew where. They willingly take turns to watch her silent body and tell her their life's stories. They told her stories about their sacred friendship that had lasted for decades for what tied them together was unbreakable such as loneliness, alienation, perplexation, congenial spirit of partnership, and works of arts of great hearts and minds.

Yet, he rejected to let Barbara be Bahaa's company as she would most probably prattling and faking tales woven out of her fantasized love between the two of them. He rejected to allow that foolish secretary, infatuated with him and his money, to utter her nonsense in her usual broken English as she did not know Arabic to do that.

When alone with her, with some help from his secretary, he gave her body a bath, put on her new clothes, combed her red hair, replaced medicinal solutions, cleaned her body's natural waste, and made sure that CPR machines worked properly. He did not forget to entertain her the way he was

used to before sinking into her long coma. He put her flowers in her elegant vase, read her some origami stars, and stroked her hair to distract his thirsty soul from cursing his bad luck that had taken away his beloved to the mysterious worlds of ultimate darkness of which he knew no way to get her out. He stood helpless, envious of all men whose beloveds were fully awake to what love yielded.

Futile were his attempts to convince himself and others that similar cases of hers awaking after coma whatever its period, long or short. He showed great enthusiasm upon talking about survivors who now enjoy good health and the blessings of good life, yet he never mentioned stories of those who got stuck into coma for ages because he feared that Bahaa would follow their examples. He just could not stand the idea that she would be deprived of her for a longer period. What he could not stand even more was that look of Barbara's casting doubts on his hopeful enthusiasm and make others believe that it was the end as her doctors said.

Whenever he felt the need to cry out his feelings of helplessness, he would lock himself up in the toilet so that his illusioned lover called Barbara would not triumph about his beloved not waking again. He always imagined Barbara standing before him gloating his tears he shed on a woman that had left nothing but a large manuscript that told her stories which deserved nothing but to be slaughtered and

thrown in the void as they were painful enough to be carried through one's life.

Three months had passed, and his beloved was still sinking in coma or as her doctors called it "her last coma" while he insists on referring to it as being just a vacation which she had voluntarily taken and designed the way she liked. He knew her; she was stubborn and does not give up that easily. She had gone through a lot at the orphanage where they called her the "damned redhead," and now she was making fun of her ridiculous disease. Music would never cease. Love would never cease.

He listened to music with her. At the orphanage, pleasures were all forbidden. They listened to little there. He could know her taste in music though. He had written several chapters of their joint novel so far. In it, he tried to weave the brightest version of their love story, where there was no place for evil, pain, suffering, or deprivation. He chose the prettiest ending, which was missing one detail, that was the time when she woke up.

It came to his mind so many times to tear the manuscript apart and burn it to erase her painful history; but he did not dare do it as he still had the desire apparently to read the remaining chapters of her life and to know how much she deviated from the reality that he had some glimpses of from her close friend, Huda. As his real motive, he had kept the

manuscript in his custody out of fear that dooming her memory dead would be a sort of anticipation of her complete death.

His life had been stamped with misery. He could feel it within the beats of his tired heart. It was beating the blues of his misery and could hear them echo back again in his ears.

Desperately, he wrote about happy things to feel happy just like his readers who believes nonsense about hope he created for them. His bruised soul was bleeding his fake words of hope awaiting at the threshold of her door, which seemed never to open again.

In his article for that week, he had that thought of writing one and only one word, that is "Bahaa" as it meant joy to him, but he backed out. Who would ever care about a woman who had run to silence, leaving him alone? Whom was he to her? The man who drafted a novel for her, combed her hair, and ran her music from the crystal ball? Who would ever believe the words of a man whose beloved had disobeyed him and deafened ed her ears to his endless pleas?

He finally drafted his article but that time with extreme difficulty. He felt sluggish, but he persisted to finish it because he did not want to let his friend editor down. He

read it to himself several times, hopefully to give himself some hope during that elongated trial.

Four months had passed, and she was still sleeping. Yet, he was more stubborn than her coma. That time, he did not bother thinking of whether she would up with her memory back to her or not. What really mattered to him was her being next to and for him.

Barbara would not rest until she drew his attention to Bahaa's severe weight loss and skin discoloration. To him, he saw nothing of these but her face as a red star standing out in the middle of the sky.

## **The 14<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

**Thabit Sardi**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"I have a lot of love in my heart enough for a thousand year."**

**"Pain is an integral ingredient in the blend of love."**

**"To suffer means that you are truly in love."**

**"Distance cracks lovers' hearts."**

**"Souls, tired of being queued in life, would fly as high as possible."**

**"How would you be such kind to all but yourself?"**

**"To let down your love is a kind of degeneration."**

The female lover wrote:

I have not found a job so far. I have been spending the money Deeb left for me. For the first time in my life, I have lived days of happiness and abundance. I have finally felt like at home, where I have all that makes me alive without any kind of humiliation or suffering. I am missing Deeb,

and I am dreaming of another real love like his to which fate may lead me to keep me on the right track towards a brighter future. "

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The female lover wrote:

Fate introduced me to Saleem, a patient in room 48 in one of the city hospitals. The first time he saw me, he did not move a muscle that I had a thought that I was invisible. I stood before him as a convict or a stray waiting for a sentence. He spoke after a while. He uttered words of determination, which to me sounded as a mourning for his paralyzed body shrouded with a white sheet.

Saleem was neither a story that I fantasized, nor a wounded patriot of some revolution turned out to be just a room number in hospital far away from his homeland. He was just a young man unjustly sentenced to bed as his legs got atrophied and looked like a ten-year kid's legs but infested with a lot of sores and scars.

His features seemed of a broken soul. His eyes were lodged deep inside his skull which his neck was struggling to bear. His manliness and humanity were slipped away from him by a merciless enemy 's bullet that settled in his spinal cord, detaching his upper part from the lower. He spent several months between light and shadow. In his days of

unconsciousness, he witnessed lucky martyrs reaching their hands to join them to the land of souls, where he would be received with ululations and religious cheers. He would reach out to them too, but his body failed him. He grew out to be a prisoner of his own body.

When he woke up, he found disability waiting for him, a thing that he received quietly. He mastered silence. He was left with nothing but a left arm which he could heavily move. To honor that arm that revolted against paralysis, he gave her a present, that was carving smiling faces on olive tree logs. He turned to be the artisan of wooden joy. His life simply revolved around wood carving and following his virtual friends' notifications on the internet.

I wished he would cry so that I would cry too without blame or shame, but he did not and kept comfortably jesting and laughing. He asked me to give him a tour around the city, to which I said "yes" to relieve his sorrow and mine too. He was smart enough to sense it. He said to me:" Dear friend, I know I am lame forever, but I am yet sure that I will be with the returnees even if over shoulders. I am coming back... dear friend... please, believe me."

At the same hospital, I got to know a man named "Thabit." I saw him first struggling his way through the dark aisle with his grey wheelchair. He had an incredible way to turn his back to aches and pains. He was determined to visit



other patients in other awards. He wanted to balm their wounds despite his broken bones. He kept patients' company until they would heal and leave the hospital. Thabit was gravely injured in a tragic car accident that chewed his body, leaving him a pile of broken bones on a wheelchair instead of taking him to the world of darkness. That accident was a foul play plotted by the enemy's intelligence services to remove his name out of the resistance scene as they could not afford to bear with his unswerving will to fight and exert his rights of return. The plan was to terminate him, but he miraculously survived. Luckily, he was right down there in a visit at the city hospital, where he was relieved and stayed for months.

Upon meeting him, two things caught my attention in that broken man: his giant smile despite the pain trapped inside his broken body and his extraordinary way to tell stories. He was exceptionally good that I forgot that day to see Saleem whom I especially came to visit and called off all my appointments and engagements. His smile refreshed my thirsty soul, which kept lingering in his presence for hours until the security men began to ask visitors to leave as it was past visiting hours then. Since then, I called him "Thabit the narrator" because he would take one into infinite realms of stories. He would tell you a hundred stories non-stop in an intriguing way that would make you think that he read from an open book. One would never

believe that he read out of his memory which was full of events he witnessed in his days with the Resistance. He was like a vast cosmic web that would hold whatever coming into its ways, galaxies, spheres, stars, and planets. People who knew him totally recognized the encyclopedic aspect about him, and that did not mean he would not receive others inferior to his gigantic reservoir with a heart and a mind full of kindness and mercy.

In short, he was a man of people. People had nothing but to like that man, who could marvelously embrace all. Talking to him was an amusing experience, in which one would lose the sense of time for the sake of a story to hear. Slowly, he recovered and left the hospital leaning on his crutches to get treatment at home. We became close friends and spent a lot of time talking and seeing old albums, in which I saw myself to find out that we had met once before few years ago. He had entered the worlds of resistance and patriotism since he was just a child straying with his family from one exile to another.

He was invited to deliver a lecture in his field of study in one prominent cultural event in the Middle East. I was there too with the company of two friends, who were into such events and did their best to attract whomever interested of their friends to those conferences to have them used to the worlds of intellectuality. I decided to walk outside to find a haven from the heat of that summer night,

and there I saw Thabit sitting with a young woman nearby in one of the conference venues. She was elegantly dressed in a suggestively glaring dress, a thing that attracted every passing man in the place. He was talking to and she was listening with an air of intense seriousness. They looked like they were alone at that moment.

The picture of them chit-chatting stuck in mind, and for some reason I could not bear. I could not leash my unwise desire to talk to him. Was it because of his elegant figure as green wheat stalk? Or was it because of his shiny eyes that seemed to flirt with silence? Did the reflection of that summer lights on his face make him look like a sacred icon of Ugarit? I was sure it was his patriotism that seduced me into approaching him. How would not it seduce a woman like me, the homeless woman who belonged to no country at all.

He was softly smiling to her, who seemed to be vicious upon any intrusion of any other woman. In a moment of recklessness,

I rushed to talk to him but quickly backed off. I feared that he would deny me in front of her, especially that I did not have a delightful story to start a conversation with the couple who seemed to be having special time together.

I would definitely lose the battle, I guessed. He was smart enough not to give up such beauty and femininity for a fool

redhead like myself. I took it very personally and decided to hate him. I forgot about him totally until I met him again at the hospital. I smiled at him! It might be my zealous jealousy I felt deep in me that sizzling summer night that made me hate him. I sank again in my ancient senseless delirium. That momentary meeting caused me to take deeper interest in his writings everywhere about his political cause and resistance to gain the inevitable liberty for his occupied country.

Sooner there was a close but hidden bond between us, a thing that did not last for long as his department summoned him to join the resistance to reach a fair solution for their cause, which had been bending for seven years or even more. I bargained him with my heart, to which he turned a deaf ear as he listened to one voice, that was his country's—a voice that would never die in the conscience of patriots like him. His heart was big enough to have love for all the world and too small to have any feelings of grudge, hate, or malice. His mind was a creative one that helped him deal with whatever hard matter, yet he would stand helpless before any dirty business behind which was lurking evil of all kinds. The transparent depths of his soul would fetter hearts and eyes that loved beauty. His eyes would see nothing but the beauty of freedom, the dreams of eternal purity, and spectrums of joy, mercy, and generosity.

He was a man saddling his dreams to look for a world where no pain or conspiracy would stain his pure heart. His strength was infinitely enduring. He had always been embracing my pains, listening to my complains, plastering the wounds of my bleeding soul, while all what I had given him was just words, and it was fine for him as he was a man of a good taste for words. Give him a word, he would give back a sentence. He gave me up for a greater language, that was his homeland. That time, he deserted my language, my pictures, my places, and my times, my skies, my seas, my face, his face, his pictures, his books, his cushions, our phone numbers, and his dreams. He flew far away up to the skies of the promised world of freedom. I had nothing to do but to send him helpless letters, to which he would steal some of his precious time to write back. He wrote me long letters as he knew how in love I was with words, especially his. He penetrated my soul and never thought of penetrating my body. Maybe, he did not want to indulge himself with such low level of living that might derail the track of his dreams. That did not lessen my passion for him. His love for his homeland was a virtuous love of a man for a woman. What intensified my passion for that man was that I knew his past full of unvirtuous adventures with women of all types. He spared me for a different type of love, like that he had for his homeland as if he was foregrounding for the next phase of his life that he had been preparing for.

While drum had been beaten for a greedy war, I wrote him a lengthy letter that took me a cruise along an ocean. I want to cross the ocean to join him and earn the honour of dying for a cause like his. That time, world powers, were racing to bear on the region, most particularly most the gigantic natural oil repertoires hidden under the scared earths of fighters as well as the unwary.

As a raging river, I wrote him a letter of longing:

"Thabit, they say that war always breeds true love, and hence there is always a space for a love letter whatever hard are our times nowadays. Cities have been paralyzed, and people are prepared for more blood to be shed. I hereby open my letter with a word of love from me to you. My heart is of nobody's but yours. They say that the East will turn into Easts, and the West will be Wests. They say that this world is leaving with no return. Mercy is giving us the cold shoulder. They claim that the end is tomorrow. What is gone is gone forever, and the returnees have no intention to stay. I have one thing to say before God, and that is: "I love you, Thabit."

"You, stubborn man, have left without hearing my words of love for you. Have them now! I want to confess before we turn into dust and merge with earth. In resurrection, we be, and so will my love for you."

The female love wrote:

Yet, Thabit did not write back. That was not typical of him. I had waited for weeks until one day one of his comrades gave me a reluctant visit. He handed me a letter from Thabit, whom I learned then to be killed by the enemy on the land of his country as he always desired. I asked him a lot of questions, to which he gave one short answer that cleansed nothing of my aching soul: "Thabit was hero, whose name will be kept in the glorious history of struggle and resistance." He continued, "I gave him my word to hand you his letter I person after his death, and here I am."

The young man left my little apartment, leaving me with a poem signed with Thabit's name at the bottom. The words were lofty just like his head, always held high. He must have written it for me before heading to death with his usual confident steps that I perfectly knew. He was a hero, and he had chosen the way he would like to die. I knew neither about his last moments on earth nor the place where he was buried under as if he had chosen to be just a sculpted piece in the mosaic account of his people who had been going through all forms of misery for more than seventy years. Before occupation, their story could be summed up in a quite effortless way:

"His people were living peacefully domesticating animals and ploughing their lands. They had never fought against a

human. They had never been bankers, murderers, or death traders. They were only farmers, builders, and worshippers. Life to them was only to strenuously build and expand on the earth spared for them. They cared about the sanctity of simple details of their lives. Every occasion needed a ceremony-weddings, deaths, harvests, visits, and parenting. All that had been before the curse came upon them, and there began an era of chaos, torture, and fear. They were savagely slaughtered and shredded by a gang of destitute mercenaries, whose desolate status among people had drawn them into that land. Their militias sheltered themselves behinds armed walls designed by mandatory military forces and the so-called will of international community, which deliberately deafened ears to the calls of the occupied. Frogs' ears turn to hear only the calls of their own kind. A whole country was stolen overnight! Then, the story of his people turned to be summed up in few words like displacement, deprivation, discrimination, prosecution, and persecution. They were hunted down and exterminated in large numbers. Some survived the genocides by means of displacement and deportation."

That was the story of Thabit and his people – a story that felt like a nightmare whose ending was to be brought about only with the deaths of the precious lives of the youth, just like his.





## **The 15<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Hell**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"This life is our only chance to taste real joy."**

**"Anticipation is the best exercise for broken hearts."**

**"Silent love is the silliest game ever."**

**"How clumsy is the ungrateful heart that doesn't cherish love gifts."**

**"In love, a lover's voice merges with the hymns of existence."**

**"Love moments are a treasure, not to be wasted."**

**"Deprivation is the biggest devil released to destroy the beautiful world of love."**

The female lover wrote:

"And now, there in my heart are just two pure larks, Wafa Deeb and Thabit Sardi, and as for the rest, there are only fear of the approaching evil as I have just few pennies left in my pocket, only enough to buy me some crumbs to

survive. I have been looking for a decent job, a thing that sounds a miraculous thing to a person like me.

To escape my miseries and fears, I have decided to attend that annual festival to be held in the heart of the city. I ventured to go there with no company to listen to that singer. He was born in Canada to an African mother and an Arab father, a thing that made it unsurprising for a person of such birth to have an exotically so warm and so melodious as his.

He could sing in Arabic, English, and French, filling the existence with his songs that were mostly of religious and national character. His songs touched the souls of all people all over the world. I could not tell when exactly his songs sneaked into my agitated heart. In a moment, I could recall all meanings of beauty, a blend of all beautiful things - masculinity, rain, wet soil, milled wheat, bread dough, and palm pollen.

His manly figure got me enchanted that I could hear his voice ringing in my heart, a talent that I never had before. That time, that talent was added to the already existing ones- to see with my ears and to breathe with my eyes. Yaraa Tarab, who kept looking at me all the time while singing his enchanting songs, hurried to talk to me and confessed his love few minutes later. He set a date for the both of us and gave me a collection of CDs of his music

and songs stressing that I hear his song titled as "My Unknown Beloved". Later, I found out that beside being a popular singer, Tarab was a great musician, whose fingers could caress the chords of different instruments, and a good songwriter too.

I was so happy with his gifts, which sent back to my old self again. I went home and decided to take some CDs in a ride. His voice was my company, taking me away along a far-reaching path, where I could find the anticipated, that warm voice fitted unto the deserted dancing stages erected in my soul. I listened to all songs, one after the other. All related to my soul, but the one that related most was a song entitled as "I will never forget you." That song sent me back to the world of pleasures. His voice, sad and gruff, could conjure up infatuation of all things at a moment. That acted as if my trusty talisman that would prevent further fragmentation of my fragile soul. It got me lost in myself. The sole truth that I had at that moment was to worship that voice, that song, and everything about him. At a moment, he danced with me, make me cry, slap me on the face, embrace my body, kiss my lips, and stroke all over me. His songs could be warm enough and cold enough at the same time. They could be coarse as salt on a wound one time and smooth as oil on hands another.

I was afraid he would run before I talked to him again, but he soon contacted to make our short love story even

shorter, and we fell in love on the spot. He pushed away the first chance he got, leaving me loving him alone.

I later found out that it was that habit of him to love women the same way he loved music and words. He loved to try women one after another and to resolve the conundrum of his self in the paradoxes each woman combined. So, once he bridged a gap in his self with me, he just ran away. I lived in a denial, and I tried hard to get him back to me. I wanted to be a new beat in his life, but I failed, realizing that he was one who would not hear the same beat twice. Then, I gave up and accepted the distances between us. I even spread that song among other women, who might happen to be a beat of his next piece of music.

Later, some insanely wealthy queer man in the world of the orient snatched him out of women's laps for his own pleasure. He had him a wonderful place in his empire, taking him to his side all the time that the young singer could not get out of it, giving up all he believed in for an open-sesame- like quest that unlocked the gate for him for millions of dollars and millions of other queer wealthy men.

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The female lover wrote:

Had my fate been twisted a little like Huda's, I had not been tasted all sorts of trials with that man called "Isa Iqbali", who I foolishly thought him to be my savior after I had spent the last pennies Deeb left for me before his tragic death. I found myself lost again with no money, no job, or even hope to get out the dark tunnel I was stuck in. Upon meeting him, I fancied him to be just like "Hammam," the man who fell in love with Huda and married her. The serenity of his facial features deluded me to think that I found the safe anchor for my straying ship. I got acquainted with him by an old lady I met in an event in the field of charity. She was that type of women who got themselves immersed in the help of the less privileged. Despite her abominable figure, she seemed to be a model of honesty, kindness, hospitality, and good companionship. Stealing the poor's money was her hobby; she just rejoiced the view of the wretched and the tempting spectacle of a man or a woman wallowing unabashedly at her heels in self-pity for losing few pennies, while she would spend thousands to satisfy her bulging belly. She would not steal other's money but the poor to burn their hearts, yet she would not mind helping them to find decent jobs to provide themselves with enough provisions. With no least hesitation, she recommended me to her close friend "Alhaj Igbali," who had a company of some service, managed by his eldest son, Dr. Isa Igbali, I

told her that I had no academic affiliations, yet I had valuable experience in the field of charity, media, and creative writing.

Dr. Igbali, who was a redhead just like myself, hired me the moment he set eye on me. He was dressed in silky religious outfit. He kept muttering words of God as praising gestures upon my beauty. Indeed, he knew how to repeat eloquently the words of God, yet he had no fear of Him. The first thing that caught my eyes in his face, lurking behind the golden frame of a picture of his family, was a shady spot on his forehead, which would be a sign of so much bowing and worshipping, but it as I realized then was just a nipple where Satan would nurse. The picture was available for the viewers-- his wife, wrapped in black outfit, standing next to his with a boy of about four years old settled in his lap, a fat boy standing in front of them, and two girls, one fat and another skinny scarfed one, who took her mother's dark complexion color. When he noticed me looking at the picture, he pushed it a little closer to me, boasting: "this is my family. My wife and my children, Ahamd, Hussien, Ali, Khadeeja, and Fatima". Then, he elaborated in listing the virtues of his pious wife and ideal children, whom he kept calling the "little pilgrims", and whom he claimed them to take the goodness and chivalry of the pure Arab roots. I, the desolate bastard, felt humiliated while listening to him, boasting about his ideal family. My thief friend,

who had a special admiration for her comrade in thievery. kept interrupting our talk with her loud indelicate laughs. He was just like her, an expert in thievery of all kinds. He even hijacked Arab roots by claiming to be in one of the purest Arab lineage as he and his great fathers were just mongrels, who appropriated themselves in the society hundred years ago and spread their breed through marriages from the master's Harem. They became royals overnight after his great grandfather robbed money from his master, for whom he worked as a servant for his dogs. He inherited his master's estates after the tragic fire that had eaten him and all his family. As for Isa's higher degrees, they were purchased. He then built his company at the expense of those whom he robbed their money and left in absolute destitute state. He would hide his gruesome deeds under the cover of philanthropic events he lunched in orphanages, mosques, and associations.

He would welcome me at his company provided that I covered my hair, to which I willingly agreed, lest he deliver me a lecture on virtue. He honored me with the title "Hajja" before I even showed the least sign of virtue or repentance of my past sins. The cover he imposed on me was just a piece of cloth that hid my beauty out of the other's sight but not out of his as I soon became his mistress or a wife as labeled on the alleged marriage contract, he called "ancestral marriage", about which I had no clue and had no



intention to know so. The only thing that I cared about that moment was to get a husband and a house to shelter me. I even went extreme in my hopes that I thought that man would make me a free woman, a mother, which he scornfully rejected as he wanted me a wife for his own pleasure. Sullenly, I surrendered. I did really want to purify my soul. I was in need for a man to keep me from getting lost. At that moment, I wanted to feel what it looked like a house and a husband. I accepted all conditions he would impose on me under the name of a husband. He believed that all women were his by means of a doctrine he designed for himself, according to which he had the right to own and monopolized their bodies the way bandits would do. Yet, when he tried to trade my body to his superiors, I decided to be on my own, playing it my way with those hypocrites with shady spots on their foreheads.

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The female lover wrote:

After a while, I recognized that the best I could do was to dissolve that false marriage and to go into that business for myself after I had been coerced to prostitute myself for his customers until his business doubled and expanded widely to include dubious partnerships with assassins, drug dealers, and multifunctional tricksters. The first things I did was to take of that head cover he imposed on me and gave

him back the religious title he freely bestowed on me. I then resorted to his influential superiors, my customers, to shelter me from him, who sued for custody he felt entitled to by the contract of customary marriage, which was but a piece of paper that legitimized our adulterous deeds. They pressed him to remove me from his imposed custody and leached his fury upon. They even raced to gain my approval, spending on my luxury until I became that powerful woman in trafficking the lives of the poor and the weak. I did not show the least hesitation to enter the political circle. I had a powerful hand on changing some of the party's key decisions. I was enabled to take some key decisions in the city and the neighboring ones too. I had my connections with prominent female figures, who also had their impact on the religious leaders in the region. I was shocked of the power they could have on those leaders that they were the actual leaders themselves. I ventured to reach other international secret female leaders but failed as I did not have the academic status needed. My beauty was my only ticket to the world, and it was not enough to ascend the international ladder to the top. Those beautiful learned ladies had made a tremendous way global sovereignty, setting out the roles, paths, and goals for the others.

I skipped my dream to go global and satisfied myself with the regional influence that time, following the advice of

one of the prominent trading figures in the field. He whispered to my ears: “your ambitions have started to bother your seniors. Go way. You will be wiped out otherwise.”

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The female lover wrote:

That moment, I decided to double back before they would spring the trap and hang me on gallows, they had been building especially for me. Salah Deen Nawrani accelerated my withdrawal process out of that dog-eat-dog spheres. Who was Nawarni? He was some man I met in a religious event held by some company. No, he was not one of those engaged in the religion business as I first thought him to be. He even had not got that shady spot on his forehead. Though he was very shy, I could manage to have a conversation with him. I knew that he was a pure man, who had committed the Holy Quran to memory. I learned that he had only come to that event to help orphans, widows, and the poor. He was such an enthusiast who could not waste a chance to help those in need. His face shone to prove every word he uttered. He had no interest in the worldly matters, but he would direct the world to reach the world he was looking forward to living in, the Hereafter. His business was with God, who would never wrong him. He proposed, and I turned his proposal down.

He offered to have me as his wife. He wanted to purify the life of a whore with much dirt stuck on her soul, which was longing to become clean again. I could not accept his offer. How would I wreck his life and stain it with my hideous history and bad luck? He was working hard to have a place in Sharia judiciary, and I, becoming his partner, would hinder him back. People would talk, especially those who would waste no chance to appease their thirsty lust from my body.

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The female lover wrote:

I remembered that night when a prig kept ranting and raving about his son for showing a desire to shave his beard, which to him was a sacred relic that should remain untouched. With his beard dripping down whisky, he was shivering severely upon recollecting the story. He was fighting to pull his crumbling body together to thrust it into mine as he would not waste money and good whisky on nothing but sleeping. Yet, his body failed him and fell asleep on the bedroom mattress, grunting like a pig stuffed with garbage.

That night, I recalled my childhood Arabic teacher's habit of hitting our little fingers with that long metal ruler whenever we did not open our essays with the name of God at the top. He would also pause in the middle of the class

until the sheikh was done calling for prayers. He would never forget performing ceremonial cleansing rites after raping me as he would not stand leaving his body stained with adultery. He was not only determined to purge himself of the vices, but he made sure to purge others too. I perfectly remember that day when he imposed public flogging as a punishment for a little girl who dared to claim music not to be a great sin that would incur Lords' wrath.

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The female lover wrote:

I left Nawarni's world for good, thus relieving him of having a share of my bad luck. Yet, I kept a close eye on his progression in the judiciary field. I learned from one of my clients in the field, A judge who would shorten his sentences for a penny and loved to throw himself on whores' laps, that Nawrani had been appointed as a senior consultant at some international judicial entity and that he travelled to a country where the headquarter was. I could not hide my joy upon hearing the news. I wished that he would remember his promise to donate money for the poor in my name, hoping that God might bestow his mercy on me, whose filthy money could not fit to be given to the pure souls of the desolate. I had no doubt that he would make good of his promise as he was not that type of a person who would ever break it, especially if it was a

promise for a beautiful redhead woman, with whom he deeply fell in love and whole-heartedly wanted to make her the mother of his son.

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The female lover wrote:

A few years of pain and suffering later, when I met fawwaz Abo Safra, I thought him to be another Nawrani again. He kept claiming his great love for me and his willingness to ignore my past ill deeds, whoredom, and men provided that I remained loyal to him and I travelled with him to his country somewhere far away, to which I showed full consent as he seemed to me be even more convincing than Nawrani was. Why not to be? He was a foreigner, and he seemed to be the best to give both of us the opportunity for a clean start, away from my clients who existed in almost all events and places.

I dared not to leave behind all I had, most importantly my top-notch brothel I founded especial for the elite. For that brothel, I recruited the most beautiful prostitutes and even free women, who would find suitable excitement in degeneration. I have done my best to offer the most attractions for my clients, mainly those in the field of press and intellectuality, my passions, which I loved to have at least in sight though I had been busy in building up my bloody money that looked exactly like my damned colour.

There, I would not say “no” for lost women who would find the brothel as an accommodation. They paid me an amount of money in return for accommodation, and I left them their share of profits for their entertaining services, which I would never deny for them as I wanted them to have their own small businesses after leaving that filthy business.

That brothel was a replica of the orphanage, where I lost my humanity and innocence. At the brothel and the orphanage, helpless pure girls were being traded, but the latter had the precedence in getting indulged in debauchery. I prided myself on my honesty as my house had never made any work against their will; their fares and shares would be paid at once before their sweat would dry even. In a nutshell, the house was put at their disposal whenever their circumstances allowed them to show up.

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The female lover wrote:

I did not risk my whoring business to live a cleaner life as I thought, instead, I became Safra’s client’s private whore. That client was a popular patriot, who sought asylum in my city after his comrades overpowered him, stripped him of his political post, and expelled him out of the country. Later, he turned into one of the fiercest rebels abroad.

He achieved a wide success in the asylum. He arrived the city, trailed with two trucks filled with stolen money. He became a political icon and had the lead there and everywhere else through his transcontinental political party he formed with piles of money. He got the name of the "Emperor."

I was accounted worthy to be the "Emperor's lover". Abo Safra had the habit of introducing me to his people at his presence, hoping that I would plead for him to get that diplomatic post that he dreamt of. I did what I was told, and he got what he wanted. He indeed became an attaché of an embassy at the edge of the world. Then, it was a bargain, me for the post, to which he gave no second thought. I accepted the bargain too as I did not want to be the sole loser of that cheap exchange.

I was not exclusive for the Emperor. He made me for himself and for his dearest comrades too. He would give me to whomever he thought fit in his party. I was the best messenger, who would never fail to deliver his messages properly. At that time, I got a little too close to the world of politics. I found out that everybody was engaged in politics, and that the only policy running in my city was to keep people always in need so they would never think of anything else other than thinking day and night of what could help them survive.



I again knew with certainty that the wonderful world had been run by a gang of secret women lurking behind politicians, steering their actions and dividing the spoils the way they wished. It was in their hands to plague the disfavored with calamities or to deport the innocent to exiles or even to their own doom.

And again, an honest man whispered to me: "Stay away from the front lines, You do not fit there".

That time before withdrawing, Muheb Waheb was waiting for me to join in his business, trading with humans, arms, and drugs. I really wanted to cat around him, the most handsome and kindest of all. He was also the most honest; he never denied his filthy business. Instead, he prided himself of his achievements in the field. He even introduced himself as Waheb, "the Great Pimp".

Our relationship lasted for long years. He was sweet-tempered, docile, and honest. He did not show jealousy or and desire to have me exclusive for him. He had that type of transparency that made me feel secured. He would give any woman of his, including me, to the one who paid more. I liked the way he handled his businesses as I was showered with his clients' gifts and money, especially that I was the mistress of the great pimp.

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The female lover wrote:

After years of that sinful relationship, I had turned into a real partner. It seemed that I lost my touch after all those years. I even started to choose women to quench his sexual desire as I was the best to know his sexual preferences, especially in the times of his drunkenness. I would choose for him an experienced whore that would go along with any stretch of his wide imagination and his weird fetishes. I had played the role of a pimp for him for months before I decided to draw back away from him in my little apartment to do my own little businesses at an individual level. I started to lose my charm and ability to fake joy and lust. I could not do that anymore as my heart sprang up non-stop fountains of pain. Yet, I still had an ambition to climb up the ladder to reach the place of great secret women. That meant a lot for a woman like me, who lost all in her frequent gambling games. I was shaking the dice into me palm for a new gambling session. I was determined to play it safe though because I needed to have some peace and to practice my sacred hobby of writing. I kept few clients, whose payments would guarantee me the luxurious life I was used to. I had saved nothing in my past years. My clients could know how to get their money back from me.

Those days, I decided to make a new Dahhak for myself, letting my imagination stretch as far as I could. I wrote for that imaginary person. Imagination evolved into a reality

that I started to feel the presence of the imagined Dahhak with me in the apartment, talking, arguing, teasing, and infuriating about my indecency. He would even storm out of our apartment upon the arrival of any client, slamming the door shut, and waiting behind until the client departure. He would quietly tuck himself under the blanket next to me late at night.

One day, he went ballistic and left the apartment with no returning back as he used to do. I did not know where to find him out there, so I satisfied myself of a new Dahhak, whom I only wrote on paper. I never talk to him again as my clients began to doubt my sanity. Some even called me the "crazy redhead" when they saw me talking to the void.

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The female lover wrote:

"Yet, Hamlan Haibat loved the company of a woman, living at the edge sanity. He realized that of all women I was his destination as I was the likeliest one to grasp the schism in his life, mindset, and behaviour. Everything in him and about him was feminine, yet he had been forced into being in his father's and other men's shoes since he was just a child. He kept acting as a man and denying his identity and sexuality. His feminine stuff he used to buy for himself, accessories, makeup, perfumes, and lingerie, was locked into drawers in his bedroom, where he used to

secretly try night gowns and stockings and had shots of himself wearing them. He would dress up as a woman and take rounds late at night in the city's sleazy corners to have a little fun with night harassers and drunkards, a thing that might kindle the flames of his suppressed womanhood. His father forced him to marry one of his cousins to keep family's money in the hands of its members. On the wedding night, she stormed off the room, shaking and shouting upon the sight of her husband's body. She insisted on getting a divorce immediately and asked for a big sum of money in return for her silence. After that night, he left the town and moved to the city, where was his family's political party, of which he was appointed as a representative to cover for his cursed body. After a while, he became a womanizer, jumping from one woman's lap into another's to prove to all his manliness. He became known of his excessive illicit adventures among women, a reputation he planned to get in order to refute his ex-wife rumors about his cursed and impotent genitals. He went through a lot. He could get any woman to be his slave with his money, but he was craving to have what his female slaves had. He wanted to get men's notice and to get out of the circle of the conspiracy about his unmatched manly powers, for which he paid a lot for his women and negotiated a lot with them. He had enough of all of that, but he could not do anything but continue working on the plan.

I snatched him out of a woman's hands, a colleague working in the same devilish profession of mine. It was a rather fascinating relationship. I did not even try to deny his gender or his sexuality. I did not treat him as a wimp, a eunuch, or a freak. I understood him to be a woman suffocated forcibly into a man's body, which his clan was trying its best to keep intact. He became my best girlfriend, whom I shared my life with and help to nourish his womanhood the way we women would do. At my apartment, he would be dressed in his womanly extravagant outfits, wear my favourite perfume, fix his hair as an elegant lady, watch romantic movies, help me clean our home, and even do our laundry. Yet, when together outside, I would treat him as a powerful and virile man, obsessed with all manly features that any woman would dream of her man having. He showered me with money for my honesty and kindness. He was a good replace of Huda, who could not visit me anymore because of my cursed profession and filthy ways of living.

Anxiously, I listened to all his serious political statements about peaceful coexistence with the enemy, as true peace would only be reached by the wisdom of true men, whom he was sure to be one of by the testimony of a lengthy list of prostitutes and the glorious mine.

His lengthy statements, charged with lies, amused me that I would forget the unbearable pain in my left breast and got

me excited to ask more of him when returning to my apartment, like cleaning the floor of my bathroom. As an old prostitute about to retire due to aging. I just found fun to ask a person like him, who had just been babbling about making peace with the enemy, to do house chores for me. He was that person, whose life was doomed to humiliation all time.

I soon lost him; he had gotten a diplomatic post in some European country. He asked me to be his company, which I did not find energy in me to go for. I had enough of wearing masks anymore. Reluctantly, I gave him a goodbye kiss, but I promised that I would follow his statements, which I religiously did until relieved of his post after his marriage to his boyfriend he met in Europe. His pictures kissing his husband in public went viral on social media. He even stated plainly that he was living the best of his years with his love he eventually found. He seemed to settle down with that guy as they filed for adoption. They wanted to start their small family together as any gay couple would naturally do.

I felt happy for him as he had found the thing that he secretly aspired to. He detached himself from politics and broke away from his father's party, which was represented then by his other brother, a top-notch womanizer, who would never stop urging to make peace with the enemy.

The female lover wrote:

It seemed that I would never have a life without men. After losing my queer friend, I met two virtual friends on the internet, one with the name of "the dreamer" and the other called "Jenan Taweel". I do not really remember whom I talked to first. That did not really matter as I lived the same experience with both. Both was a virtual lover but with different details. The Dreamer, who rejected totally to tell me his real name, was a learned person who could speak about anything, culture, science, and philosophy. He preferred to engage in lengthy dirty talks and pervert fetishes. He even would not mind sharing with me his erotic painting he prided himself of creating. I went along with his ideas and let him take me into his strange imaginary worlds. He had such a different view of life and understood sex in all its paradoxes. He adored pain and suffering. I learned later that painting was not his only passion, but he loved playing music and composing poetry as well as philosophical articles, especially in eroticism. I became an addict of his talks. To keep him, I started to send erotic pictures of me and videos later as bribes to make him share his ideas and views, though he insisted on calling himself a novice, nobody!

I asked for a picture of him or a call to hear his voice, which he totally rejected. Our relationship was completely virtual and was restricted to exchanging lengthy emails and

lengthy chatting days and nights. He sent me pictures of erotic paintings, music pieces, and Arabic books. The Dreamer took me to the worlds of the human body, and we together explored its curves and organs, sometimes away from infidelity or virtual fornication. He worshipped the woman's body and respected any woman who could realize the holiness of her body as an extension of sex goddesses worshipped thousands of years ago. He thought of women's bodies as worshipping shrines opening for worshippers to keep life circles rotating non-stop, therefore, temples were erected to worship their sacred genitals. Some of these women gave their bodies away to men to collect money needed to erect and expand these temples.

Our relationship had grown closer, and he nicknamed me the "Holy Whore". He even asked for my bank account to transfer me money for my virtual sex services, a proposal I strongly declined as I considered mine as mutual sexual services that got me closer to the frontiers of madness, where one would obtain the secret knowledge of the body and its arts. The whole thing gave me the pleasure of discovering the glamorous unknown. I was longing to see his body, inspect it, and make love to him the way his madness and unlimited zest would allow. He gravitated the anticipation by inviting me to explore our bodies in one condition - that was, making love to me with his face covered with a black mask. I went too far in my fantasies



that I became convinced that "The Dreamer" was actually the imagined character that I used to think of as Dahhak. Perhaps, life had been breathed into him. Maybe, all were illusions building up due to the sexual chaos I had been in. I would even rush to my PC to make certain that all were not merely hallucinations.

I got exhausted of my speculations and anticipations, and I stopped finding his disguises and maneuvers a source of fun and pleasure anymore. Making virtual love to The Dreamer was just an awkward case of e-sex, that's all. I, with the name of "Red Inanna", was surely just an easy prey for a sex maniac like him, dawdling over social media channels. I thought that he might be just one client of mine, who he craved for some exciting, disguised amusement after he pleased himself with my body openly sometime somewhere in the past. No wonder that I could not tell whom exactly as the freshest fruits of my body had been harvested by many strangers whose names I had never considered. No need to ask for names as all I wanted was a share of their pockets then. One day, I dared to disturb our erotic session with my curiosity to know his real identity, a thing he surely rejected as usual, but after a lot of negotiations he made a hollow unsatisfactory compromise. He sent me a manuscript, which he claimed himself as the sole holder of it. He also claimed that it was the greatest

ever written about the magic of love. He asked me to keep it until would come the moment of the truth about himself.

It took me several sleepless nights to figure it out as it was transcribed with Arabic letters, dotless and irregular. It also included a lot of cryptic symbols, which I got so much pleasure to decode. I felt caught up in perpetual absorbing reveries while reading about sex enchantment and infiniteness. When I intended to keep a hidden copy of those enchanting hymns somewhere on my computer, I was shocked that they all had abruptly gone. I hurried to check my inbox. His emails had gone too. I sent him a dozen of emails to know what was going on, but he received nothing as he removed his account totally! I hopelessly used the little information I got about him to find him elsewhere on the internet, but with no use. He had gone, leaving no traces. He, as his sex hymns, evaporated forever.

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The female lover wrote:

I was left alone, occasionally chatting with "Jinan Taweel," the last of my virtual friends, who showered me with pictures of his age-beaten naked body, for which he begged me for words of praise- a thing that an old sexually aroused female bonobo caged in some forsaken zoo would not do. Yet, I did as I had greed for the trophy out of his filled pocket. Why not? I got his money without having his body

humping on mine for real. I found amusement listening to his quixotic accounts about the women he had fornicated in his past days when he had been a handsome flight attendant as he claimed. His life was a series of short-term relationships that consumed him over years, He was not a great storyteller, yet beside the money he used to send me I learned a lot about the peculiarity of women's natures and desires. I drew him out of his solitude and lured him to tell me all his secrets about his sexual perversion, about which he would never be able to talk openly to anybody. Again, in a foolish moment, I thought he might be Dahhak, which I momentarily shook it out of my mind as he sent me pictures of his body, fully naked with a wide smile drawn on his damned face.

A few days later, I had a sudden epiphany about the absurdity of my situation, after which I decided to drop all out of my men list. All was only in my mind, which seemed to be affected by the great pain in my left breast that kept stabbing as if a knife. To run away from all of that, I removed all my accounts of all social platforms.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I started to think of the necessity of consulting a doctor about the pain in my left breast that kept growing every passing day. I was already nosophobic; I could not face it

that I would really be sick. I convinced myself that my body only needed some rest, so I headed to a resort, where I would escape the hell I was living in.

That charming young man enchanted me, while sitting by the artificial pond there. I wanted him. I craved to sip some of his delicious youth. He was just half of my age. I had fantasies about his sexual power that his fine presence, his height, and dazzling brown hair would suggest to me.

He approached me a few times, a thing that I wholeheartedly welcomed. I gave him my full attention to drag him to my bed as I could not stop looking at his azure blue eyes with his youthful delicate complexion and his hazel brown ponytail. I would not stop fantasizing him inviting me to his bed a thousand times. My fantasies would be interrupted by him calling me "auntie" while offering me a massaging session, of which he was best known at the resort. I surely declined his generous proposal as I knew my body would be melting on his fingers as I could even feel, in my mind though, the gentle pressure of their touches playing across my body. Even though, he would leave my company until my last day there.

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I heard some knocking. I opened the door to see a figure smiling at me as a naughty kid waiting for more chocolate from his mom. Immediately, he eagerly said: "I have got

your room number from the reception, and I am here to check up on you.” He handed me a bunch of flowers. “Have these lilies. You love lilies, aren’t you? I thought you would love them as they look like you.”

I did not return the enthusiasm; instead, I gave him a hostile look that intensified the broodiness of the air. I reluctantly let him in. I showed little hospitality, serving him biscuits and tea. Like a stone, I sat and listened to him. Inside me, I was celebrating my achievement to get his attention. To an old woman like me in the age of his oldest sister or even his mother’s catching a young man like him, was a great accomplishment I had the right to pride myself of. Enthusiastically, he talked to me as if he had won a one-million prize. I proudly looked at the white lilies, which he offered to put in the vase on the table near me. He did it gently and then seated himself on the closest chair to me. He recited me some love verses he knew as he had known how much I loved poetry. He gasped in between poems, watching the changes drawn on my face, on which I faked the features of carelessness to mislead his confident spirit yearning for my acceptance. I did not want him to read my mind that was busy fantasizing myself in his muscular arms playing with his beard and kissing lips while mediating the beauty of his blue eyes, wide enough to swallow all that they would meet. I just could not show my desire to mother such a young man in his age, who would only fit to be a

son – the son I wished I had had with Dahhak. He looked exactly like Dahhak, his blues eyes and his lofty height.

One day, he visited me with no prior invitation. When he sensed no ambivalence from my side, it became a habit. I found out later that he was not as innocent as I pictured him in my imagination, and my presumptions proved to be wrong as usual. That young man had been living a life full of sex adventures with his clients. He was more of a masseuse or a sex worker than a massage therapist as he used to connect sexually to his customers and surely got paid for his sexual services. When I said customers, I meant of course both women as well as men, who would satisfy their homosexual desires with him instead of travelling to far places where they could not be scandalized. He told me all stories of his sexual adventures with the smallest details, my affection I had for him remained intact (No wonder as my life was no different from his!). I was also aware of his endeavors to drag me into it, a thing which I declined and preferred to think innocent of him. He was just a novice and deserved opportunities better than mine. I kept my affection parental. That sounded the right thing to do at that moment. Soon after, we got even closer but with no labels. We were neither friends nor lovers. I accepted the status quo though I was torn up inside. How could I be beside such a fiery being without giving myself any chance to approach it. I

did not want to go back to my stinky old self or to be a number in his pervert sexual adventures. I kept ambivalent about our relationship until resolved by the result of the mammogram tests, I dared to do before meeting him. I had stage-four breast cancer. I had another fight then. My fight against the malicious cancerous cells that invaded my left breast with no prior notice. That time, I had to fight alone. No company. No lover. No more adventures to perish the remnants of my dying soul.

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In my first chemotherapy session, I met a redhead old woman in the waiting room. She was correctly dressed and exceptionally beautiful for a woman in her sixties, as I guessed. She kept talking about her long journey with breast cancer and chemo treatment with her husky voice that added to her beauty. Yet, I was particularly caught by her green eyes as I had never seen a redhead with green eyes. When she called me "daughter", I suddenly remember the one woman who resembled her. Me! Was she my mother, who I had been meant to meet after 40 years of absolute break? The first thing that came into my mind was to ask her about my real name. My name when she threw me to the street. I wanted to know why she did that to me. She must have forgotten that she even gave birth to me then. She must have been my mother from whom I had inherited cancer. These questions kept ringing into my

mind but I swallowed them when I recalled her image looking through the hole while I had been raped by Ramli. Hers was the same. Weirdly, I made up my mind not to talk to her. I did not need her while walking forward to the void. I stood up and headed to the other room without any words of goodbyes. I asked the secretary to change my chemo schedule as I did not want to coincidentally meet that damned redhaired woman. I did not want to put myself in a position of a dreamer again. We did not need each other that time as we were carried away to the altar of death, where our bodies would be consumed by a disease that would prefer to devour its preys slowly and mercilessly.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I am ...

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Before finishing the chapter of "Hell", he felt as if a volcano pouring inside his body. He was torn up. He tore the remaining pages into pieces which he grudgingly stepped over. He collapsed on the chair but then stood up as he imagined Barbara collecting these pieces together again to find out the secrets of his beloved. He wanted to bury her secrets inside him forever. As if gone mad, he



hurried to gather the scattered pieces into a pile which he fed to the fire. He kept recalling the times when he shunned away from buying the bodies of women, whatever titillated by their beauty.

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## **The 16<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Bright Stars**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Why does my heart fly high every time he breathes?"**

**"The highest moment of truth is that when two lovers melt in one pot of desire."**

**"Love, when requited, is to reach the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary."**

**"The stingiest is the one who is reluctant to take the hands of whom they love."**

**"There are only two truths in my life- death and your love."**

**"A heart, when becoming a home, is the coziest of all."**

For few long days, Dahhak could not look at Bahaa's face after he had often peeked at the hell she was tortured in. It was not that he loathed her as one might think of him, dropping his eyes whenever coming by her sleeping body. He was just unable to see her eyes, shedding tears while even closed. like a devout, he would bow before her figure

to wipe those tears of an anguished soul. She reached the highest point of suffering throughout her life. The tyranny of life would not leave her until it ripped her body up. She was doomed wretched, not for a great injustice she committed against anybody but rather for being a beautiful orphan thrown in a society, lewd, crude, and obnoxious that knew nothing about virtue but to rant about it. Whenever she tried to escape the hell- out of anguish- she would be forced back into it to taste more of hellish torment. She was just a poor soul hanging somewhere in the void, where would be no diseases or sex slavery.

He was overwhelmed with terrible guilt for breaking his promise to get her out of the orphanage ages ago. He must have shared his luck with her. He indulged in utmost luxury, while she was drowning deep down the abyss. He was learning, while she was being stripped away her passion for knowledge. He was touring around the world, while she was getting lost in men's bodies. He was busy creating new hobbies for himself, while she was busy to satisfy her masters' wishes.

Had she run away with him to streets, would she have been in a better place than the void she was in?

He, who would imagine Bahaa to be soaring as high as the skyline, would never expect her to be as degenerate as she was then. She fitted only to be an icon of beauty and virtue.

Still, he could see her true self, peaceful and pure, regardless of her life full of execrable defilements,

To soothe himself, he kept repeating the scenario in his mind a thousand times, switching roles and events to get better eventualities for her miserable life. He had a lot of ideas swirling there in his head. The best of those scenarios was imagining that she was just having a nightmare, ended by a kiss stamped on her lifeless lips by a chivalrous prince, bringing life to them and to her motionless body.

\*\*\*\*\*

That morning, he felt everything wretched and ailing, all shrouded by an air of gloominess. He even did not wish to see her awakening eyes, preferring that she would remain sunk in deep slumber. He wanted her to wake up. But not that particular day.

He sat next to her bed and turned the music box, gazing at the lovers hugging each other under falling snow inside. He did it a hundred times. Meanwhile, he remembered one and only one thing- that was, he bitterly resented her; surely, not because of her life full of wickedness as his great love for her helped him bear with her whoredoms. Love overrides all done before and after. Nothing can stand before love but love. But that night, he was frenzied with inordinately frantic jealousy after he found out what he already been his had actually another man's.

The origami stars. She had them especially made to be sent to the last of her lovers. Had not cancer destroyed her brain, she would have sent them to him. The day before, he mistakenly opened the manuscript to read her letter to her love "Tayem Jazeeri" . It read:

"Tayem, my dearest love, words are God's love, and that is why He breathed them into the souls of the chosen ones. I feel that we are among them. I give you some of God's words breathed into my soul as I believe them to be the holiest of all other blessings. I thought that the best gift to you would a part of my free rebellious soul, represented in words. I have decided to leave all behind me and take you to my present. My gift is just like me, a container of all contradictions. I do not mean my favourite books attached to the gift. I mean the colourful box. It is full of star-shaped papers folded in the shape of stars folded in the Japanese way. There are 365 stars- that's the days of the year. As if your calendar, you read one a day; thus, my words will be your journal that documents your history but in my own words."

The female lover's letter reads:

"My words are to tell you how great my love is for you. Why in the shape of stars? Stars, as mentioned in heathens' myths, are thought to be the incarnations of the souls of the loved ones who have left us behind. They say

that the dead are watching us from above, lightening our paths. When I die, I want you to look at stars. I will be one of them. Remember always that I will be your guardian, days and nights. "

He read her letter a hundred times, and every time he read it felt as if the first. He felt jealousy ripping his inside into pieces. What hurt him the most was that her men were only ink on paper, leaving behind them grief, humiliation, and disappointment -to him, such crimes would never be forgiven. He was grieved as the last of her heart's beats were caused by another man.

He felt suffocated. He could not look at her beautiful face. Hastily, he combed her hair, mix her drugs with solutions, change her diapers, checked the respirator and the defibrillator, and wiped her face, hands, and legs with sterilized slips before leaving her room. He was holding his tears meanwhile as he did not want to cry in her presence.

Grieved and defeated, he entered his room, carrying his laptop. To escape from his pain, he intended to write the weekly article. Slowly, he turned it on. The first thing that caught his eyes was the date to realize that two months had already passed waiting for Bahaa to wake up. He had an intention to celebrate the New Year's Eve with her. He checked his email. Hundreds of New Year's wishes had been sent to him. He felt somewhat obliged to return

wishes back but did not do anything about it. He went ahead to write the column.

He tried to trick himself into believing his indifference towards the whole thing but failed. How would she do that to him! How would she pronounce her love to another man, not him!

What about him? what about their vows? what lies would be he telling his readers to forget his bitter realities?

Anyways, he wrote it and sent it to his friend, the chief editor.

He called his four friends to spend a joyful night together, hopefully to forget her betrayal. He invited them to a big roasted turkey he intended to cook by himself, the best to cook a turkey. Three accepted the invitation, and the fourth excused himself as he was on a tour with his family. He quickly headed to the kitchen to get things done before their arrival. He spent the whole night cooking and chatting with his friends, who knew that he was hiding his tears behind his loud giggles. The louder the laughter, the more the pain he felt inside.

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They all left at midnight. Alone with jealousy again. He rushed towards her room but turned back few steps away from her door. He felt drained. He went back to his office

and turned the heater on. He snatched a bottle of whiskey and sat on the floor. He reached into his pocket and took out some origami stars left in there. He counted them carelessly. Vanquished, he read the inside one by one:

"We are our thoughts. Our hearts are greater though."

"How sweet is the child in him?"

"Silence is the truest of all languages."

"History began the moment our eyes met."

"Those who master being tough in love are to be banished out of its land."

He gulped more whiskey. He wiped it off his beard with his sleeves. Angrily, he exploded a question out of his shivering lips: "What he had that I did not to make her write her final words to him?"

He was determined to tear them asunder, along with all pages dedicated to their love story, but he did not as he wanted to know more about him.

\*\*\*\*\*

He slept with only one eye, stirring up in his bed. A bottle of whiskey could not block his senses. He felt alone. He needed a company. He called Barbara, asking her to pack to live with him, an invitation she would never decline.



Happily, he urged her to hurry as he would be at her door in half an hour.

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He did not go for a walk as usual, instead, he wore a swimming suit to swim in the river. It was supposed to be a beautiful spring morning, but it was rather an icy cold one though. He went down the river, which was half frozen as the sun could not have melt the icy layer fully. He took a deep breath and jumped into water. He felt as if all emotions of grief and anger were extinguished by chilly water. He froze, and so were his senses, soul, and time. He moved up a little. His body accelerated its movement, kicking water behind as if his painful past.

He was startled with another body jumping near him. It was Barbara's, wearing her blue swimming suit and covering her blonde hair with a rosy latex cap. She moved her body smoothly towards his. Mist kept coming out of her alluring mouth. She stuck her body against his, grinding and rubbing. She gave him a kiss and whispered into his ears: "I love you".

## **The 17<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Revolutions ... Nations**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"Walls do not discipline but provoke instead."**

**"Neutrality is the traitor's policy."**

**"I speak, and that's how I reject."**

**"An unloving heart is just a pump of an inferior quality."**

**"Years are best measured as how much time left rather than how much passed already."**

**"A smile of love is as delicious as a kiss."**

**"Love demands a brave bias in favour of whom your heart adores."**

Last night in his dreams, he had a long dance with Bahaa. He woke up with a decision to dance with her for real, so he put on her sleeping body a white ball dress. Gently, he lifted her body up, pressing it passionately against his chest. He grabbed the saline in one hand and wrapped her body around in the other, dancing with her body with life

support machines trailing behind her as if a part of her dress.

He danced with her crumbling body until he got exhausted. He collapsed upon the couch, letting her body rest there as a pure bride, so heavenly, lying on the steps of a holy temple, that was, his body. She was all his that moment. A faint smile was drawn on her face, and he could feel the pounding of her heart.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the morning, two bodies were fused together, warming each other. He opened his eyes happily, and quickly tucked her body into her bed, after he had changed her clothes and cleaned her body with warm water. He injected medicine into a new saline bag and attached it back again into the cannula.

He looked at her body. How thinner it had gotten since she arrived. She had become just like a sliver of a waning moon, lying on a huge bed and covered with an extravagant a crimson blanket ornamented with gold threads in the edges. It was of his choice as he knew how much she loved extravagant details. He was about to leave, but a slight smile drawn on her face slowed him down, He approached her and leaned against her shoulder. He could feel the heat emitting out of her body, coursing its way through his veins to warm up his shivering body. His smile got even wider. It

looked as if she was pouring power into his soul. He felt a warm kiss on his forehead.

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That evening, he wanted to take a side on her bed. He went up to her room earlier than usual. He tucked himself into her bed, sticking his body to hers, lovely scented. He stroked her red hair, which grew a bit longer since the day he saw her at the retreat. He was about to sing her their favourite childhood song but Barabara's solo interrupted. Down there, Barbara was playing piano. He could recognize the piece. It was composed by a famous Scandinavian pianist, and it was called "The Plague". She had not played that piece for a while.

Barbara would rush to his piano to play that music every time they had a heated night.

Recently, Barbara transcended into silence, not typical to her lively nature. He could not read her eyes, filled with mysteriously gloomy words. He decided not to approach her, fearing that she would leave him amidst the mess he was in.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bahaa would wake up one day, very soon, he thought. Then, he would read her newspapers, magazines, and blogs of all subjects. She would not remember any though. Yet,

he was determined to update her about what was going around her. He was also hopelessly hopeful that reading to her might trigger her sleeping brain.

His tranquil mood was provoked by an article about the crumbling Middle East peace processes. Those nations were sinking down to the abyss with no least hope to be given a bit justice. Peoples there knew nothing but death and empty promises from the tyranny of global power, which elected itself a guardian of it in the name of democracy, which brought nothing but the plague to people. He read it all for her although he did not like the content, full of rosy dreams and far reached wishes that told nothing about the abyss into which those nations were heading down. He would never read her an article about revolutions as they were full of lies and conspiracies against innocent people.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I am forty now, and that is the time to publish my writing before I grow older. I have not written a word in twenty years..."

Mine was a story full of pain. After much thinking, I meekly showed it to an editor of a popular magazine. To

my surprise, he expressed his fascination with my writing style, promising to publish it in the next issue.

He fulfilled his promise, and it indeed appeared soon later. I felt giddy with excitement the moment my sight set on it. I tried my best to get myself collected but joy overpowered me, crying and laughing at the same time upon seeing my name written in bold to the left of my story's title. I was overwhelmed with happiness for the first time in my life. As I was not used to that huge amount of happiness, I would check my name every second to make sure that I was not hallucinating.

I got a good amount of money in return too, and that money was the most delicious as it was the cleanest that I got for real efforts I made. I would pay for them to publish for me though.

I was wondering if I would be able to publish my first novel. I was hoping that writing would save me, derailing me while heading down to the path of vice. Writing would lend me wings to fly away the darkness I had been languishing in. My pen was my savior then. I felt alive. I felt alive!

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## **The 18<sup>th</sup> forgotten Chapter**

### **The First Love... The Last Love**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Writing makes the equation of life austere."**

**"Disappointments and longing are just other forms of deadly cardiac arrests."**

**"Those whom we stop loving are those who let us down."**

**"Disappointments break us, our dreams ."**

**"Loving is not about giving; it is about welcoming lover's gifts."**

**"Mindless is love as it gets our souls back to childhood, but not our bodies though."**

Half a year had passed. Bahaa was still in a deep coma. Her body was shrinking, her arms and legs dried out. Her hair got longer though. Spring was paying goodbye. The river was getting even bluer.

He was still waiting for her to wake up.



Doctors wondered why she had not died yet. Blood stains congested under her skin started fading away instead of increasing as they expected.

All were praying for her to die. To them, death would save her much pain dithering on the start line of the next world. He was her only believer. He was waiting for a better life where they would live the smallest details of love. He had been working days and nights to finish their novel. He had written a new life for her, a clean start behind which there would be no painful past at all.

He had written half of it. He read it to his four friends as if a new prophecy of what her life would be after she woke up. He decided to pave her way towards a more beautiful life than she really wanted. He was making her a new history where there would be only happiness and satisfaction instead of pain and shame.

To get the worst of him, Barbara, the young and beautiful, would call her "Auntie Bahaa" to remind him of their sixties. He in turn would never give the least interest in her cunning ways. Barbara would sneak out into his office to read the novel. She was reading attentively. Every word stabbed deep in her soul. Jealous, she would ask him: "How could auntie Bahaa, the Eastern, read it while it is written in our language?"

Confidently, he would answer: "When awakening, Bahaa would be a goddess of mortality who would understand all human languages. When she hears "Dahhak adores you", she masters all languages you would think of."

Upon hearing his answer, Barbara, with thickly a sneer and a wry twist in the corner of her rosy mouth, would mutter incoherent phrases and get back to her reading, drying her tears shedding against her will. She did not want him to see her that weak, even for a moment.

She always showed her powerful self. "How would you do that to me?" She contemptuously muttered. He gave her up for an old Eastern woman, stuck between life and death?

Whenever feeling caught crying, with haughty tone of white females, she would inquire: "You recite holy verses upon the dead, hah?"

"Yes!", he answered confidently with a tone welcoming her to throw her next question.

"Why don't you recite some upon her!" meanly, she threw the question on his face as if declaring a victory over him.

With a challenging tone, he replied: "Quran verses are not only for the dead. It is for the living too. I will read upon her living body."

She would keep silent, hiding her hatred for that living creature named Bahaa, who was stealing her love away

from her. She would turn back as he would not see shedding the tears of jealousy before the loyal lover.

\*\*\*\*\*

Immigrants and refugees of different races were flocking into the city. They had in common fear, alienation, and suffering. Citizens had different points of view about them, some welcoming and the other demanding their immediate departure. Politicians saw them as a fortune for their aging state. Most of the newcomers were young, holding their crying kids, who would promise the country of a promising prosperous future.

His four friends were busy communicating with brother refugees as they were so a long time ago, a thing that reopened their wounds that they thought they had gotten over a long time ago.

Homesickness is chronic and can never heal with time passing.

for him, he had no homeland buy his Bahaa. As for that abhorrent geographical region called country, he had denied it ages ago as she did in the first place. He had no intention then to recall the hell he was in while there. He even abandoned its language, Arabic. He barely was able to pronounce a letter as he used to do in his childhood. He

kept some knowledge of it for his love as it was her mother tongue.

When Motherland colludes with the traitors against its people, she becomes just like them.

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His book of seven volumes, "Psalms of Passionate lovers", was eventually published. In it, he had collected love epics of the East, surely translated into his second language, Scandinavian. At margins, he incorporated some information, comparing between the East and the West. He concluded his book by remarking that: "Love is as generous as spring, and yet it is humanity's biggest fear."

The first volume was dedicated to his sleeping love. In the acknowledgement page read: "To Bahaa, a beauty crucified under the aurora of the polar sky as the Phoenician star, a warm heart living in the longest ice age ever on Earth, a legend fighting the impossible in life's fighting ring, a woman waiting like nobody ever does, a woman smiling in spite of pain, a woman whose bright eyes can seal the sun."

On the cover was an Arabian goddess braiding her hair with flowers blossoming while making her way through the golden wheat spikes before the scythe, next to her sweet young lover. Beside his library, that book became his biggest academic project, his gift to love and humanity.

Yet, unlike others, he was not as thrilled as he was supposed to be. He excused himself not to go several seminars and interviews to talk about it, instead, he was busy taking care of Bahaa and finishing their novel.

Barbara was not happy about him secluding himself in his house. He ignored her pleas to get back on the track. He declined all invitations to sign his book around the country. Why to waste his time while he believed he was supposed to be busy changing Bahaa's destiny.

Barbara started to be a source of concern for him. He did not see that cold look in her eyes, which filled with tears every time she saw him busy taking care of Bahaa.

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He had not read any from the manuscript for Bahaa since days. It was enough for him to mediate her face and to get her to his bosom. He was watching her fading away day by day. Smarting, he would whisper in her ears a lot of their adventures while at the orphanage, stories about him trying to get her out and elaborating on delicate details, which remained intact though turning sixty.

That novel took all his time. He did not even have the time to bereave his two close friends, the critic and the sculptor, who had recently died. He had not even noticed their bodies, struck with deadly diseases and disappeared. Only

once, he made them the food they liked and smuggled it into the hospital where he sat and recalled their old days back while still in their country, where had been the mother, the family, and childhood friends. They went quick. How sad he was, watching their names carved on the gravestones next to each other in a Muslim graveyard in that tough city, whose coldness would not stop gnawing bones even during spring. He did not attend the critic's funeral because of the heart failure episodes Bahaa went through. At that time, he would not leave her room whatever would happen. He could make it to the sculptor's funeral though. That day, he wondered how he gave up everything for Bahaa.

Was she the dearest to his heart, if there was anything or anyone dear to him at all?

He did not censure himself about it as nobody could take care of his life love as he would. Their dead friends surely had their families around their death beds to the last minute. But, Bahaa had nobody but him. They also had had enjoy life as they wished, while she knew nothing about life but pain.

After the funeral, he rushed back home. He put off his charcoal jacket. He turned back to hang it on the rack, where he found no place for it as it was full of coats, except for an empty space just next to Barbara's red jacket.

Bahaa's had no place there, he thought. He turned back again heading into the hall, where he found Barbara, mesmerized, giving him a stern look, behind which he could not figure out the reason. She kept looking at him without even blinking. Not a word she spoke. No condolence she gave. She instead rushed into the hall, grabbed her red jacket, and just left.

He had nobody now, except two other friends, painful memories, and silent stone images on shelves, which seemed to him crying over the departed. With all brightness the chandeliers emitted, the house was gloomier though.

Death became his biggest enemy then, holding him back so he would not reach his most loved friends and most importantly, his only love, Bahaa.

Typical to him, he hid his pain. Nobody could recognize the pain in him. Nobody to share his griefs with. In such cases, he would have been walking in the streets or travelling to forget the shadows of his sorrows. Yet, that time, he was obliged to adjust those luxurious habits, so he unloaded his burden by doing house chores, taking care of Bahaa, and finishing their novel.

He also cooked for his two remaining friends, who adored Arabian dishes he prepared specially for them. Even Barbara, who out of fear of diabetes was following a strict diet, would devour the desserts he made to the last crump,

throwing caution to the wind. He cooked for her out of gratitude for her efforts to buy new clothes for Bahaa, who needed smaller sizes as her body was shrinking to become as small as a child's.

\*\*\*\*\*

He was no more able to create time for his weekly column in the city's magazine. He sent an email for his friend, the chief editor, to inform him that he would indefinitely stop writing, a thing that angered the editor and his readers too. He sent him one last article, and rushed up to Bahaa's room, her shrine where she had been sleeping for a few months.

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## **The 19<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Nationalism**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Voice, looks, and heartbeats are vital signs of love."**

**"The lover is great, and the loved is even greater."**

**"I love you today too."**

**"Hatred is half of dying."**

**"Why do we even have to live only once?"**

**"I have lost my believe in love stories, but I recite their lines to cleanse myself."**

The female lover wrote:

"Losers are all around me, cities, citizens, ideas, evens, the obedient, and the rebellious; they look all the same to me then. Nothing in sight but failure. They are all derailed and openly drifted away into a maze where was no way out. I have not cared about any but myself long time ago. I have been through successive failures, which has made me tougher and even more selfish. No voice or plea can move

the stone in me. I do not care as I do not consider myself belonging to any. People, times, and places make no difference to me. I have been lost among them anyways!

What would one expect from a nameless person like me? Nobody to cry for me, so I become no good to cry for the others in return.

I have a lot cried over my lost dream, becoming a popular novelist that I always dreamt of. My dreams to be a mother, a wife, one's sweetheart, or a normal human being have become impossible."

For years, I have used my body to pay for my food. I have paid my body to get the least rights or services that must be taken for granted for me as a human. Sometimes, I have used it to vent out all my anger and vengeance against humanity and against heaven too. I am alone for no guilt I had done. I have been deprived of my basic rights as a human. I never felt entitled to perform my vengeance against whomever I felt my enemy. I have been deteriorating to the worst, the action of time, aging. So, I have decided that my body would be my own privilege, not others. I will unleash it to whatever pleased it. I have started seeking the passion I have lost the day Dahhak disappeared. So, I worked as a novelist, yet in the shadow, a ghost writer. I am paid to help others, who want to be writers despite their inability to write a line, go up higher in the ladder of

success, the ladder which the powerful especially tailored for specific people, but not for me for sure."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

At the beginning, I felt no pain as I did it for a living. I got a fairly good pay. I preferred bread over the word. That was my truth; I said to myself a million times, indifferent of what might false patriots, liars, and traitors might say.

I knew all's truth, the performers of the uprisings, the protestors, and the orators, cloaked with outfits of virtue but hiding inside vice and falsehood, wallowing about whatever they wanted before congregations to make them believe what they wanted others to think to be the ultimate truth.

I did not care about trading my words with their money. To me, that was far less harmful than trading my body. That was far less unethical than letting human parasites plague it with their weird vices.

Thus, I had become a ghost writer for most false heavyweight writers. They were just clients to me, filling my pocket with money to fill their pages with magnificent words written by my hungry pen dedicated to satisfying my empty stomach and their vanity as well.

Nothing had changed inside me as I still saw myself as a cranky prostitute, who would not mind lend her most precious Jewlery to pigs, who would cherish dung over green grass and whose necks are so thick that they could not raise their heads up to see the sun above.

Yet, with time passing, deep down inside me, the feeling that my words were part of my dignity and hon our and that words' buyers were just entering my body in some way had been becoming an obsession driving me insane.

Out of the frying pan to the fire!

Once, I got a job as a payment for a novel I wrote for a client. The job was at a press agency for the hateful country. I did not know the reason behind such a generous offer. All I wanted was little money to survive. I never expected such a payment, which would provide me with a regular monthly cheque and a pension later after I retired.

I was about to trust his intentions, but later I found out that the job offer was solely a way to pay me out of the country's pocket. He was too mean to pay me himself. That fraud was the best to talk about patriotism, which to him meant nothing but exploitation in all its possible forms he exercised by virtue of his critical position in the government.

Loving a country means to strive, to give, and to sacrifice.

As for him, he used to throw his heavy but baseless statements about how to be a patriot on the shoulders of the weak, the hungry, and the ignorant. All he cared about was his part of the riches of the country as it had been already divided among the traitors like himself.

That was not to say that my conscience was any cleaner. On the contrary, I was among those who would be bought and sold for the sake of money. I was too beautiful to stay poor or lonely, and he was too strong to grow clean before the folks. We were just the same.

My body was my country, and I was done giving it up for money. My words were the exclusive commodities that I traded with after I had convinced myself that such a business would be less harmful and cheaper than the earlier one.

I accepted the job, apparently a clean one, and I started to outline for my next would-be virtuous life journey. I thought that I found for my tired body a safe harbor after all dark turns that twisted my body and squeezed it until I was left totally broken at all levels.

The first thing I did was to stop writing for others. After a while, I dared to reject a writing offer for that fraud, who in turn sent a recommendation to retire me, deeming me unqualified to continue serving for my post because of my illness that was really worsening day by day. That

saddened me not as I did not actually want anything but peace at that time, some peace, a regular cheque dropped in my humble bank account, and above all a total health insurance coverage, which I most needed to fight the malignant disease.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

The last thing I wrote for others was unpaid. I gave it as a kind of gift to a woman, who had not the least skills to write. She was far from being a literary character, yet she was determined to attach the title of the "author" before her other titles that she made for herself by money. Yet, she was so nice and generous to me. Serving in health sector, she managed to have me a lot of treatment grants in several health institutions inside and outside.

I tailored a piece of writing that helped her get a new position, beside her other positions which made her big money bags and secured her with unimaginable privileges. She had a lot of academic and honor degrees she managed to get with her father's money, which he collected while serving as a prominent official in the judiciary for quarter a century. He wanted to secure his daughter with degrees and positions so that she would continue robbing the Weeks' pockets even after his death.

He felt entitled to for he had done that out of fatherhood. Why not? He just sold his country for his lazy useless daughter!

I allowed myself to appreciate her services which she offered out of the weak's pockets to cure myself.

I laughed to the point of tears once I saw her photo on the front page of the gazettes. Her smile resembled a hen's bottom, uncovered to poop. Her name was preceded with a protracted line of titles. To the left was my article sealed with her name at the bottom. At that moment, I felt the desire to curse her and her father until frothing at the mouth.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

After I was forced to retire without even being referred to a competent medical committee, I made up my mind to stop prostituting myself in all forms. I was consumed, and I had no desire to trade the little remaining of me to stay alive. I had not the least desire for more breaths. I did not want to live if my body would be the cost. I did not want to live if my words would be the cost. I wished death much than anything that I thought precious before.

I wanted to die clean. I would say no to anyone who would stop me.



I stayed at home, as a hermit. I surrendered to death. No more stupid fighting. No more false hopes. Just death. My door would never open to traders or traders. My body would be exclusively mine, and my words would be exclusively mine, and surely for Dahhak, the only person who never betrayed my body, never stole a piece of me, and knew nothing but making me happy.

My biography was for him, only him. I would like him to know all I had been through. I would write honestly. No lies. No sugar-coating.

I wish I could die in his arms as I could not live in.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **The 20<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Fleeting Phantoms**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"How on earth my heart has been deemed to be as if a forgotten page to an entirely forgotten book?"**

**"He does not know the logic of rain nor seasons of love."**

**"Can I close my eyes without seeing you inside?"**

**"Can love be just an unfortunate cosmic incident?"**

**"Which had been created first? Love or pain? Or had they been created side by side for each other?"**

**"What we write is just an incarnation of whom we love."**

The female lover wrote:

First, when cancer invaded my left breast, I did not take it that seriously. It just sounded illogical to me that among all I had been singled out to suffer that much. I did not feel alarmed until it laid its vicious hand on my right breast and soon later my womb. That moment, I realized that my path

was giving me a sudden twist, the unkindest of all. I decided that silence would be my only “fighting back” strategy. No more fighting. I would rather entertain it with a bunch of stories about the passersby I stumbled over in my past years, hoping that would slow it down or even stop it from trying to steal more of me as there was nothing left of it, meager leftover that would barely satisfy a sparrow.

I grew more of a devout, approaching the divine my way rather the way of the hypocrites’. I performed my own rites of purgation. I would wash my body with water mixed with salt and then rose water to cleanse it as it had been filled with intolerable stink of men’s filthy drools. My body became a shrine, forbidden to all humans, ready to be offered to death. Naked, I would dance until I would feel sickened and pile in the spot, silent and lifeless.

I locked myself down in my little apartment. I received no visitors, except for Huda and very few faithful friends.

Huda seemed satisfied with family life. She let her past pains and made a good wife to her husband “Hammam”, who made her a mother. As she claimed, the word “Mama” would make her forget all happened to her at the orphanage.

She might be luckier than I was because she had a little of everything, beauty, sentiment, and talent, unlike me who was damned by the greatness of all I had. My redness,

libido, sexiness, talents, hopes, and desires should have led me to one certain destination, that was the perfect love that I had never had. I had lost my perfect man, Dahhak. Days were past us. Having lost all, I felt entitled to my vengeance from life which deprived me all I asked, simply love.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Now, I am alone with cancer, which came uninvited. I have been obliged to renounce all and left drown in a sea of pains and regrets, puzzled and unguided. I own nothing but dozens of stories about fleeting phantoms of men piling behind me like dim mirage of dull greyish mountains. Every man had had his own special share of my body, mind, and soul. They all had felt legendary under my shade.

Cancer, would you like to listen to such stories? I know, you like to devour whatever coming on your way. Come with me to stand before their gravestones to tell you why you should not bother dragging me behind you to the void. I have been the void itself since I existed.

I would not tell you anything about Dahhak as he was the only one who never got into my body, yet he went through my soul. I guess, you have not earned the right to know our

story. But I give you the right to spit the others out of your arrogant mouth, one after the other as I did before. “

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

For a few months, I spent my time telling stories of the passersby to my new friend, cancer. I was a good narrator, and it was a good listener, yet being so did not make it have any mercy upon my body.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Cancer is a friend, awfully hard to live with, ridiculously hard to get rid of, and absolutely risky to be enemy with. I have taken a neutral position towards it. Neutrality fitted the Sufi life I have chosen to myself. I asked nothing from it. I begged it not. I was as if its Shahrazad, who gave up everything for the sake of "his" amusement. I wrote everything on the manuscript, which I hoped to be my indulgence certificate that granted me some time off purgatory.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Ironically, I could not but recall very few names of the passersby. I just felt their filthy existence back in my mind. I tried to retrieve their faces, their eyes, and their voices, but nothing.

In the past, I used to count them one after another in a lengthy list in my mind. It would take me seconds to do so. One day, it got too long that I could feel it suffocating my throat. That day, I stopped that habit of counting.

Dahhak was not among them. He contained my innocent soul within his. His name was a holy word I would recite whenever filled with terror. It calmed me down.

True love would not be killed by a cancer...

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Cancer, dear friend:

The mummy knight was the sweetest of all. I first met him in his refrigerated chamber at the national museum. As I remembered, I bought a first-class ticket, which cost me a fortune just to approach the glass coffin, where he, wrapped with a white cloth, was displayed to visitors coming from all over the world.

The moment I laid eyes on him; I fell for him. Despite the opened wound wreathing his forehead, he stood, proud and majestic. He was knocked dead seemingly by an axe on the battlefield thousand years ago.

I liked his mummy face. His beauty lied in his facial features harmonically settled on his angled face.

Intrigued by his royal figure, I approached him as a way to challenge his knighthood. I whispered to the glass coffin: "You love me? Then, follow me."

He did not give it a second thought. He jumped out of his royal slumber, breaking his way through the solid glass, and whispered to me: "Let us leave this place."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"There is a type of men, who should be stamped with the name of "onion men". They deserved that title not as an integral ingredient in life dish, but rather for being born with a stench, just like that on onions when rotten. I myself had known one of thas type! I liked seeing him, I admit as he could make me laugh non-stop. With his meager figure and huge bald head with few white hairs, as sharp as needles, I laughed. I looked at that clown as cheap stuff. It seemed that he was born just to make children laugh at his hairy butt and to extinguish the desire of lustful women.

Our relationship did not last. It did not take us time more than a small girl would spend playing with a monkey or a roaster would take too poo on a junkyard.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"That stupid poet ended each of love stories he lived with a failed suicidal attempt. His end was by the hands of my love. He loved me and of course he wanted to end it with a suicide. I made sure that he got not a chance to fail a suicide after he protested to end his life. He killed himself, and thus I proudly announced a new type of men, that is "men who end their love with death".

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I did not love him. I did not feel the least attraction to his body. Yet, I had empathy upon his loss. He lost both of his legs in the battlefield. With a great courage, he broke his way through a hail of bullets coming from the enemy side. I presented my body to him as a reward for his unequalled bravery for he had been deprived to smell a woman's body for a few decades.

To me, it was an exceptional secret patriot national act to support march towards freedom. Even prostitutes love fighters and feel honoured to help.



The female lover wrote:

"In my moments of drunkenness, I dared shout that a conspiracy had been plotted against love in my country. It is not a coincidence that they do die a painful death at the end. Loving, whatever its form, is their only crime.

You do not believe me? Then, just go for a round on TV, and I assure you that it would be enough for you to relate to what I am babbling about. All lovers end up, stricken with either hunger, madness, or death."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"That handsome, whose iconic face and body had all what people through ages agreed on as the essence of beauty and whose spirit had nothing but absolute hollowness, knew long lines of the best poetry to get me to his bed, a thing that I gave him easily so that he would stop abusing magnificent words in return of a one-night thing. I got my revenge for poetry though, as I doubled the price for him that night."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Love is a battlefield, where lovers would turn into brutal beasts. It is way more barbaric than a fight between a naked slave and an angry lion in a Roman wrestling ring, where the lion is ridiculously baring his teeth to eat the slave, who is too tired to fight for his life.

I myself had been down into that ring. A thousand times, I was forced into such a ring to fight the most bestial of human beings. I had no right to surrender, so I faced the inevitable. Do not ever think I was brave enough to fight; instead, I kept wallowing in men's filth."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I was not a victim. That young man of the pure soul worked hard to smear it with my filth too. He loved me purely, and in return I pushed him away from me. Had we, Dahhak and I, got married, I would have been a mother to him.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Being an orphan like myself, my fat client's driver had had a share of my body. Empathetically, I gave him my body as

his life was not different from mine. His boss gave me massive amounts of money to get the little of me, while he paid nothing to get the whole of me. It was my way to give him my condolences for him being a destitute orphan. I would sometimes put in his hands all I was given by his pig boss.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

That rich man, by whose instinctively skill could manipulate everybody he talked to, fooled me to think of him as my man who would make me live some moments of motherhood after he knew that motherhood was my weakest point. He convinced me to adopt an orphan, whom in reality was the product of his casual lust. It was not too difficult for a man like himself to cunningly take back his bastard son without being scandalized among his rich peers.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

A bum, claiming to be a poet, claimed to not be able to compose a verse but after a heated meeting. When in my lap, he would raise me up on a pedestal with his lofty words, promoting me to the rank of a goddess with full divine honor. When done with his lengthy sophisticated

preambles, he would have the rug yanked out from under me, withdrawing the divinity he bestowed upon me and pulling us down where he relieved himself on whatever spot he found stimulating on my body. That moment, he would come back to his senses, feel disgusted of his load sliding down over my body, and at once leave room before even covering his bare bottom.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

He had been already dead ages before we met. He could not even move a finger, but he insisted to take his share of my body in return for his services for me. When death pinched him a little, he would rush into my place, begging me to urinate on his wrinkled face so he would wake up again. To tell the truth, I loved it, and I did it for myself first and foremost and on behalf of the people. I would ask for a raise too as that was not among the entertaining services I used to provide my clients with.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

That only son had an issue with his lesbian mom. She dumped his father to do whatever she fancied with her lesbian friends. His painful past was too much for him to forget, and it was rooted down in his depths. There was no

escape, and degeneration was inevitable. His utmost pleasure was to hire male whores to rip their cores hard so that he would enjoy their helpless moans of pain before him.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I had innocently thought that the walls of the orphanage held inside the darkest place for the darkest creatures I had ever known, first among them a beast called Ramli. Then, I found out that the world was a huge orphanage, within which lived dark creatures, copies of Ramli, limitless in numbers. In that huge orphanage and among such, it would sound normal for the weak to get raped by those dark creatures.

I considered myself lucky for I could recognize them while I was just young. I was used to such dark souls since I was just a little girl. I learned then not to shed tears of pain whatever deep it would get into my soul. To me, my tears were far more precious to be wasted on them.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

His sweet words and confusions he showed whenever meeting me had been just fabrications to get my body as officially his. He wanted me as a wife. Yes, a wife! Not for

him but for all he wanted a service from. My body was his investment. He would give it as a bribe for his seniors. My body was a trampoline, whenever he pressed his feet down on my body, he would fly high where he thought he belonged to. None was more extraordinary about passersby was their best attempts to pass me among them, with each claiming to be the first to go through me.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

There was a type of men I called “Men of Inferno”, who mastered the games of denial, disguise, and lunacy. I knew the rules of their games too. I had the honor to receive delegates freshly coming out of the inferno. I met them all. I open my arms for them to get my body mauled, to disembowel the inside of me, to sip my blood, and to overshadow me. Few were punished, and a lot got away with it, leaving me cleaning our mess behind. I was darting across a vicious circle, where I would be caught back every time I tried to get out.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

All were vampires of destitute souls. They sucked my soul to the last drop of it until nothing was left for me but death.

The female lover wrote:

The most insidious of diseases, consuming me along my life journey, was simulating the lovers-to-be's illusions and assimilating their pains. That patriot, who kissed his woman before martyring himself, had felt a hero in my arms first. I made the other feel as a real knight before got assassinated by the enemies' hands who feared the power of his mind. You see those drowning in the seas escaping death. I made them my dreams.

Not a hand of those who stained my soul could touch my heart, but those who stamped an innocent kiss on the cheeks of love did.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Skeptic about all but one thing: I had been split up into meaningless slivers, scattered across that cursed country. Taking advantage of my aggravating poverty and loneliness, all were scrambling over my decaying body.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I grew skeptical about love. I reached a point where I could not buy their love words. But I was sure that my love share was kept for me in Dahhak's heart. As for those who swore

love to me, I was sure of their intentions as a bird looking at the cunning eyes of its hunter setting its trap, would be.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Cancer, dear friend:

It seems to me that you have got fed up with my stories, haven't you?

I have got familiar with your dignified being,

I suppose you are not yet fed up; otherwise, you would knock me dead with a single blow of yours to smash the memories of those paper men.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I must admit that I would like my dear disease to crush me in one blow, so I would bear no more pain than I have already had.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Cancer seemed not to be a good fan of my stories as it bit my breast with its fatally sharp fangs. It is biting me to shut up forever. It had enough of my storytelling thing.



The female lover wrote:

You are right my dear friend. Who would anyways like to hear stories about beings under the shadows, in the rot, inside the mud, and from the hell, whose tortured souls are crucified at the gate of eternal waiting?

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover cried:

My sincere apologies, dear friend....

I really cannot tell you any of my stories with Dahhak as they are too sacred to be told to one of my executioners.

His love has still been pure, and I swear I will never let fate to mess with it.

He is my geography, my distances, and my soul.

Only his ways will lead me to safe shores...

## **The 21<sup>st</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Paths**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Disappointment wrinkles love and dulls its sensational details."**

**"Why should a calendar register all days of the year but not the happiest ones instead?"**

**"Futilely, in the search for a love, we look for angles among humans!"**

**"The devil's biggest problem that he had gone beyond the limits of love."**

**"Love requires no commonalities, but it wholly embraces the differences."**

**"Siding with the loved is a lover's best deed."**

He remembered back the time he spent in his renounced mother country; it synchronized with Bahaa's narrating the stories of the passersby to cancer! He was sure of it. It was a time of protests, which soon turned into bloody clashes with riot police, who received order to disperse the masses

apace with no mercy. Their government defeaned their ear to the protesters' calls for freedom. His embassy ordered him to leave hastily for his own safety before things would get worse. Responding to his country's plea, he, along with his compatriots, left immediately as the country turned into a fireball that burned anyone stepping outside. House arrest was imposed on all.

At that time, he was invited there by a friend, a literary man who owned a prominent publishing house in the East. That friend offered him to translate his latest bestseller novel into Arabic, a thing which he wholeheartedly accepted without even going into money details.

He kept walking on streets searching for his beloved's face in the crowds. He went to the street where the orphanage was. It seemed that the orphanage was demolished as the country was. He did not bother to inquire about the reason for that. He kept walking for hours, hoping for a miracle to happen. He fancied Bahaa, still a little girl, running away out of that filthy place towards him. Broken, he went back to his lodging. On his way back, he heard women speaking the same Arabic dialect Bahaa spoke. How greater he missed that language, running in his blood, though he hated its speakers, their cities, and their histories altogether. During his stay in that cursed city, his only passion was to overhear women's chit-chats, hoping to hear his beloved's voice, delicate and spoiled.

His host invited him to his place to meet with a woman, who he claimed to be a popular literary figure in the city. He did not give it a second thought and hurried to see her, a candidate for a highly prestigious official post in the city with the name of "Sahar", thinking that it must be Bahaa. His hopes were shattered upon seeing that woman, wearing a prostitute-like outfit. She was far away from being a lady-like demure literary figures should look like.

It took her two hours to show all her cards, which all labelled her as a lead prostitute. Her talks, having not a shred of decency, offered him her body and her girls', an offer he declined. The only thing that attracted his attention was her narrative of the assassinated Arab nuclear physicist, who was killed in his apartment by an unknown person as mentioned in the police reports. All knew the entity which executed the poor physicist, whose only fault was to protest the corrupted regime in his country, which he had escaped decades ago. His pen killed him as it did with the likes with him.

As for the other stories she told about her latest piece of literature she got published, he neither showed the least interest nor got engaged in the discussion. He only broke into hysterics when she proudly declared her absolute rejection of taking a part in a commercial for some type of detergent. When asked about his laughter, he cynically answered: "It seems that you detest purity in all its forms. "

He Then excused himself and walked down the street heading to the hotel. He felt suffocated in those so-called literary talks. On his way, he stumbled over night girls, throwing themselves on him. He generously threw money on them with no gain back. They mesmerized on their spots about his unjustified generosity. They did not understand him calling them: "The purest in the city".

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That time when he was hunting for Bahaa's voice, she was locking herself in her little apartment where she was amusing cancer with her stories about the passersby! She was bargaining cancer, not to save her the remnants of her life, but to eat out all of her memory to save her the pain of the past.

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He shut the manuscript and started his game of possibilities. Did he pass by her apartment? Was she on the balcony watching the shadow of him loitering down near? Did not she recognize him? Or nothing happened but they were just two people under the same gloomy sky and on the same dry earth?

He could not bear ideas crowding inside his mind, so he walked out to have some fresh air. Walking, he lost the

sense of time until he heard low-pitched notifications of his watch striking one o'clock after midnight. He went home.

He peeked at Bahaa's sleeping face through the door crack. He, dying to see her eyes open, did not to disturb her at that moment. He looked at the mirror next door. He saw a man with a long beard and hair, as a cave man. He felt that he was Bahaa's lifelong prison mate ages ago. He panicked and hurried down the stairs heading back the street again. It was more refreshing than his house despite the risks that he might face there at that moment so late at night.

While going down the staircase, he thought he would better let Barbara know. He was so embarrassed that he thought about it a thousand times in a minute before he finally approached her room's door. He could see light coming through the crack under the door. It was not so typical of her to sleep with lights on. She was always sleeping in a room dimly lit or in complete darkness. He knocked the door lightly, waiting for her to give him a permission with her proud accent to open the door. He heard nothing but the footsteps of bare feet solidly touching the wooden floor. The door opened, and a face looked straight ahead at him. Not a strange face. He was half naked, covering his low part with a white towel wrapping his waist down, one inch above his knees.

He went silent, having not a word to utter, upon seeing Barbara, hiding her precious things under cover, lying conveniently on the giant bed as if pouring the scene in his wide-open eyes to humiliate him as he proudly did before. She replaced him as he did for an old hag as she thought Bahaa to be.

He muttered an apology and turned back up to Bahaa's room, traumatized by the shock of the sudden knowledge he just uncovered. He poured himself a glass of whisky and sat on the couch just close to the window. Unbelieving his senses, he sipped his drink. He questioned his aggravating feelings which he could not even figure out. He tried to talk some sense into himself that Barbara was neither a minor nor his fiancé, nor his wife, nor his girlfriend to feel so. She had the right to do whatever she wanted and to enjoy whatever rights and freedoms given to her in that country, where no one would censure the other for satisfying their sexuality as long other's freedoms would not be preached.

He could not tell whether it was jealousy, or it was just machismo he inherited from his Arab ancestors, which made him feel a roaster that wanted to keep his hens all gathered for him inside the coop. Whatever, he rejected the feeling both ways. He loved no woman but Bahaa. He craved no one's but her perfume, voice, and fiery charm. That moment, he wished he could take away Barbara's health to grant it to Bahaa.

He knew Barbra's man. He came to the country as a refugee among thousands escaping death in their homeland far in the East. He was a grown man, with a perfectly dark skin and an enormous body which resembled that of Aryan men. He saw him with Barbara so many times, as the latter asked to hire him as Bahaa's caregiver. He thought she wanted to dedicate her time for him as his office manager. He thought he was just a friend of her she met at an international organization for refugees. It never happened to him that she would invite that man to his house to make love on the bed he bought for her.

That Eastern refugee quickly got immersed into the new place. He was never seen in the company of his people, and he never used his people's language; he used the new country's language he was learning in the compulsory language courses he attended the time he arrived. The host country paid for the courses so that refugees would get a temporary permit and a monthly cheque that would offer a decent life. He never talked about his family too as if he never belonged to them. He severed all ties with them all. At that charity event, he kept dancing with white women and turning back to the table to take swigs out of whisky bottles freely offered for guests. He slipped one small whisky bottle under his coat too.

He was a handsome man, fun to be with. He perfectly danced, a thing which incredibly increased his charisma



among the women of ice. His mahogany brown complexion aggravated his exotic beauty. It never came to Dahhak's mind that Barbara, who looked a decade older, would drag the young man into a romantic relationship. He questioned it a lot in his mind, but he would not approach her to know the secret. He felt hurt upon seeing Barbara's lover at his own house.

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In the morning, he, on purpose, decided to have breakfast in the kitchen to meet the couple there, thinking in that way they would feel embarrassed upon his presence. Yet, he was late as he saw Barbara stamping a goodbye kiss on the young man's cheeks upon his departure. Seeing Dahhak's stepping down the stairs, she shut the gate and muttered an indifferent "good morning" to Dahhak when their eyes met. She headed to the kitchen to clean the dishes. He saw nothing of her face, but her blonde hair sliding down her back. She kept silent. When she heard Dahhak's steps out the kitchen, she turned her back. She was sure that he must be jealous. She smiled at her first victory. Let him taste his own medicine he was giving her since the day he brought Bahaa the house.

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Barbara, herself, could not figure out how it started between the two of them, but she knew that it was just a

part of her plan to burn his heart the same way he burned hers. Surely, she was not aspiring more than making him feel jealous just a bit. A little was enough for her, and she was sure of it as he considered her as his luggage that he would carry wherever he went for fifteen years. He appreciated her loyalty despite her coldness and stubbornness. He knew she loved him the most, yet he chose the old redhead over her. She wanted to kill him by the brunette from the East, which he claimed his hatred, as he killed her with the redhead. She knew the East was his sole weak point. What does it mean when he filled his house with Eastern stuff? What does it mean when he brought his Eastern woman to his house to be his first lady?

She wanted to hurt him by that Eastern stud, whom he could not be a competitor at all levels. She knew that the young man would not be as noble as Dahhak, yet she chose him as he made easy meat for her. She knew that the young man was after her money. He would not mind becoming her bait as long as she gave him money and satisfied him with her unsatiated desire for his body. Why to reject a body, a bunch of money, a warm bed, and delicious food? He risked his dignity when he accepted her invitation to her boss's house in the middle of the night. His dignity did not matter at all, anyways. He even exceeded the limit of decency when he ate at a stranger's table, drank his vodka,

had a shower in his bathroom, shaved with his own razor, and wore his aftershave cologne.

She tasted a little of victory when seeing Dahhak drowning in silence. It was typical for him to do so whenever he felt hurt. Still, neither she could feel healed, nor she felt that she had a closure for her case. She felt sadder instead. She felt the loss deep inside. She could not find an alternative for Dahhak in the young man, whose cards were revealed to her. That young stud was just a Machiavellian, who could not match Dahhak noble traits. He resembled him not, except for his sad oriental voice and his fiery looks. She caressed his hair as she used to do with Dahhak's white hair.

She cared about her fantasies more than anything else. Absent-minded, she listened to his sad stories about his escape journey to the new country and his family's bodies turned into ashes under the rubble of what was their home. She did not care at all. She would have cared more if he had told her about a book he read or a brilliant idea crossing his mind as Dahhak would do after a night of hot sex. She pretended to sound like she was interested in the sake of her plan, and she was a good actress. She learned that in her work with refugees' organizations. Deep inside her was Dahhak, and only him.

## **The 22<sup>nd</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Redhead Women**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"The man I love is all my family."**

**"He spent his time talking about everything, save his love to her."**

**"Idiots think they would resume love where they last time left it."**

**"Every time earth saddened him, he resorted to the heaven."**

**"They lie to us when they say our children immortalize us."**

**"Art is the voice of deprivation."**

Grabbing the manuscript to his chest by both hands, Dahhak fell asleep on the couch after he read Bahaa some pages. Opening his eyes, he saw Barbara combing Bahaa's hair. Barbara seemed absent-minded, but her eyes filled with compassion. At that point, Bahaa's health was at the

worst. Her skin seemed glued to her bones, and half of her body melted down.

He did not like it though. He thought it was beneath Bahaa to receive charity from others. He asked her to hand him the comb to do it himself. She dropped it on his palm and turned back, heading out the room. Seconds before she reached the threshold, Dahhak's voice rang on her ears: "I don't want see that rude man walking in here again".

She did not turn around. She did not say a word, and she idly walked towards the staircase. Stepping down, a victorious smile was drawn on her face, certain that her plan had been going well. She felt the flames of jealousy bursting through his ribs, clawing at his soul.

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She really felt pity for Bahaa, and that was her first honest time to feel so. It moved her seeing Bahaa turning into a gloomy mommy, not a sleeping beauty as Dahhak used to describe her. She felt so though she always hated her even before they met. She made an enemy of her and tried to push her away from Dahhak's way, but she failed.

One hot night, Dahhak told Barbara his story of his lost woman. She once thought an Eastern female friend of Dahhak to be his lost love, so she did her best not to make their meeting possible. She on purpose booked her the

wrong tickets. The guest found her lost in a large airport where she knew nothing about how to reach Dahhak's place, so she went back angry to her country, with no intention to contact him about that big mistake, which she considered it as an act of disrespect from the side of the host.

She knew she had not hit her opponent as Dahhak did not show any interest to make up for the mistake. He was more concerned about retrieving some of the ticket's payment.

Since then, Barbara was always prepared to blow that unknown woman. It never happened to her that chance would bring them together again at that remote Scandinavian resort. It never came to her mind that Dahhak himself would enter the house carrying her sick opponent to die slowly, where she would consider as her own.

Barbara had always been by his side. He never felt her love and never cared about her as a lover. To him, she was just a secretary who efficiently and unconditionally got things done for him. It was her choice to do so, fearing that any mistake would lead to lose him. She, who best knew how much he hated serious relationships, had foolishly been planning to take their transient sexual affair to a higher level.

He had a long history of failed marriages, ending with a loss keenly felt, apart from much of his fortune wasted on

his ex-wives after divorce. He was left alone with no child to inherit the humble fortune left for him. He had no child to embrace or talk to about his love of knowledge. He, whose big heart was the resort of all, even the neighbor's kittens which would race to his door to get their part of his unlimited affection, could not have a child of his own to lavish his affection on.

Barbara had her part of that too, a part given to her in the first place as a charity not surely out of love. Newly divorced, she found him a resort from her pain, caused by her husband, who threw all good years they happily lived together behind his back and dumped her for no reason. She had lost all then, but she made a restitution at his place. He offered her a job and support until she retained her strength back. With his great support, she built a new life in the new city, to which she escaped from the ghosts of the past. Natural of him, he lent her some money to help her buy a new apartment. He got her place decently furnished too. When the due time came to pay her debts to him, he rejected it totally. He had been her sole supporter, and for that she loved him deeply. Yet, her love never scratched the surface of his heart, that heart which had been for one and only one woman, Bahaa.

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The first time Barbara saw Bahaa, she realized Dahhak's fascination with redheads. He married three, and all were redheads. They all were interested in his money. They criticized his extravagant lifestyle. They hated it when he generously spent money to please his dear friends. They wanted all his money for themselves. Yet, he never changed those habits for their sake. He kept the same, chivalrous and generous with all.

He spent his past days roaming old streets, brothels, and gaming tables, where he suffered pleasures and sorrows alike, both transient. He then trod the paths of the literati - theatres, libraries, universities, laboratories, and factories, where he landed in ultimate ecstasy, getting stuck there amid civilizations, where the commons crowded for crumps to survive.

His greatness made no difference for his ex-wives, who asked for divorce to seize whatever they wished out of his fortune, a thing that he did not really mind as long as money could buy him freedom. He kept waiting for the redhead he had always been waiting for to make her the mother of his children, whom he always imagined taking after their mother's beautiful features. He dreamt of leading a new life, not like the one they had lived, mean and merciless.

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"I declare I have lived, indeed.", he giggled while drinking a glass of wine after he had eaten a large piece of the pie, he made for his friends that night. He drank a lot and laughed more. Their laughs synchronized. Watching him through her glass, Barbara knew best that he was living his worst days. She knew that he was just a lover grieving over his split love. She could touch his despair wrapping him as a halo he cocooned himself inside but daring not to touch.

\*\*\*\*\*

He insisted that they stayed there, suggesting moving the party to Bahaa's room, a thing they welcomed. He wanted to amuse her with their talks. They went up her room and sat next to her bed, where she was lying as a dead body. They kept telling anecdotes about their vanished countries and happy childhood memories. Dahhak did not know what to say, so he just listened. He had nothing to say, except for his love for Bahaa, which he eagerly described while watching her face.

Had he had a mother, making him a hot pie in his cold house in his cold country, filling the house with aromas as well as prayers, reordering the furniture, teaching his children manner and virtues, growing little trees in his small garden, mending his clothes, and waking him up to perform prayers at the crack of dawn, his life would have been less unpleasant. He always longed for such details,

though simple, but would take the sting out of the trials of life. Back in the old days, he would envy his four friends, who enjoyed their mothers' love. Upon their visits to their sons, he would get crumbs of their love, which did not quite make up for the loss of his real mother. Upon their departure, they would leave their sons little thoughtful gifts behind and leave him deep sense of alienation and deprivation of mother's love, never replaceable by any other type of love.

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That night, he remembered nothing but his love's angelic face. He sang their past songs, and so did his friends. Barbara understood nothing but very few words they uttered in her language, so she withdrew to the window to watch the sunrise. She thought of sneaking out to swim in the lake, where she could take off all suffocating her - her clothes as well as her tired soul. Her tears mixed with the lake. Meanwhile, Dahhak was making up happy stories about his love until he felt defeated by the invincible waves of painful memories. He went silent, and so did his friends. They all fell asleep.

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He opened his eyes, glancing his friends sleeping on the spots where they were chattering their last words the night before. Barbara piled on the couch near the window. As a

red dove spreading its wings across white cloud, Bahaa lied on the big white bed. Her cheeks grew reddish, like when she cried or laughed. He stamped a kiss on her pale forehead and another on her dry lips, whispering: "I love you more, today".

He grabbed the manuscript to read her some before they woke up.

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## **The 23<sup>rd</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Barbara**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"I will devise my own alphabet to pronounce my love to you."**

**"He knows good best, and that's why he always smiles."**

**"Cowards end love in one statement: "Circumstances were stronger than our love."**

**"Come, tell us what happen after lovers meet."**

**"To women, love is a matter of existence."**

**"Write me, lest I die."**

**"He schedules his love down to the bottom and then anticipates its coming."**

More than a year and a half had passed since Bahaa fell in her seemingly eternal sleep, and he was still kneeling at the altar of his love. Nothing seemed to change to the better, nevertheless, like a true worshipper never asking to see his God, kept performing his love rituals to his love days and nights, a nurse in the day and a storyteller and a writer at

night. He did not waste a second; he would either read the manuscript to her or write their novel, which he hoped to finish before she would open her eyes.

Barbara, never got bored watching him taking care of his crumbling redhead woman, felt extreme pain stabbing her heart. She envied Bahaa and wished that she could be wandering in the void like her. She would not even mind faking ill on the bed for the rest of her life to have some of Dahhak's love, which he granted all for his sleeping woman. She had been longing for such freakishly staggering love. Before she became an eyewitness for all that love, she had never thought that love could remain young and violently spread out in lover's souls and all over the existence. She had had her own definition of love as making a good company and having as much as hot sex as a couple could; yet after she knew that legendary love story of Dahhak and Bahaa, she changed her mind and knew deep in the heart that it was far more than that.

Their love story had not been the only one from which she learnt about what love really was. There had been her love to Dahhak. She remolded her heart to fit her love to him. It made her learn the secret hymns of love and transcend her human feelings of painful jealousy to stand by him, looking after his only loved woman, a pile of bones lying on bed, days and nights.

She thought that the stupid Eastern man would think that she had done all she had done for his money. The truth was she was there to be as close to him as she could be, whatever the cost. She could not live away from him, and she would never leave him, not out of greed for his money, name, or intellectuality. Not for his stories though. She loved him, and that was all. She knew nothing about the language of love but one thing, being next to love, supporting, advising, patiently waiting until he got over his love for the sleeping old lady and surrendered to the truth that she would never be back to life as he had long thought since her arrival.

\*\*\*\*\*

Playfully, Dahhak would call her a "cold fish". She knew that he meant it, a thing that would smash her inside. She knew that he thought she lacked feelings as most people saw her - always uptight, cold, and raucous. He could not feel her. He could not recognize the pain in her or the earnest efforts she was exerting to keep herself composed inside, the thing that held her back not to throw herself on his lap to cry out all the pain he caused her. She always imagined doing it, shouting at him: "I love you. Please, leave alone that sleeping woman. She is not going to wake up. She is so dead. Just take it. Let's live in love forever."

She would not do that though, lest he push her away and hurt her with his words, and he was the best in that. She did that out of love. Did he think that love was born only in the East? In her cold country, there were a lot of martyrs of love. Her heart, which he always described as a cube of ice, was overflowing with love. That icy heart could feel pity for her eternal opponent, who she had no intention to fight a woman in her mother's age.

When Barabra was a little girl, nobody showed the least interest to listen to her. She had two fathers and two mothers though. Her parents split when she was just nine. Each parent lived in a city. They agreed to share the custody of their only daughter fairly; school days for the mother at her mother's boyfriend's house, and weekends as well as summer vacation for the father, who tended to replace mistresses from time to time until he finally settled for a woman, who did not mind him cheating on her or him rolling in his vomit after heavy drinking.

Many were in her life, but no one was willing to listen to her or to talk to her about her feelings and inner worlds. Hence, she retreated into herself, devising a space for herself, where she could communicate with her hellish worlds. She became silent, slow, and frigid. She did not even mind to be called "the thick-headed".

When she became a young woman, fate had pity for her and willed to bring her together with whom she thought to be the love of her life. Yet, loss seemed to be her eternal doom. Things happened that got their love jeopardized. She ended up alone again. Completely alone, she could not find a soul to embrace her pain, except for Dahhak, who she knew by chance in her quest to find a job. She met him at the university, where he taught, while applying for an administrative post. He offered her a job as a personal secretary with a good salary, equal to that offered to her there, apart from other privileges, an offer she would not decline at those tough times. She got into his world, nice and quiet, while he leaped into her life like a sudden rainbow as if to seal her wounds and to be everything for her in life.

She perfectly knew that his help had not been offered out of love but rather out of compassion. It was typical of him to help people in need and generously spend money on them. She fell in love with him though. She just could not help it, and she had no choice but to hold to that job, which provided her with descent style of life. She then reached his bed -not his heart though.

She talked about her feelings for Dahhak to his poet friend, who sympathized with her, asking her to have some patience and to hold together her fragmented self hopefully until finally fate would put an end to her agony.



Her problem with the two lovers, Dahhak and Bahaa, was an existential one, three people living under a roof, all tortured by the other as if forever orbiting in a vicious circle. The poet read her some verses about the agony of love and its trials:

"With no plan, a woman fell for me,  
and I fell for another, who fell for another,  
who fell for another!  
Frenzied by love,  
we were all drawing, withdrawing,  
attaching hands and letting others'."

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In the past, she tried to win Dahhak's heart, she had a dress especially tailored for her in an oriental style. She also attended Arabic courses to talk to him in his language, especially the words of love. She wanted to come closer and closer to him, a thing he did not like. He asked her not to wear the oriental dress in front of him again and not to speak Arabic, but in her country's language, which he declared he loved the most.

But she changed her tactics. She dyed her blond hair red, fixed the exact way rival did, and hid her blue eyes behind green lenses. She would not mind transforming her look for him or even take her face off to look like her rival, if needed. She would never mind locking herself in his house for ever if he wished.

She even thought of trying to write a piece of writing to impress him, as Bahaa did. But she failed. She was not born a writer or a storyteller, a thing that burned her inside.

“She must have been a great writer to,” the blonde thought, “then why he is insisting to finish a novel with their names on it?” She read every chapter of the novel that he had written so far. She loved every word. She adored the way he, subtly and smoothly, wove events together. She hated one thing, that was, the prophecy that her rival would wake up again, escaping the inevitable death haunting her in the void.

\*\*\*\*\*

Curiosity killed her when she saw Dahhak, wrathfully tearing some pages of Bahaa’s manuscript. They should have had secrets so explosive that he must burn them to ash. She wished she could read Arabic to know those secrets, which Dahhak insisted to know, strongly believing that they would breathe life into his half dead lover.

Barbara felt as if running out of time and patience, so she decided to take whatever steps to gain his heart. It was the right time as her rival got so weak to fight back. Her plan was to convince Dahhak's close friends that a competent committee should see Bahaa to decide what was to be done. Her plan went the way she planned; his friends convinced their stubborn friend of the idea, on which he, coerced, agreed. The committee's final decision was that Bahaa's case was a hopeless one, Dahhak should pull the plug and let her walk the path to death, a decision he detested. He asked them to leave his house. They at once did, with their heads down. His two friends fell silent, one pretended to busy himself lighting his pipe, while the other sat on the couch staring into the space ahead.

Carefully, Barbara came closer to him, looking beseechingly into his eyes, reaching out to touch his hands. He pulled hers away of his, looking at her with grudge overflowing out of his eyes. With a quivering voice, he said to her: "Bahaa won't die, and you, you won't be her. Dye your hair red or changes your eyes green. You won't be her. Get lost. I don't want you here anymore."

\*\*\*\*\*

On the top of the steps, he stood, watching Barbara, broken, carrying her luggage and heading to the door. She approached

the glass table there and dropped the key. "This is your house key, "inaudibly said, "I don't need it anymore. "

She sighed and hurriedly approached the door. At that moment, Dahhak hurried down the stairs, hugged her from behind, pulling her body firmly to his. "Please, don't leave. Don't leave me alone to my agonies. I need you, Barbara. Forgive me."

His poet friend was closely watching them up there, reporting back to the other friend standing few steps way.

The poet friend recited:

I am the judge of love,  
and love is the murderer.

It inflected me,  
and so it did to the judge of judges.

The other friend followed:

I sought tears to save me,  
They did not answer,  
Defeated by pain.

That sickened me to death.



## **The 24<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **Tayyim Jazeeri**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"There are no love charms, Love comes its own way."**

**"They get us feel intimidated of love, not of hatred."**

**"Love topped all religions."**

**"When it comes life, he is the philosopher, But he missed all lessons on love."**

**"A heart in love becomes a saint, a rogue, an outcast."**

**"When in love, things taste different."**

**"I love you today, too."**

The female lover wrote:

"Cancer was not that generous as I thought it to be. It intensified its torture until pain grew unbearable that it could no longer be treated in a way as diplomatic as my way was. It could not be handled by the logics of ascetics, Sufis, or storytellers. The pain in my breast and belly was too severe that I would cry as a grieving mother bereaving

her only son. My blouse got easily soaked up with the surprising amount of sub and fluids, mixed with blood, outpouring out of my nipples. My womb was bleeding heavily too. I lost a lot of blood. I felt drained. I felt nauseated all the time. I could barely leave my bed. Leaving my bed to the bathroom felt as a risk with so many consequences, all uncertain and unsafe.

Hence, I thought I should deal with cancer by the logic of the rulers in the time of state's collapse, a logic which I mastered during my days with the tyrannic traitors I slept with. I decided to plot against it, preaching the compact that we once signed. I flew to a country where medicine was advanced enough to make a good ally for me against the ferocious disease. It took me no time to implement my newscheme after I realized that storytelling and entertaining were not the right weapons to use at those hard times. I changed allies and reordered the priorities. I was the best to do whatever necessary in the waste land, where death was everywhere, and living chances were meager. I felt somewhat balanced. I became a traitor as all around me.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I am now at the end of the second quarter of my life. I am a lone in my battle against disease, poverty, and destitution. I was sentenced to death caused by extreme grief and fear. Yet, my path is clear, and so are my choices. I will fight for my womanhood. I have escaped my country which offered to cut off my breast and womb to cut pain. I need them. I still want a baby, and I still want to be a mother. Dahhak will be the father.

Lucky to have such an opportunity, offered to me by that sham writer, whom I wrote for. She became a popular writer by means of the stories I wrote by my pen that I victimized for the sake of a little bit of money. As a reward for my honest efforts to take her high to the worlds of literature, she put my name in the place of another woman, poorer than me, who had nothing to give to have some of her mercy. I did not mind it as it was too late for me to act honest. It feels too old-fashioned to act noble in this world, where countries are being stolen before us, who have not the least intention to fight for it.

No wonder I have done that as I have no alternatives. I must loot other's chances to survive. Why not to leave a poor woman die so I live? I am to fight cancer away from my country, where I smell rot and see cracks everywhere. "

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The female lover wrote:

"I warn myself to write that manuscript, not knowing exactly what will happen to me next. I have willingly started chemotherapy in a new way devised by the worshippers of science.

I feel confused, distracted, and imbalanced, swinging here and there in amidst of that decisive battle against cancer. I trust these eccentric doctors, who believe in science, yet they worship a god living in all living creatures, from the finest to the meanest."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"In the midst of intense agony of silent pain, I am wandering in the worlds of memories. I still remember the day I was stuck in my seat just close to the window on the left side of the airplane wing, making its way to that strange country. On that day, I kept drawing lines and shapes, representing the nothingness that I felt deep into my soul. I spent hours and hours drawing until a herald announced the arrival at our destination. I looked at what I drew. It looked like the "mandala", in which a manly face silently stared at me.

I felt a sting in my left nipple. a cold wave of sub slid down, soaking over my shirt. The man's face in the mandala filmed itself over my eyes that moment!"

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I forgot about the mandala face, and I focused on one thing – fighting cancer, which was way harder than I imagined. I bled heavily. My womb was to be cut off my body as the doctors decided to save my life as they decided. They did it without even asking me about as I fell in a coma due to losing liters of blood."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Life will not stop laughing at me. Ironically enough, of all doctors there, Dr. Tayyem Jazeeri was the doctor who led the operation? Dr. Jazeeri, the best doctor in the country, was summoned to do the operation for me after I fell in the damned coma. He decided the operation at once after a quick diagnosis upon his arrival.

He saved my life yet killed my womanhood. Of all men on world, he was singled out to do that for me! Chopping off my womb and throwing it into the trash of human remains.

Bedridden in a brightly lit award, I felt like my soul wandering in the bitch-black void, where defeat resided. All were guided by the light of happy days. All cheerfully cherished the victory of goodness over the evil, except for Bahaa, the little girl, who remained stuck in autumn years infinitely. She could hear temples' bells ringing at a distance to declare the coming of the new year, carrying the happy promises for lucky souls."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"When I came of sedation, I was clear-headed. The first thing coming into my mind was that fact that I had lost the most important requirement for a female to be a woman, her womb. I felt hollow like a bottomless beautiful cup. I would never be filled with the seeds of life. I would never be a mother for Dahhak's children, as I wished before."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"At those times, I had one crazy idea, that was- walking naked in the streets of the city to bring all men, emperors of sex, to prove one thing to myself, that was, I, even though wombless, was still attractive in a way that would hurt men. Unable to put my crazy idea into action as my body could not hold my up, I decided to follow the ways of the

tyrannies in politics such as the policies of "denazification" and "crisis-migration". I decided to invite my men to my bloodstained bed at hospital. I wanted that for myself - one last retribution for my non-existent womanhood."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"The last thing I remember was that manly face I saw while on the plane before the unfortunate disaster. I solicited him: "sleep with me". But, the face disappeared, and I slid down into a giant loop, where I felt something good, tickling my soul. Inside the loop, I glanced the figure of a man, the man of that face, wearing some exotic outfit, decorated with golden lines all over. There was a crown of diamond on his head, and gold rings ornamenting his elegant fingers. He looked like a prince of an unknown era, and I felt like his princess. I had a glimpse of myself wearing a beautiful long golden dress. It was long, yet it did everything for my body.

I could recall the dream after I woke up. I could remember all details, ecstatically joyful. He did not talk to me, but he was singing in a language strange to me. I understood nothing of it, but I felt it all."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I fell asleep again. When I woke up, I saw the prince standing in front of me. He drew a smile, which was a blend of humor, intimacy, admiration, and astonishment.

All at once, the dream filmed over my eyes. My face reddened when I remembered my awkward solicitation. I felt naked for a moment. My eyelids shook a bit then closed."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"When I saw Dr. Jazeeri, wearing his traditional outfit, I realized that my youthful dream was being rendered true. He was the prince I often saw in my dreams. He was strutting around like he was. I felt a great desire to stamp a kiss on his full lips to make sure he was real. His figure merged into Dahhak's face for a moment, as if two figures became one.

Could he be a replication of Dahhak's soul?

I like the way I reasoned the whole thing, which fitted my mixed-up feelings. I felt a part of him too. Yes, he was a replication of Dahhak's soul!

I believed that what happened was not a mere accident. To me, an accident was but a randomly purposeful gesture

from fate. Cancer, that vicious traitor, might be the medium that pushed me to that far land, where I was deemed to meet that prince wearing fanciful clothes."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"My questions could be resolved by one and only one kiss. That moment, my hypotheses would become facts. I needed to kiss him to taste Dahhak's lips, which I was the expert to recognize the taste of.

I announced my desire to him. His face changed in doubts. He thought I was still sedated, which I was not. I reasoned my plea in a way that related to his spirituality, which directed him to think over the redhead woman, hallucinating non-stop after her womb was taken away from her without her permission.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"When a childless woman loses her womb, she loses her chance to be a demigoddess able to shoot off everywhere. She loses her chance to be divine. She is left with no options but to run after trivial human desires, weak and transient. She becomes just a human being that can fade away at any moment, without living the clear and ecstatic moments of divine manifestations.

What could be worse than having your womb uprooted by the love of your life, depriving you of your only hope to be a mother of a child, a blend of their existence and their sacred sexual act, borne of the eternity of cosmos.

Knowing his role in my heavy toll, Dr. Jazeeri fell silent, soundly draping his eyelids over his mysterious eyes. He opened his eyes, and as a hermit saying his prayers in a cave, whispered to me: "I love you. I have found you, finally". He followed the prayer with a kiss on my forehead."

## **The 25<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Seventh life**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"Evil spirits are cursed; they are never in love."**

**"Love is God's blessing for the good until they come back to Him."**

**"When you mimic the beloved, be sure that they preceded you to that."**

**"When you betray your heart, you stab your soul."**

**"When you betray the beloved, you actually betray yourself."**

**"Love is a sign of a good heart."**

**"A woman accepting a man's help is her way to acknowledge his manliness."**

The female lover wrote:

Flatly, Jazeeri rejected my hypothesis about her past love incarnated in him. He was sure that he had reached the seventh and final stage of his life, and so did I. We met to



resume the love we lived in the earlier six stages of our life. He believed that we were in the seventh stage, a stage just before the "Nirvana", where we would be merged into the immortal.

I like his reasoning though it hurt me that it resulted in demolishing the idea of Dahhak, the love of my love. So, I adapted Jazeeri's hypothesis the way it would not ruin the dream that I had been living for all the years passed. So, I secretly kept attached to my theory as it made my love to Dahhak more logical. I could not afford losing Jazeeri as he was my last chance to cherish the rest of my life next to my love before leaving that brutal place called "life".

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Jazeeri was not only an intelligent doctor popular in the field of curing breast cancer but also a walking encyclopedia and a giant mass of fiery feelings. It felt logical to me that he had lived six lives before. He was as if made up of layers of lights, each enlightened the space of the other.

Jazeeri was a top-quality solipsistic writer when it came to literature. He kept his writings for himself and never published for the other. He only published papers and books in his medicine though. He mastered six languages,

let alone the branching dialects. He was also well-versed in ancient as well as modern philosophies, mythologies, dogmas, and sects. He read all about parapsychology, metaphysics, natural and applied sciences, music, drama, and folklore. He was a good critic of various literary genres, including poetry, and classical as well as modern prose. He got a lot of international awards for his writings on peacemaking, humanitarianism, and communications among peoples of diverse races and cultures.

He always introduced himself as a multi-faith person. Every time he was asked about his faith, he would give the inquirer a smile that covered his face, even his eyes which always seemed to sink in an ocean of eternal grief, then read them some of Ibn Arabi's verses:

I had denied a companion for his faith,  
But now, my heart embraces all,  
A deer running in the prairie.  
A hermit worshipping in a shrine,  
A pilgrim circumambulating Kaaba,  
A temple of stone idols,  
Or a holy Quran or a Torah into the hands of worshippers.  
I owed it all to love,

My only religion,

My only faith.

Whenever I inquired about what lied behind his grieving eyes, he recited Ibn Madani's:

My liver sored for love.

Who can sell me one, unscathed liver.

No one!

Who does that anyways?

Trading for the diseased one!

Moaning with pain,

Of longing,

ravaging all over my body.

My heart would be humming the melodious notes of the verses he read, dismiss my bitter thoughts before I got struck by unfortunate speculations.

Once, after reading me some Arabic poetry, he asked me after a long silence: "You write poetry? Or prose? "

I was about to confess that words were my murderer, but I pulled back, nodding my "No". I prayed that I would live happily ever after, instead of writing my pains on paper.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Jazeeri embraced all religions and chose all paths, all leading to the Divine. He would even sometimes, overzealously for the sake of argument, play the role of the non-believer. Though a harsh debater, he was a lover, a man of so purely good nature, whose character was marked with an acute sensibility to the least forms of imbalance. Cruelty was not a word in his dictionary. He did not eat meat, except for fish. He was an ascetic, eating little that kept him alive. He abstained from all forms of extravagance and followed the rule of simplicity in everything. He, a thinker and an experimenter, was a nomad, wildly scouring the globe far and wide to hunt for knowledge. After the trials, he would return to his village, two centuries away from ruthless modernity of our age, where he would curl up in his mother's lap – the worshipper, who knew nothing of life's secrets but all about the Divine.

To me, the ability to forgive was the most peculiar of his fine qualities. He could even find a virtue in the hearts of the most depraved. He approached the divine truth the way

he felt right. He was the epitome of all philosophies, which aspired to permanently reconcile with the highest Truth.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Jazeeri, the prudent doctor, knew that I was not going to stand up long against cancer; yet he, the sensitive lover, believed that love, only love, would save my life. For months had his youthful love tended upon me. I felt overwhelmed as it was my first time that I felt I was not alone. I forgot cancer. I forgot all pains. Cancer's business in my body declined, and I restored my body back.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Jazeeri contended, strenuously but humbly, that he had known little of everything except for in love and sex of which he proudly but warmly, boasted to be the master. During his dwellings around the world, he invested most of his time to sleep with as many women as he could as if he was trying to break the record as the top in freeing fair maidens of their virginity and vying with ladies versed in sex. When it came to sex, he loved to intensify its exotism by embracing all races on his bed. He slept with women of all races. In tight times, he would sometimes invite two or three women to his bed at one time, so he would not miss

the joy of the experience. He never hired a prostitute as he bet on their purity which diabolic humans stained with their unspeakable lusts. He even bowed when they passed by him as if great goddesses, above all forms of defilements.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

The only time Dahhak made love to me was when we, Jazeeri and I, slept up on the top of a snowy mountain. It felt like in a threesome, like a multiple orgasm, in one lap. Full of exotic irregular rites, a thing not so much strange to me, sex was great and surprisingly unruly. That was the only occasion I had sex with desire, infinitely exquisite. Physical sensations made a tunnel through which I passed to the real, the Nirvana, like that of a hermit's who could reduce the world into a few seconds of ultimate pleasure. The feeling took a root in my once-pulseless heart, rejuvenated, that I forgot my truth, my incomplete femininity, my disease, and my whole history. I felt my body boiling while he slid into it that I felt snow melting down under my frozen thighs. It was his choice that we melted into each other on snow, new and soft. Fully naked we lied there, humming after the worshipper's hymns echoing far away out of the temple on the other side of the mountain. We had rented a cottage for two months before snow melted into pure water running down to the depth of

the green valleys. For two nights in a row, we stuck our bodies to each other, not caring for the bitter cold wrapping up the place. Every time I asked him to let me put on something to warm up my body, he pulled my even closer to his and said, smiling: "As long as we are naked, we are just newborn, innocent creatures. Let it be, please."

I was not as red as I used to be as most of my hair fell out after multiple chemo sessions. Yet, I felt I was being born to see the light of my seventh and last life on earth.

Every morning, I woke to Arab songs, intoned by a voice, low and calm, yet withal, solemn and reassuring. Perching on the mountain top, he sang, so valleys and streams sung back, gradually evolving into a kind of a chant, so immense that it wrapped up the universe. Dahhak was there with us every moment there, sharing the pleasure of the adventure.

The three of us laughed when I slipped on snow. Both, Jazeeri and Dahhak, lifted me up.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Jazeeri was not into the classic ways of love. He fashioned love his way. He knew all his ancestors' love hymns. He wanted to leave a trace of our love over every inch of the earth, which he thought of an immensely infinite thicket of green trees, mythical and immortal.

He insisted that I went with him in his quest around his immense country, which with him I flew over, not caring about my sick body. As nomads, we went around, renouncing all pleasures, but love.

For the first time in my life, I felt free, fearless, and happy, untainted by thoughts of death, deprivation, or despair.

I saw nobody but him, and I understood no language but his. In his country, people spoke hundreds of languages, which overwhelmed me in a moment that I almost lost Dahhak among the crowds.

We reached a godforsaken village, plunging deep into primitive times. It traded with no currency. Jazeeri traded his ruby ring with a handmade golden comb for me to use it when my hair would grow again. I stopped him as I knew how dear the ring was to his heart. He told me once that the ring was what was left to him after his father's death.

I was his little girl. He never said "no" for the things I asked for, whatever weird they were. He danced with me under heavy rain, made love to me over flowers, showered with me under hot falls springing from the heart of stones, swam naked that summer night, and took me to all temples, where we could gain God's people's blessings.



Because of him, life got more affectionate to me. With him, I deserted the flashy insecurity of my lost femininity. I stopped my habit of keeping adjusting my hat whenever breeze ran over my bald head. I stopped feeling my breast and belly whenever I saw a pregnant woman passing by me. I was a purely happy woman in her late forties. My feet touched the happy valley.

Jazeeri spent a lot of money to make us two similar necklaces made of pure gold, with our names carved on both.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Jazeeri loved doing Arabic accents. He would do it in an exaggerated manner to make me laugh. He would even talk dirty to me using Arabic words he learned during his visits to Arab countries. He had an immense pleasure whenever my giggles, melded into my feminine husky-voiced gasps of exclamations, poured into his ears. He would in jest ask me to sing for him, who judged that I could sing. I would surely skip the request, a thing he would not let go for a while, unabashedly bandying around, before he surrendered and started to sing in poor Arabic to make us laugh. Dahhak laughed too though I often ignored his presence.

Every evening, I curled up in his lap, as that of a hermit's, as a little tired kitten, sleeping after an eventful day. He would lower his head close to my ears, playfully asking: "Have you fallen in love with me?" . "I have, naughty!", I answered, lifting my head a little to reach his lips, which mine would stamp a quick lazy kiss. "I am yours, my love!".

\*\*\*\*\*



## **The 26<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Last Life**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"I am watching you."**

**"Love is a drive."**

**"Love makes life a believable idea."**

**"Those who never fall in love miraculously escaped happiness."**

**"A man, bereft of love, is in some ways conquered."**

**"The more love gets radical, the more it proves the lover's sincerity."**

**"It is never too late to fall in love."**

The female lover wrote:

"The East was on fire, which came after capital cities, one after another. People got frantic about the hurly-burly of politics. It felt as if the Doomsday, having been heralded for ages, and people had been standing on the elevations in between the Garden and the Hell, waiting for their Lord to

decide their final destiny, to be the inhabitants of the Garden or the inmates of the Fire.

Whatever! It would not matter whether I was in a village or a city. Cities, villages, the world... all places had left me the moment I first opened my eyes. My heart, my hopes, my love were kept in or for no place, so no tears were to be shed for any. I was just some devilish thing which had to do nothing with anything or anybody. I was nothing more than a bastard raised in some vile orphanage. I came to understand then that all countries in the East were just huge orphanages, where dignity, hope, and kindness had no place in.

Unlike me, Jazeeri was so captivated by the magic of the East, about which he diligently got himself updated, proudly reading the news in Arabic, without any difficulty whatsoever. As for me, I was totally the opposite; I did my best not to know anything or to remember anything about the country which did not acknowledge my existence.

Anyways, I cared for nothing that time, but to live forever with Jazeeri .

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I so wanted to tell him all about my life, but I pulled back when he talked about his. That moment, I chose lies over

the truth as I could not afford losing the title he bestowed upon me, "The Princess of Arabs", while I actually was just a bastard among thousands there. I so utterly falsified all facts about me. I made him believe that I was of a high-born family, of an ancient maternal and paternal aristocratic lineage. I claimed that I was born on the New Year, a day blessed with showers of rain, the day my mother's prophecy of giving birth to a beautiful redhead girl was fulfilled. I lied about my mother's dreams- the mother who I had never seen. I even lied about my visit to his country, which I justified as a vacation to relieve myself of psychological distress I suffered after chemo sessions. He took my lies as truths nonetheless, without a doubt ... the lowest. I reported false prophecy in a manner, so suave, so grandiose that made it as majestic as his, which he was told by an oracle he accidentally met in a visit to his small village. The oracle looked straighter into Jazeeri's eyes for a while, and he then muttered: "Knowledge is your fate. Knowledge was what you were born for. Knowledge will be your wings up to the highest skies. "

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"About a year passed. I have spent it all with Jazeeri. I have improved. Cancer has ebbed into remission in both breasts.

I should return to my big orphanage, the world I belong to, but I could not help it. I do want to live life happily, as it is supposed to be, to the last day of my life.

Yet, he is as silent as a graveyard. He does not ask me to stay whenever I talked about my departure, which is alarmingly approaching. It bugs him, but he does not talk.

He rendered all my dreams true. With his love and care, he speeded up the healing process; I felt no pain anymore. He made me his company to all events he attended. We prayed, laughed, sang, and even went along with the marriage thing we played at that temple on the top of the holy mountain.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Jazeera's village was a totally primitive place, situated on a small island on water. He told me that he would feel purged of whatever had polluted his body and soul whenever his feet stepped on its holy earth. Once there, he would take off his fancy suit, tailored in Western style, and slide his ridiculously expensive Italian loafers away under his ancient wardrobe. He, bare feet, would be strutting around the house, wearing a white linen garment. Whenever he got out to wander in the fields, his names would be coming through everything down to the valley,

echoing back as a song when all people proudly greeted him using his name, which they loved and boasted about. Why not feel proud of him? He could jump out of the muddles into the world medicine, a thing that made a name for his unknown village, which came to be associated with his name.

He was the luckiest, the noblest, the most intelligent, and the most charming of them all. He knew how to hunt for opportunities too.

He could be outwitted by the least cunning opportunist though. In his tender years, he was of a good - an utter novice, easily deceived. His friends, taking advantage of his kind heart, robbed most of his money. His close friend, a sworn enemy, ruined his chance to get a scholarship at one of the most prestigious medicine schools in Britain. The so-called friend did not submit his application to the university as he promised. Jazeeri passed up the golden opportunity and had to pursue his study at a national university, where he made a lot of enemies because of his unsurpassed intelligence.

One of those enemies was a student, who knew that Jazeeri, the intelligent medicine boy, would make a good husband, the cash cow, for her. She tricked him into loving her, and they got married very quickly. The trickster gave birth to two girls and a boy before robbing his house and bank



account. During those bitter times, jazeeri descended unto a greater woe that blew over all others, among which was his step-brothers' despicable act of seizing the money his father left for him before death. His stepbrothers bonded against him, the only son of their stepmother, taking over all he had and dumping him and his mother by the roadside as dogs.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jazeeri hated hunting as he was always a prey. He did it few times in his life. His first time was the nastiest of all. One beautiful morning, his friends and he raced to rape a little girl, who was walking away in the field to relieve herself as there was no bathroom in the house. He, coerced, was the first one to rape. He topped her to prove his manliness to his five friends, surrounded the rapist and the prey. He ripped her little organ. His organ was dripping the fresh blood of innocence. They left her behind, bleeding to death, indifferent of what might happen to her as they knew their deed would go unpunished. Who would question the deeds of the noblest in that far away village? He never did it again.

His most delicious prey was Bahaa. He loved her. He hunted after her. He kissed her. He let himself love the redhead with no conditions, with no complications.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jazeera had lust for the redhead. He was intrigued by her race, which he never tried before.

To tell the truth, he first topped the redhead to have something to boast about among his medicine friends.

Yet, he sank. He loved her really. He could not help it.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I foolishly thought that he took me to his village to let me be the closing part of his long history, but soon I found out that it was more about the joy of discovery.

Our visit was just a scene of a bigger play he drew in his mind. He just wanted to entertain his dear family with the exotic beauty of the redhead, a beauty they had never seen.

\*\*\*\*\*

In quiet moments, I could see intense grief in his eyes—something that was familiar to me. He was as if wishing to erase the past, his choices, wives, and women. Then, he would be able to crown me as the queen of his heart and soul.

I was sure that he would not dare do that. He jailed it inside and just walked about it.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"One hopeless moment, I asked him to burn my body after my death and drink my ash. He laughed so hard that his eyes filled with tears. He cried, and tears flooded over his cheeks. Next morning, we left the place. We took the train to the city. He kept talking philosophy. He talked about a lot, life, death, meeting, and parting before he pushed his body towards the window, where he talked in a muffled voice that I understood nothing but few words.

I comprehended nothing. I could not even tie the subjects he disorderly jumbled in front of me.

That journey was a long one. I stopped listening to him. I felt pain moving inside my breast. I did not care as the images of some wandering homeless kids filmed over my eyes.

I took my eyes off them, when Jazeeri's little sister's story jumped up in front of my eyes. It was a horrible story about a little girl who had her hands cut after she touched the skin of some rich boys. I remembered her body sticking to mine, shaking, to comfort me. She whispered into my ears: "We are all wretched outcasts here."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

Through the train's window watching cow herds grazing freely in the great silent grasslands, I remembered the hungry scattered in all corners of the globe. I envied cows over the glamorous life they lived. They were luckier than us, humans, whom had been tortured since the creation. A question then, like a pin, pumped into my ears: "What has come to people in the burning East? Religious and political conflicts had been raging in various parts of the East, where thieves and murdered were strutting around restlessly, and death became the dear friend of the innocent, children, heroes, and scientists.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Pain started to move deeper into my breast. I felt my soul suffocated while standing under the hot sun in front a pre-historic building, where we agreed to marry. A year ago, Jazeeri rooted out my womb. That day, streets were crowded with people celebrating one of their religious days. I did not see them. I just saw Jazeeri, with a wreath of orange flowers in his hand, approaching me, shyly but not reluctantly, making his way towards me and waving at me from a distance.

He was late, but I kept waiting. I was sure he would not miss our day. He would not lie to me. He would not let me down. The moment I would see his face I would be sure that he chose me over everything.

I had waited for long hours that day. People went back their homes. I was alone there. The night was half consumed. He did not come. I got extremely exhausted. I rose and headed to the nearest motel to spend the rest of the night there.

Next day, I booked a ticket to my country. I was broken, bankrupt, and disappointed. I was too broken but ready to tell him the truths of me. I was then ready to tell him about my stories with other men like him.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

I slept soundly that night. I saw him in a dream, a beautiful one. He was crying out: "I wish I could make it there. Don't resent me. Don't resent us. You are going to be fine. Life is just a sketch of a bigger play or a verse in an epic. The absolute truth has not to do with what we are or what we do. How small we are before the truth! We rise our heads up while we should bend. We bend while we should rise. Now, I need you to let me go away. I am returning to my world, wife, and children. They need me the most. We will meet. I am sure of it. If not, we can merge into one."

Terrified, I woke up, raving: "We will never meet again, Jazeeri", I stammered, "As you told me it is our seventh and last life, right?"

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"It felt a year to the airport. Before I got on the plane, I hung the necklace he gave me around a statue erected in the middle of the terminal. I moved on."

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"On the plane, I needed to do nothing but to sleep. I closed my eyes. The last thing I saw was the figure of Jazeeri , riding in a chariot pulled by a half-naked man with his feet bouncing over the burning ground through the ancient city streets. Jazeeri kept cooling himself a straw-woven fan in his right hand, prompting the poor man to hurry up so that he could make it to a lecture about human rights.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"I turned the key and opened the door wide. Standing. Looking around. Nothing was waiting me except for cancer, staring at me with a mouth wide open as if making fun of my attempts to escape him. He was rapturously

gloating over my trust in Jazeeri, whom I foolishly thought to be my last anchor where I would live happily ever after.

I piled up on my bed. I did not take off my clothes or shoes. I wanted to sleep. I wanted to dream. I wanted to see Dahhak.

\*\*\*\*\*

The female lover wrote:

"Jazeeri, my love, God loves words, which He gives as a reward to the chosen ones, among whom we are, I believe.

"My words are to tell you how great my love is for you. Why in the shape of stars? Stars, as mentioned in heathens' myths, are thought to be the incarnations of the souls of the loved ones who have left us behind. They say that the dead are watching us from above, lightening our paths. When I die, I want you to look at stars. I will be one of them, remember always that I will be your guardian, days and nights."

## **The 27<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Manuscript**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"A great person can never be satisfied."**

**"A good heart is always mournful, always anxious."**

**"Those who proud themselves of being forgetful have never been sure about anything."**

**"Love is just like faith; it soothes hearts."**

**"I am only sure of my eyes, nothing else."**

**"Love is our real mother, indeed!"**

**"Love cracks the door of the paradise."**

The female lover wrote:

"Back from the world of wonders, I as if secretly snatched one wonder in my pocket –that is, though I was extremely down that I felt I would evaporate anytime, I could breathe.

After Jazeeri, I just cared about my physical being that time. I busied myself responding to the primitive needs of my human being - eating, drinking, sleeping, and passing



dirt out of my fragile body. I cut hopes. I stopped anticipating the time appointed for happiness to come. I stopped waiting for Dahhak, who left my soul behind. What could a defeated woman like me give for a man, so accomplished like him. He might even have completely undermined our past long time ago.

After Jazeeri, I would never think of taking a man as my resort. They had been all abandoners, and all around me had been so. I would only run to myself. I myself would be my only resort until I faded away. I would never picture us, Dahhak and I, together. I would never dream of his hand approaching mine. Whenever pain attacked me, I would dance about it."

\*\*\*\*\*

Years had passed, alone in my little apartment, filled with blue memories I created by my own foolish hands. I dropped out of life, and I hid myself behind the door. I was left with few people. Huda, my close friend, accompanied me through my journey with cancer, which as usual came without invitation. I did not mind his presence though. I even welcomed him that time as he kept a ticket for me to leave this dirty world.

Cancer promised me a quick death, so I decluttered my skull for him. For my liberal hospitality, he showered me with his blessings, and he was the expert in that. He even

helped me to clear the space for him. He broke the rusty chains of ungracious memories, disgraceful histories, unpleasant destinies, and bad lucks.

He turned to be my friend, the most gracious, the most merciful. He wormed himself through and out the subtle nets of my past. My sorrows were deported, thrown into the void. Fully satisfied, I was watching his artistic arts of vandalism he practiced into my brain. What a great being cancer was? He could rip out sixty years of my life in no time. I just needed to recall the memory, which he at once would jump to smash it in his invincible iron fist. In his pastimes, he worked as a gravedigger, digging deep into my unspeakable pains. He would make V sign after ruining each, upon which I would nod him my "well-done". Doctors stood perplexed about the pace cancer worked into my memory. I secretly waved him for more of his artistic workings.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dahhak sat next to the pile on the bed. She had been sleeping for a year and a half so far. He felt as tired as she was. Few pages were left for him to read for her. After that, he had no clue what would become of him. He was scared to death. What if she did not wake up with the last word read from the manuscript? He forced his mind to weave an image of her waking up to read the last words herself.

The female lover wrote:

Cancer, my dearest friend, seemed very excited about rooting men out of my memories. He hammered most of their past, leaving very few that I remembered little about. They all with no exceptions became passersby. Just like enemies and traitors, running down into the void, as Sardi described their path.

One and only one man's face was left there in my head, that was, Dahhak's. Was it that cancer feared him? His childlike face was still clearly stamped on my ruined memory, except for some slight changes I made after I saw his picture on a book cover on my translator friend's library.

What was the name of that man or that man? Theirs were all on the tip of my tongue but I could not get any. My heart was unyoked of their names, their past deeds, and their glories over me. My heart was only for ne man, my Dahhak.

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The female lover wrote:

"Strangely, I dreamt that I ran away to Dahhak's place, up in the lofty mountains springing up through the thickets. He had the same face of the boy I loved at the orphanage. He had the same eyes, the same complexion, the same sharp

nose of the noble, except for the white hair covering his head as a summer cloud. He became a big boy with white hair like that of saints. He shunned away from me. He even reproached me, saying: "Get off my face. You are not my Bahaa. My little redhead girl died long time ago. Her soul is still jailed in that forsaken orphanage."

He rejected me as I expected. It was no good to dream being with him, so I decided to go with cancer wherever he wished to go.

\*\*\*\*\*

It is the last page of her manuscript. Conquered, he is reading with tears sliding all over his cheeks, lips, collar, as if racing to commit a suicide. He last words are about death. He feels as if the chords of his hearts are being cut one after another. He is looking at her face; he finds a soul ready to leave quietly.

"Why have you done that to us?" he is pleading.

"I have been waiting for you!"

"Why haven't you trusted us?"

"You just decided to go away. Look at us. Two poor souls: one jailed in the worlds of oblivion and the other is jailed outside. What to do now? Please wake up. Have mercy upon our poor hearts."

He stood up, half naked, in front of the fireplace, He fed the young fire the whole manuscript at once. Relieved, he kept watching the flames devouring it until reduced into a fragile punch of ash in few minutes.

He felt relieved as he did not panic upon the idea of Bahaa's disappearance. Her dear words just died. He made her novel words in their joint novel. He got their names printed on the cover too as authors. He paid to the publisher a lot to speed things up. He wanted him to do it in a month because he believed that she would be awake then to launch together the publicity ceremony for their novel. He would never let her down.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **The 28<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Departure**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"They made us believe that life was just the breathes we could take."**

**"A loving heart is worth fighting."**

**"Any dream is a great one."**

**"He is a galaxy, time, and resurrection."**

**"He could be the prophets of the revolutionary."**

**"Everywhere I can see your face. Tell me, are things just delusions like your face?"**

**"Love is just like faith. Both should be renovated; otherwise, they fade away."**

Two years had passed since she fell in her sleep. He deserted life. He spent most of his days sitting on the floor just near her bed. He would get up only to nurse her. He kept watching her face, waiting for a blink or any sign of life. But she was as silent as a graveyard. She shrank into a little bite, quite easy for death.

He had read their novel to her so many times, every time hoping that she would wake up after he finished reading it. Alas, she could not relate to his pain, to his calls.

His hair and beard looked like they have been locked up for ages. His face grew paler. His eyes looked meaningless. His soul felt as if drifting away of life towards death.

His two friends looked at his sad face as if eclipsed by the great pains he came through all years.

One dared, though with ambivalence, to say, with a sympathetic but reproaching tone: "Dahhak. It is the time for her to leave this world. She has had enough of pain. It is the time for her to get the eternal rest. She is just hanging in between life and death!"

Encouraged by his friend's bravery, the other friend approached him, saying: "You should let her leave. She is breathing just because you insist on it. "

He kept silent, looking at her face that shrank to a degree her cheek bones were about to rip their way through the thin layer of flesh.

Barbara hugged him from behind, supporting her head on his back, which got bonier recently. Crying, she pleaded: "I beg you. let her leave. I will be always there for you. I will never leave you. She wants to leave. Let her leave. I beg you."

Dahhak did not say a word. He pushed her away, heading to Bahaa's bed. He hugged her, pressing her little body against his and mumbling incomprehensible words.

\*\*\*\*\*

For the entire day, he had locked himself up in her room, not allowing a soul to interrupt his solitude. They thought he was saying good by to his love.

Entirely undisturbed, Bahaa was lying as the dead would do in graves, while he put the rest still being of her origami collection. He read:

"God is the greatest love."

"Hell and heaven are two faces of the coin of love."

"How dumb are those who leave one love to wait for another."

"Love is not a ghost to fear; it is instead a flowery path we covet to walk in."

"A dream is just a potential reality."

"Love is actually the beloved."

"He is great as he sees through his heart."

"A new day ... a new hope for and in love."

"An idea is useless unless executed."



"Those who teach cruelty are those who can bear pain."

"Justice is never an idea. It is a motion, a word, or even a breath of anger."

"We grow cleaner when we are in love. Why?"

"A sacrifice is an act of a voluntary stupidity."

"Follow the traces of love, you then find the heaven."

"Madness is everywhere, even at madhouses."

"On heaven door is scribbled: No."

"The more human you are, the more alienated you feel."

"This life is just for the meanest."

"The more honest time is when a heart beats out of love."

"Emotions cannot be scheduled. "

"The bond of blood is a big lie. Love bonds us all."

"When you just cannot stop talking to your lover, you are really in love."

"I love questions."

"I am locked up inside my body."

"Set me free."

"He needs a thousand lives to fit in his wide soul."

"Time gets more precious when in love."

"How come a life has passed with no happy moments."

"Love cleanses souls, whatever cursed, whatever sinful."

"Finally, I have a reason to be alive for."

"Tomorrow is the doomsday. No need to worry."

"When I close my eyes, I see him."

"Whenever you come into my mind, my soul kneels down."

"I am more beautiful because of you."

"God loves lovers."

"Lovers are semi-prophets."

"Humanity scribbled history with blood, why not with love? "

"They know you are different, and that's why they torture you."

"Love makes us humans."

"Love sets us free."

"How cursed is this world. People proud themselves of hatred and get shy of love."

"Read me some verses of love upon my soul."

"What's life without love."

"The only story I believed when I was a child was the story of the Prince Charming."

"Hearts are temples, and selves are mighty trees."

"His name is what I took out of men's world."

"Whenever afraid, I repeat his name."

"He claims he cannot dance. Why then all dance upon his coming?"

"His mother loves him because she delivered him to this life. I love him because he delivered me into it."

"Love lays bare our language, our souls."

"Cursed is that who slaughters love."

"Why we love who don't make us happy?"

"Satan often becomes solely responsible for lovers' affairs. "

"Love is hearts' spring. What is its winter then?"

"Love is a murderer, a sweet one."

"If our death is our destiny. Let it be by the hands of love."

"How delicious is the forbidden fruit of love."

"A man was dumped out of paradise for his stomach, had he been dumped for love?"

"God is the most just appraiser of love. He promises to unite lovers on the day of judgement."

"God will punish us for all sins but the sins of love."

"There are two kinds of hearts: hearts that love and hearts that don't deserve love."

"I wish my success was estimated by counting the number my envious enemies."

"They say: when we die, we become God's neighbors. Who are ours now?"

"They say: if trying love, Satan will become an angel."

"People are a piece of art- they fear love, not hatred."

"A great love is just like translucent glass, easily cracks."

"The idea of love remains just an idea unless put into action."

"A loving heart is smart; it is never fooled."

"A loving heart recognizes its peers."

"A broken heart calls: love whomever you choose. You will resent it after all."

"I wonder: how was he before he turned into a human?"

In the following morning, with the sun rays coming through the windows to touch the cold floor of the living

room where Barbara and his two friends, half asleep, all lying on the couches, he opened the door. They all got up as if emerging out of graves, looking at his face which turned blue as that of a mommy sent over from the abyss. Silently, they kept watching the ghastly figure of his. Holding his hands out, with his palms up, he said: "There are still a lot of origami stars that I haven't read her yet! "

\*\*\*\*\*

Their eyes, wide open, were following his figure while sluggishly staggering under the lights of crystal chandelier, at which he looked as if seeking for some of its light. He then started to dance as a wounded canary hitting the bars of its cage before its soul departed the world. He danced until exhaustion. He fell. His body slammed to the floor. He arched his body up a little, but it failed him. Then, he pushed his body towards the old forsaken piano. He supported his body up to the stool and leaped up. Desperately, he adjusted his body a little. His shaking fingertips lighted up, reaching out to the keys. As if directed by his fingers, he played a nameless piece of music, so epic, so victorious.

\*\*\*\*\*

For hours, he had played until he was not able to move a finger. His last notes sounded like the last rain drops after a hail. With the last note, his head pumped the keys as if to

give a descent closure for his piece. The ivory keys dripped with his unstoppable tears.

All were anxiously waiting for him to wake up. Strangely, they were sure that time that he would wake up to declare his permission to unplug the devices to set her poor soul free.

\*\*\*\*\*



## **The 29<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Detention Camp**

**It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:**

**"I can tell lover's breaths from other's even in the dark."**

**"A heart beating of love can avenge itself with cruel silence."**

**"Lovers are the last survivors of the kingdom of love."**

**"Does light cleanse souls or only uncover them?"**

**"Had we been created as transparent as glass, we would have seen the amount of pain in each other."**

**"He smiles in spite of his sorrows."**

**"Souls are free, and that's why they can confer themselves to whomever they choose."**

He woke up in the middle of the night. The piano's keys perched in the edge of his right cheek. Tears, as his soul, dried. His heart was barely beating. His neck was stiffened. He opened his eyes. He saw nothing with his injured eyes. He reached his hand down into his pocket to make sure that the origami stars were still there.



They were all sleeping. His suffocating breaths did not wake a thing there. Broken, he walked out of the room up to the stairs through the dark alley to the bedroom. He was directed by the dim light tilting out of Bahaa's room. He stopped for a while thinking of reading the rest of origami stars left in his pocket before sunrise. He loosely put his hand on the doorknob, but he took his hands away, walking away to his room, where darkness perched there since ages which he pierced through with few different steps inside. He could hear silence until it mixed with Barbara's gasps, walking into his direction from the back.

Like a predator, Barbara stuck to his back. He could sense the heart emitting out of her inflamed body. Her breath felt even hotter. She looked bigger than usual. He just could not fight back. She stuck her fingers through his silver hair, rubbing her face all over his beard down his neck. Without the least trouble, she worked her hands down his shirt, carefully unbuttoning it. She victoriously took it off his body. Like a child, he was guided by the grab of her hands to the bed. He just could not fight back. She threw him on the bed. He kept watching her swooping down. Her body settled on the top of him. Mooing like an angry bull just stuck his curved horns into the heart of a bare-chested matador.

He felt his heart stripped away from him. Defeated, he let her do whatever she wished with his naked body. She

tucked her body, smelled like Vodka, sweat, lust, and rot, next to his after she threw the last piece he was wearing away. It banged on the door and fell down the floor. She started kissing him again, with her lips heavily drooling all over. He dared hold her mouth as her moans filled the air. Yet, she kept screaming as if she got him finally. He surrendered. He just could not fight any woman that want to scavenge for sex, even if it was Barbara, who he abandoned since the day he found his lost woman.

Bahaa failed him, so all women were the same to him in the dark. Bahaa chose cancer over him, so Barbara could eat her fill from his body. At that time, nothing mattered, his soul, his present, and his future. Barbara reaped the fruits of his body which she had always been craving for. She was hungrily sucking as if punishing him for his long abandonment of her. He did not mind giving her the animalistic part of him. As for the rest, he shut his eyelids on them. He closed his eyes to escape the image of the animal on him to a place, far away to the frontiers of his soul, where he could plead for Bahaa to wake up and cry to cleanse him of the dirt stuck on him.

He could smell Bahaa's blowing upon his nostrils. Yet, she was not coming. She did not answer his calls. Barbara's moans pushed him further to the edge. His left hand struggled its way upon his chest as he did not want Barbara to touch his gold engagement ring.

That night, Barbara ripped his virginity he made brand new after he found Bahaa. He always fed his body to women scavengers, especially redheads. He often slept with Barbara, especially in his bouts of drunkenness. That night, Barbara ruined it all. She ripped his virginity apart, drinking his blood, and flattering his cold body with some heat that felt burning rather warming. He chose fire over ice. He let her scream as she did, hoping that some screams would sneak out through the dark alley to Bahaa's room, maybe to get her sleeping soul accosted. He wanted Bahaa to end the charade herself.

He smelled Bahaa again. She did not come to him. She agreed to leave him in Barbara's tyrannous hands. Satisfied, Barbara took a warrior's rest next to his absent body. She threw her head on his chest sticky with her saliva. She slept deep. His tears wetted her sticky blond hair. He cried over his raped body. He cried over his love unsheathed out from his soul.

His cheating body responded perfectly with Barbara's. It was an act of raping though. He did not wish it, nor did he look after it. He involuntarily used his male tools to get things done.

He became even with Bahaa. They both suffered the act of raping. He lost his body once while Bahaa lost it so many times that she could not name the rapers anymore.

Bahaa had her own way to bury the past. What about him? Would he be able to bury the past into his depths?

He thought he would, but he could not help it. Images kept filming themselves over his unsleeping eyes.

He was just a little boy when the old principal at the orphanage accused him of stealing money out of the so-called safe. She kicked him out of the orphanage into the streets, where he got arrested by some politician for treason as they claimed. He did not understand a word from them. He later found out that he was kept in a camp especially built for heroes who valiantly defended their country. It seemed that the politicians found it reasonable to let the little boy inherit his father's charge. It sounded just for them to punish the boy for his father's heroism.

In the camp, soldiers had been trained to methods of torture that nobody could endure. He tasted them all to admit what he did not do. He kept silent as one old prisoner told him to do, and he was the expert in that. He had always believed that silence would be his only way to survive there. He resorted to silence at the orphanage too. After a series of temptation from her side and resistance from his, the old matron, also provoked by his attempts to rebel against orders and incite other students to follow his lead, plotted to get rid of him. She could not resist his young body. She wanted to kiss that body to rejuvenate her wrinkled lips. So

many times, she tried to strike him, but he pushed her away. Insulted by his ingratitude as she thought it to be and afraid of scandal, she threw him outside. She claimed that he ran away after he took amount of money from the safe. Her barren assistant help prove the deed.

His mysterious silence intrigued the jailors, who took his clothes off, tied him up against the wall, and enjoyed his body organs the way they liked. They then beat him up as he did not respond to their caresses the way they expected. They hit him on the face until he felt the absolute darkness invading one of his eyes. That moment, he made a confession of what he never had the time to do. He even used names of some people he knew to make a believable deed, indifferent of what might fall upon them.

Days after the confession, he heard the screams of the newcomers next to his cell, most probably those of the people he falsely referred to in his confession. He did not feel guilt upon the pain he caused them not felt the least guilt about their wallows. All he cared about was to get out of the place, with at least one intact eye.

Like that which would happen in a fruity movie about suffering, he got out of the prison with the help of a rich cousin who heard about the son of a friend with whom he once fought the mercenaries attacking their village in the days when integrity was gained by blood. Bribing hell

guardians, Dahhak saw the light again, but with one eye then.

He ran to the rich cousin begging: "Take me out of here!."

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He did not believe his only eye when he sat next to his rich cousin on the plane, resting his bruised head on the cousin's shoulders. He felt the plane sparring the clouds to save him out of that barren land. His uncle a really fatherly totally serious tone: "You have no choice but to forget it all. Erase the memories of this cursed land forever! The coming is the wonderful part, believe me."

He acted as if born again, first to please his uncle, until he really forgot it all. He cared much about his well-being, most particularly his wounded eye. His uncle kept taking him to doctors until light came back to it. Yet, he felt darkness cloaking it from time to time, especially when it filled with tears.

His eye, which looked smaller than its peer, reminded him of the agonies he endured in the camp, but it did not remind him of the rape incident, as his body was crucified against a rough concrete wall. He did not see with his eyes but with his burning soul. He forgot what he was and got on with his life at his uncle's and his nice Greek wife's mansion.

Later, his life was full of joy. He enjoyed all comforts of the rich. He devoted most of his time for knowledge. He found out his hobbies, a lengthy list of them, such as dancing, singing, swimming, skiing, writing, playing music, acting, travelling around the world, hunting, exploring, and enjoying women of all races. His career as a writer took off in few years. He lived happily enough that he always repeated his famous statement: "I declare that I lived, indeed."

He squeezed all pleasures he craved for out of life, except for the pleasure of all pleasures, his only love, Bahaa.

At that moment, under the white body of Barbara was his body. He felt as if still in that camp and that his past was only a sweet dream that he just woke up from.

Barbara's body was purely white as those of the polar bears' he saw in a visit to Lapland people. Her whiteness sent him back there where large herds of caribou freely roamed, drawing beautiful patterns of prints on fresh snow, whose brightness would blind prying eyes.

Yet, white would not be red anyway. That white body was soiled with the dirt of luxury, while his beloveds was desecrated by human beasts who would throw her crumps to help her survive. She did what she did to live. She did it to have her legitimate revenge too. He could relate to her as

he had divided his body for women passersby and for camp jailers too.

That night he could even relate more to Bahaa's prolonged suffering. He at least lived some quality life while she never felt settled down. Life kept tossing her from one orphanage to another for no good reasons. Life made her a prostitute. Life made her a pimp. Life was a burden that yoked her strong body.

He wrote her a new life and sweet memories that better go with her sweet redness. Life did not care about it though.

Had she been with him that moment instead of Barbara, he would have thrown his head on her bosom to cry out his childhood burnt at the orphanage, on the streets, and in the camp.

Badly did he need her in his arms to tell her that he had lied all the time about his past. He told nobody about the orphanage, about the streets, and about the camp.

He mastered the art of lying. He told all that he was one in a series of "Amirs" of a noble dynasty in one of oil countries, and that his great grandfather had the largest of oil wells in the whole region before he lost it for a gambling game few years ago. He kept telling lies orally until he decided to write them down to make him one of the



most popular writers, not only in his snow country but also in the entire world.

That night, he did not want to remember his lies but the truths, and he did not want to dream of anyone but his sleeping love even though he was naked in the arms of that huge blond-haired woman who chewed his body and smothered his soul with her stinky smell.

He felt light going out of his injured eye. He felt his soul hurrying to one memory- that day when he brought his love home, carrying her into the room he ordered to be furnished especially for her. He could feel her soft skin slipping through his fingers, burning the fiery horses of his desire for her.

\*\*\*\*\*

He made a space between reality and dream in which he saw Bahaa stripping before him and inviting him to sleep with her. They did it. He could feel it. She fixed a lavender flower behind his ears, whispering: "I really want to go. Let me go, please. I am fed up."

Terrified, he opened his eyes. He looked around. He then left the sinful bed, walking naked to reach the chair nearby. He holds his trousers up and reached down into the pocket to get out all origamis there. He grabbed them tight into, lest that Barbara would crush them with her huge white body.

## **The 30<sup>th</sup> Forgotten Chapter**

### **The Past**

It reads on a sheet of Origami stars:

**"A kiss feels greater on lips so thirsty for love."**

**"A mind is not the highest, but instead the most skillful to export pain to others."**

**"Love is not greater than me."**

**"Love becomes a living being once a lover's heart beats."**

**"Whenever life grabs my soul tight, I think of you. Then, the world feels wider."**

**"Is love an earthly being or a heavenly one?"**

Dahhak's smile made Bahaa so incredibly happy during the publicity ceremony held for their first novel together. She got a brand-new memory, totally severed from the old one, completely erased by cancer. Her mind was as clear as a newborn's.

Her fight with cancer was of a unique style that amazed doctors, who declared that they had never seen a similar

case before. She had woken up the very morning when Dahhak finally decided to unplug life-support machines from her fading body.

Against doctors' expectations, Bahaa went back to life. Her body, having stopped working for two years in raw, functioned again with no support systems. Cancer packed up and went home. She just needed to take hormone medicine to stop cancer cells dividing, until her body totally recovered after a few chemo sessions she eagerly underwent. Her case was an exceptional one that intrigued doctors to search answers for.

She went back to life as a little girl but in her sixties, strutting around wearing a pink dress with her hair waving soft and lazy behind.

Proudly, she grabbed his arm during the ceremony. She would childishly giggle whenever he held her body softly to his and kissed her cheeks to smell her thin-skinned skin felt as that of a little kid.

Whenever she felt overwhelmed with questions about the novel, she would bury her head into Dahhak's chest and said with fear: "I don't know what they are talking about. Please, take me home."

He, along with his adopted brother, "Goerge Saleem", who came specially to share happy moments with his brother,

would laugh at her innocent fear. Dahhak was ecstatic with joy. His dream came true. She woke up half an hour before he had decided to let her go. She opened her eyes, like a little baby seeing his mother's face, and weakly said: "You are Dahhak. I know you." Upon seeing the scene, so miraculous, Barbara, along the doctor standing next to her, stared straight ahead, trying to believe the unbelievable. Barbara could not believe how happy Dahhak, who was lying as a dead man next to her the night before, looked as much alive as a new shoot in dead trunk.

\*\*\*\*\*

The lovers' novel was a hit. It became a bestseller and was translated into so many languages. It attracted wide media attention and received competitive offers to get it adapted into a feature film.

Their love story had gone viral. All the world knew the love story of "Dahhak and Bahaa", the lovers who won over life, death, oblivion, and separating destinies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bahaa did not understand what was going on, nor was she able to connect the dots in her new world. Yet, she would be bawling like a newborn whenever Dahhak hugged her while reading their novel to her before sleeping. Her cheeks would blush whenever he read on her the erotic scenes. She

would stick her body to his, from the head to the toes, innocently asking him: "When will we get married?"

"We will get married when you learn to read and write." Dahhak answered, fidgeting and grinning.

"And when I will learn to read and write?" She replied with another question.

"Very soon, my little girl. Very soon!

\*\*\*\*\*

That day, Dahhak laughed as if he never did when he saw Bahaa strutting around wearing a charming yellow dress after Barbara's leaving their house for good.

Bahaa did not ask Dahhak why Barbara left, but she danced around as a princess. She was the queen of his heart. Nobody made him laugh as she did.

Strangely that day, Bahaa did not seem as a little girl but as a little woman, a jealous one. She was as if celebrating her victory against the woman who wanted her dead one day to have her only love for herself.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dahhak left teaching for good too. He resigned following an extended leave of absence. He left everything behind to write and to love. Bahaa accompanied him everywhere he went. They had no time for the others. Even co-ed in the

shower soaping each other up. They would dry their dancing body. She even became his hair stylist.

He watched her growing up before his eyes. She was his spoiled girl. He showered her with gifts, new dresses, shoes, and accessories.

He, a man in his late sixties, lived with her young soul, as young and lusty as a teenager. He made good on his promise to get her out of the orphanage. He made her his queen exactly as they planned. They walked under rain again. They wandered in the open fields. They raced in the alleys between old houses in the heart of the city. They went to amusement parks, played games there, and had their lunch on a bench as they always dreamt. Together, they attended music and acting classes. They did and enjoyed all they could not do at the cursed orphanage.

Every night, he read her the same story of theirs, a different story filled with happiness. He skipped the orphanage part. He skipped a lot more.

On frigid winter nights whenever she asked for a moon as their summer moon was covered with freezing clouds, they would lie on the carpet in the piano room just under the huge chandelier and fix their eyes up to crystal balls, which were their moons as he convinced her to think of. They talked about their future while they were pointing at their moons, with their fingered tightly crossed.

Bahaa was not the only one who got her life back. He returned to life as a child too. He decided to live happily ever after. He surrendered to her heart's beats.

She did not even ask him about his injured eyes!

\*\*\*\*\*

Thanks to Dahhak, Bahaa learned to read and write in no time. Her handwriting looked as obscured it always was.

She was a fast learner too. She did not understand why her face looked as about old as Dahhak's though. She could not know why her hair was, unlike her peers, as white as Dahhak's.

She could not crack people's cryptic glances at her, nor did she understand why did Dahhak keep naming her the lady everywhere they went to.

\*\*\*\*\*

Living with him was full of happy details that, with days passing, her questions about her face and hair became less and less. They got married. They never consummated their marriage the conventional way people would do. He never touched her body as he wanted her to relive her childhood innocently. It was enough for him to smell her body and to enjoy looking at it. If it was about merging in one, their souls did it a long time ago. Their wedding party was a big one. People from all levels of society, politicians,

businesspeople, professors, journalists, and friends attended the big event. His adopted brother made the groomsman while Barbara made the bridesmaid.

\*\*\*\*\*

She wore a rosy dress she chose from one of the best fashion houses in the world. She was so happy with it. That happy girl was strutting around the guests as if she had never been dreaming of wearing a beautiful white dress for her groom, as if she had never been dreaming of carrying in her womb his lover's child.

Dahhak chose for her a flowery wreath. He wanted the glowing redness of her hair to challenge the dewy bright flowers. He wanted her to look like a goddess. Her picture made the new cover of his widely known book "Lover's Psalms".

\*\*\*\*\*

He offered her a new name to all cords tying her to the past, but she did not want to. Their names were the only happy part remained for them from the past.

He did not use his glasses anymore to hide his injured eye as it was filled with the light of love.

\*\*\*\*\*



The lovers are now drafting together their novel which tells the story of a lover who cannot save his dying beloved. She is now supported by life-support devices. Out of severe sadness, he falls in a coma to meet her in the void, where she is prisoned forever.

They are now wandering in the middle of the nowhere. They are the only moving beings there among piles of bones of prehistoric lovers.

Nobody knows where they are. All they know is that they can go away this evil world. They are just living their moments of love they have always dreamt of.

This is what Barbara writes in her bestselling novel, "Oblivion Saved her!" which has been sold in large numbers in the world of ice.

\*\*\*\*\*

In another novel, having the same name "Oblivion Save her!", Bahaa is still waiting for Dahhak, who has been in a coma for long years. He does not wake up though she spends all her time reading him their novel, which she has written for him hoping that a new story will help him return to life. He does not wake up though. She dreams of him opening his eyes out of blue, saying to her: "I know you. You are Bahaa!"

\*\*\*\*\*

In the cursed manuscript is scribbled: "In the end, Bahaa does not find Dahhak, so she devises a new Dahhak for herself out of her wide imagination. She keeps raving about him and their stories together. What is left of him is just a name in death records. His body is in a morgue of a hospital in the heart of the city. Nobody calls to get the body.

\*\*\*\*\*

A horror story transmitted by the orphans living in the basement tells the story of a wretched redhead girl and a loving boy buried in the ground just under their feet who are left to starve to death then are buried by the orphanage's matron.

\*\*\*\*\*

The least popular, though the most important one, says: "There are no definite details about anything. There are no truths. There are no lies. There are no pains, no memories, no waiting, and no coma. There is a little kid, of a brave heart named "Dahhak" and a beautiful little redhead girl named "Bahaa", who have loved each other since they first met.

There are no crucial details about their love story. They are still in love.

\*\*\*\*\*

After "The End."

In the distance appear two lovers, incredibly happy about their never dying love. Nobody knows their names or their history. The sun is sinking down into the bloody sea. Against the bloody horizon appear the silhouettes of two merging into one.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **The Beginning**

**I see you ...**

**Dr. Sanaa Shalan (bint Na'imah):**

is a Jordanian of Palestinian descent, she is writer, academician, and media personality, is widely recognized as a prominent figure in Arabic literature. She is often



referred to as "the Sun of Arabic Literature" and "the Lady of the Arabic Short Story." Her contributions to literature and her activism in various social causes have earned her international acclaim and numerous awards.

Dr. Shalan holds a Ph.D. in Modern Literature and Criticism with Distinction. She currently serves as an Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Jordan. Her prolific literary career has resulted in the publication of 75 works, encompassing novels, short story collections, children's literature, plays, travelogues, and comparative literature studies. She also has numerous published articles, essays, and regular columns in various Arabic publications.

Beyond her literary accomplishments, Dr. Shalan is a passionate advocate for human rights, women's empowerment, child welfare, and social justice. She serves as the Honorary President of the International Peace and Friendship Organization for the years 2023-2024. Her activism has led to her participation in numerous local,

Arab, and international conferences on literature, criticism, human rights, environmental issues, social justice, Arab heritage, human civilization, and comparative literature.

Dr. Shalan's works have been translated into multiple languages and have received critical acclaim worldwide. She has been the recipient of numerous international, Arab, local, and regional awards in the fields of novels, short stories, children's literature, scientific research, theater, travel literature, comparative literature, and media. Her plays have been performed on local and Arab stages.

Dr. Shalan's literary works have been the subject of extensive critical studies, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations across Jordan, the Arab world, and internationally. Her contributions to Arabic literature have established her as a pioneer and a role model for aspiring writers.

Dr. Shalan is a representative of many cultural and human rights institutions.

She is a partner in many Arab and international cultural and intellectual projects.

Her works have been honored with numerous awards, shields, honorary titles, cultural, community, and human rights representations.

Dr. Sanaa Shalan stands as a beacon of literary excellence and social activism. Her contributions to Arabic literature, her advocacy for human rights, and her dedication to social causes have left an indelible mark on the world stage. She continues to inspire and empower individuals through her writings and her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on society.

### **Contact Information**

**To connect with Dr. Sanaa Shalan (bint Na,imah), you can use the following contact information:**

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**Youtube: [sanaa shalan](#) (سناء الشعلان)**

## **Mushira Saleh Talafha:**

The translator Mushira Saleh Talafha chose to translate the novel *Oblivion Saved Her* by Dr. Sanaa Shalan from Arabic to English because she wanted to be the first to introduce this distinctive feminist Arab literary work to English readers worldwide. She saw in this work a unique narrative experiment that engages with experimentation and modernity in narrative techniques. Additionally, it presents a complex human experience of the oppressed individual in contemporary worlds, particularly in the Arab world. The novel achieves this through a combination of contemporary human alienation issues and the techniques of magical realism, while also utilizing the unique narrative style of the novelist.

Mushira S. Talafha is a committed academic with a strong background in English literature and translation studies. She holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and has earned two master's degrees—one in Translation (2011) and the other in English Literature (2020). Currently, she is pursuing her PhD in English Literature and Criticism at the University of Jordan. Since 2018, Mushira has been a valued member of the academic staff at the University of Jordan. Her scholarly work includes several published research papers on literary translation and literary criticism, demonstrating her dedication to these fields.





• I see you ...

ALTNOOR  
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ثقافة والفنون  
Culture and Art

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Sanaa Kamel Shalan