

# Mourning for the Knight



**Morteza  
Karbalaee**

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## Mourning for the Knights

One day, a worker of a petrol station who was patrolling among the gas pumps with his tough Russian boots and was giving back the changes of the drivers was recalled to the petrol station office in the middle of the winter coldness before it became dry and the temperature increased and the snow would not display anymore. He was told that there was no need to him. Before sunset, he got fired. Desperate, with his intact lunch plate, he went home with a butterfly in his stomach. Sunset arrived soon. Out of hopelessness, he went to his front neighbor to find sympathy with him. The neighbor advised him that disappointment is blasphemy and God determined everybody's portion. He himself would show you a remedy for the man's irresolvable problems. The heart-rending worker walked across the icy street,

smoked half of a cigarette before his door and threw its rest into kicked off snows on the ground. He unlocked the door and with his broken back entered home and behaved his wife coldly. He went to bed and drew the quilt over his head while thinking how he can earn money with having an education of elementary level and four kids. Suddenly, he thought that they could bring exotic second-handed clothes and sell them at house. Like some women that were traveling to Istanbul and purchased cheap clothes on wholesale there then show them for other women to sell. Their job had no tax, no shop rent and no obeying of a master's petty orders additional expectations. Since the next morning, following his plan during a year his business flourished to that extent that people would travel to that poor-income street from all parts of the city. The ex-worker had to buy shop to prevent the blocking of the street by his

customers and bothering his neighbors. The business of second-handed clothes at that time was such money-making business. The time passed and all those shops, opened in all spots of the city, presenting second-handed clothes in large quantities brought the profit of that business to its end. Then they followed another business. What a business it had been! If it could have been called a business. Presenting clothes of different colors for different sizes. The customers went shopping there just relying on their chances. If they had chance as they went to the shops to take the clothes out of the bags to find a cloth that fits you or one of your relatives before other women customers.

Out of all those businesses and his customers, Just a shop on Samangan (a poor neighborhood) street was left for the ex-worker, a long and semi-light shop and it was not known from where he could provide second-handed clothes that he could hang them from

hanger one by one and patiently unlike the time of his business flourishing when his customers that was not known how would understand the arrival time of his clothes rushed into the shop suddenly.

In a winter night, a Volkswagen was parked a woman of about forty was passing the distance between the car and the shop with cautious steps frequently. She kept taking male clothes from the shop to the car and after opening the drawer-like door of the car, she gave the cloth to a person inside the back part of the Volkswagen. Then she would close the car door and kept waiting until the drawer-like door is opened and the clothes be given back to her and she took them again to the shop and brought some other clothes to the car.

This behavior drew the attention of a police officer who was sitting in his car fifty steps further, up facing the Volkswagen and had a bunch of grape in his hand.

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The woman's waiting out of the Volkswagen in the cold until the car door be opened and the tried on clothes be back to her was what drew his attention more. Who was in the Volkswagen that gave her such stupid mission? Why that person himself would not leave the car to the shop to try on the clothes inside there. It was suspicious and different to that extent that made the officer to leave the heat of his car to the street.

The officer got out with the bunch in hand. He got the bunch close to his lips and picked one grape, then walked to the Volkswagen slowly. Standing in the light cast from the shop windows, the woman did no attention to her dark surroundings and did not notice a police approaching her. When she saw the cop, he was leaning his shoulder on the Volkswagen and was chewing something. She shrieked and thought with herself, "He is chewing a gum or shell of a sunflower

seed.”

The cop said, “Who is trying on these clothes?”

The woman moved backed and took the handle of the car mirror not to fall in the brook and said, “My employer.”

He asked, “Is he paralyzed? Can’t he go to the shop himself?”

The woman moved forward with one of her feet on one side of the brook and another on the other side. She pushed back some strands of her hair under her scarf and said, “He had an excuse, officer.”

Suddenly a man voice was heard out of the back room of the Volkswagen saying, “Talaat! Stop teasing. Now I am your employer too!”

The officer took one grape to his mouth and sucked it. He kept the bunch in his hand as if it had been his walkie-talkie. He held it before his mouth and talked with it in codes. While kept looking at the woman



whose name now he knew was 'Talaat', the cop walked forward. Through the side window, he looked at the driver's and front passenger seats. There was just a pocket of chips and a bottle of coke. He could not recognize anything suspicious and asked Talaat, "What is the excuse of your employer?"

Talaat reacted normally and said with a loud tone, "Many things make one to be excused, officer. One has to be benevolence for others. If you wanna, take it from me. Don't waste your time for us. Go back to your car. At last, we choose one or two pieces of the clothes and will go about our business."

The voice in the car said, "Does it suit me well, Talaat? Don't talk with such threatening tone." Then he guffawed.

The cop turned back and looked at his car. Its front lights made two pillars of dust visible. He was examining the situation to keep on the inspection or

not. Their conversations were normal. It acted as an evil-like tempting spice added to the grapes took to his mouth and blasted them under his teeth. There was no solid evidence for condemning them. If he kept asking questions and began to inspect inside the back room of the Wagon, he had to continue to find something. He returned to his car. That night was his daughter's sweet 16 birthdays. He had to return home soon.

Talaat opened the drawer-like door as much as half a meter. She stretched her hand out and took the clothes. They were a velvet scarlet coat with a hat whose color could not be recognizable in the dark. The man inside the back room said, "The waist part of the pants is loose for me. You have to take some inches in yourself otherwise; it falls down while I am walking."

Talaat said, "You need nothing else."

Laughter was heard and the man said, “A pair of purple leather gloves. Swiss ones. It’s getting cold.”

Talaat replied that we couldn't find gloves here. I have to go to the leather shops in Ferdowsi Street.” The woman wanted to close the drawer-like door that the cop prevented her. He offered the grape bunch to the man by stretching his hand in the back room wagon darkness. Talaat had a look at the cop and jumped over the brook to the pavement but he stumbled and fell inside the shop. The old salesman was ironing a pair of pants. The cop held the bunch of grape into the dark. A hand stretched out and picked one grape. The man with a seductive tone said, “Why don’t you give me all of them, sir?

The cop replied, “We don’t give grapes to the prisoners as we afraid they produce sweat out of them.”

The man burst into laughter and said, “Are you trying

my taste to see if I am of the prisoners' type to handcuff me.”

The cop did not stand by the door anymore and began to walk around the car. When he reached before the car back window, leaned forward to test if he could see the face of the man. Inside the back room was dark and things could be recognized there with difficulty. But to see the face of the man, the cop made a mistake by looking down the back room darkness as like the gradual appearance of a camera picture in the dish of chemicals, suddenly he saw an abnormal face right by the window that was chewing and laughing. He just could run back to his car and sat there. Not before sitting in his car, he could not understand that his heart is beating and shaking him because of seeing that appeared face. By hearing the sound of his walkie-talkie, he remembered his fellow policemen who were protecting the city security and

were close to him that if he would call them, they would have shown up there rapidly. So, there was no need to worry. He stretched his hand and turned the button on the top of the walkie-talkie. The sound of walkie-talkie filled the car. By feeling supported with the sounds being heard from the walkie-talkie, he looked up again and saw that the woman came out of the shop with a bag in her hand. She moved around the car and after opening the driver's door, sat inside the car. She turned the car lights on. The cop just found the chance to stretch his hand, to pick a pen and paper and to write the car number. He put his hand on the gear lever but did not put the car into the gear and looked at the car moving away.

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A year later, there was a series of those sinister happenings, the presidential election was held and the day after, the candidate who he lost the election, held

a national victory celebration for himself hurriedly. His advocated considered being the president just a right for him and protested the claim of rigging in the election. As the only place for rank and files' protest is nowhere except the streets, first the streets surrounding the Ministry of the Interior where votes had been counted and then the streets of downtown overwhelmed with common people. The police that during the past ten years did not encounter any crimes of political types had to be on standby and blocked the streets. The protesters, most of them were university students, fastened a green band around their wrists and their slogan was, "Where is my vote?" They had to escape from the anti-riot police. The blind streets no one else except their residents had entered them, was the scene of those running away from being hit by battens or from tear gas. Old people that their age had made them early risers and had been going to

parks every morning and after buying a subsidized pocket of milk, they had returned home, at those days, had to stay home and from their balconies and traces, looked at the escaping people in the streets. Shopkeepers had to open their shops whole day, pulled down shutters to prevent the smashing of their window shops and were looking at the clashes through the holes on their shutters. The selected presidential candidate of the people announced consecutive statements and got the people to come to streets. The state made cell phones stop working, so people could not send SMS to each other. His fans in the country and abroad, made each other aware of the news and places of gathering and demonstration through internet. It made the state to warn people through the speeches of the Friday prayer preacher. The selected presidential candidate announced more explicit statements. B.B.C. Broadcast added the fuel

to this fire too. The Candidate was put under house arrest and could not have any connections to his advocates anymore. That Movement got quelled. Everybody was backed to his business as before while Iranian residents inside and outside of the country's border were bewildered of the way of their own reactions and of the other side's. How wondering it is that suddenly something inside you stirs up and leaves a wound on your body. The wound remains there. Will the time remove it away? Could it remove the wounds left of the ۲۸<sup>th</sup> of August Coup<sup>۱</sup>? The answer is what the poet said to his wounds, "They won't greet you back; their heads are down inside their collars."

Five years passed just like that.

And then,

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<sup>۱</sup> The ۱۹۵۳ Iranian coup d'état, known in Iran as the ۲۸ Mordad coup, was the overthrow of the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in favor of strengthening the monarchical rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on ۱۹ August ۱۹۵۳.



On the signboards showing the names of the towns in surrounding parts of Tehran, there can be seen a suffix that is repeated frequently, "--shire". What an enthusiasm exists in this geographical part for proving these "--shires"! Ibrahim-shire<sup>1</sup>, Ali-shire, Mehdi-shire, Hassan-shire. In this area, intersecting roads are passing through barren fields; some disperse cowsheds, an old and isolated factory. There were also some rusty and tireless trailer bed left in some parts of the area that as they had been exposed to sun, rain, and snow to an extent, they became unrecognizable and a part of the nature of that area and under some of them dogs, which were panting in summers, formed a dorm. If someone missed the old type of snow-snows also have types of old and new-these beds of trailers and rusty metal bars thrown away in the shire-full desert could remind him real

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<sup>1</sup> In Farsi this combination means 'made residential by Ibrahim.

snowy winters as the density of snow falls just left pile of snow of those beds of trailers and removing any irony spots of that area. They made a sheer white plate that choked any barking or engine sound of a Nissan van in its sponge-like context. Nobody was looking an address in this shire-full plate. How a village located at the southern area of Tehran dared to call itself “shire” as in a diameter of kilometers from Tehran, the only habitable “shire” is just Tehran. Its surroundings compared to it were just ruins.

But in that special day, things went different as the expressway due to a devastating storm that knocked down trees on cars and started from the west had a bumper-to-bumper traffic jam in a way that a bicycle was moving faster than cars. An accident also hampered the traffic in some spots of the expressway. The expressway was like a river in which dusty cars were flowing slowly. In spite of the traffic jam, the

flight of Lufthansa to Frankfurt was not delayed. Masoud Amini was sure as he had called the information desk of Imam Khomeini airport and had asked them. So in order to reach his daughter on time the airport located thirty kilometers away from Tehran, he had no other choice except forgetting driving in the expressway and driving to the airport on the detours among those “shires” that had been asphalted with sands. His daughter, Somayye, sat at the back seat nervously and next to her bag that she could not put all her sundries just before sitting in the car and leaving home. At that moment, she pulled up her bag zipper and silently was looking at those barren deserts and ruins of clay and straw and unconsciously she was pulling out the mobile cover lint. Her cell phone was vibrating every other minute. Her mom was calling to ask if they arrived at the airport. Somayye had told her not to call repeatedly;

as once they reached she would call her. Masoud kept looking at her daughter from the front mirror and saying, “We get rid of the traffic jam. I take you to the airport on time” or he was saying, “Why are you worried? We will be on time.” Having had no reaction from his daughter, he would ask the question he had been asking her when she was a kid, “Now are you insane or playing hard to get?” But Somayye kept being silent.

They reached an intersection that its only traffic signs showed the direction to the town of “Vavan” with an arrow. On the other side of the intersection, there was an old restaurant that some trucks and trailers were parked before its sandy front road. From one side of the restaurant, a brick and high wall was invisible in the dust arisen from the storm. Masoud parked his car between two trucks loaded with potteries.

Somayye did not breathe a word.

Masoud Amini got out of the car and his steps on the road caused the sound of sands. He passed an empty small poll and went toward the restaurant front door and pulled it open with his shoulder. The drivers were sitting on the wooden bed-like boards covered with carpets and they turned their heads toward a TV, watching the news about the storm. Among the bed-like boards, a man wearing tank top was moving two miles by his ears so fast that the writings on the miles could not be read. That man was also starring at the TV. The presenter was reporting about the destruction of the storm approaching the city from west. There was nobody at the cash register of the restaurant. Masoud asked one of them who was younger and seemed to be a driver's assistance, "Where is the master of here?" the driver's assistance who was thin, tall and had a falcon-like skull and beak-like chin pointed to the door next to the kitchen and said,

“Maybe he went back there. To the Restroom.”

Masoud turned back and had a look at his car and the shadow of Somayye inside it. A dog under of one of the trucks, ran off and approached Masoud his car and tapped its body with its tail. Then, it went under another truck. Masoud look carefully to be sure Somayye did not become anxious because of dog’s presence. Then he went to the kitchen door rapidly, He hesitated there a moment. TV presenter told that up to that moment eleven people had lost their lives because of the storm. Masoud went. There was a back yard with some barbecue, pans and orange gas capsules in the corners. In one end of the yard, there was a restroom and some parts of the wall stretching out from its side had collapsed in a way that he could see the neighbor’s land. With a loud voice, Masoud asked, “Anybody here?”

One inside the restroom replied, “What?”

Masoud went closer and said, “How can I go to the airport?”

The man said Just a minute, I will be out.”

Masoud said, “My daughter is waiting inside the car. We have to get to the flight. I am in rush.”

The man said, “Go to “Vavan” toward the way shown by the sign arrow. On the second intersection, turn to a road shown by a sign of Hassan-shire Industrial Complex. Keep straight until you see Qom expressway, turn to dirt detour of the expressway. Then go to the other side of the expressway through one of the underpasses there. On your side, you see the airport. Got it?”

Masoud listened his words carefully. Putting his hand into his pocket said, “Yes, thank you.”

The man said, “No problem if you asked the drivers, they would tell you too.”

Masoud turned back to the collapsed wall and said,

“They all transfixed by the TV.”

The man said, “Cause this murderer bastard storm.”

Masoud laughed as he never heard the term “Murderer” for storm as its usage was inappropriate for flood. He wondered a murderer must use deadly weapon by a predetermined intention and spite. On the other side of the wall, there was a barren land, with a wall and far away there was a building. It appeared to be hanging in space in a hallucinating way. Before leaving there, he approached the collapsed wall and saw a tireless Volkswagen placed on bricks. Its color was not clear. It could be blue, purple or even gray As if it was used as a store. The plate number was hanging off its only pin. He had another look at that distant building, returned into the restaurant. On TV, an officer in a cliché way was advising people traffic jams in different spots of the city That could be eased just by drivers’ obeying the



laws and cold-bloodedness. The truck driver assistant showed Masoud the back yard and said, “Did you chat with him?”

Somayye was looking outside waiting for Masoud. Her anxiety made a happy feeling run through Masoud’s body. He desired to delay that the visible anxiety of his daughter took her back to the good old days. Every step he put on that path, the sands sang a happy song for him. At last, he reached the car and sat inside. Somayye browbeat him, “Does asking an address need to take this long time?”

Masoud replied, “Sweetie, don’t be panicked, we will be there on time. Which was better to ask the right way or just to drive in one of these detours?”

Somayye took out her mobile and said while showing it, “What do I have to tell her?”

Masoud said, “Don’t you know that your mom is nervous. Turn your phone off.”

Somayye replied, “She is going to be worse in this way.”

While putting into reverse, Masoud said, “I don’t know anymore.”

They drove in Vavan road. The city horizon on the right side of the road seemed yellow because of the dust arisen by the storm. Masoud changed the gear rapidly to drive faster, and said, “When you arrived there, just focus on your program. If she is on Skype, don’t answer her. She will calm down.”

Somayye replied, “Neither you nor uncle can deal with a psychopathic woman.”

Masoud did not even knit his brows. He moved his right hand over the steering wheel and said, “She is you mother anyway. We know what to do. No need for your teachings.”

Somayye looked back at the barren plain and took a deep breath and said, “I don’t want to come back to

this damned country. I am not contented you pay for my expenditures. How much did you pay up to now? Forty million Tomans?"

Masoud said, "Whatever. No of anyone's business. I am sending my daughter to Europe to study."

Somayye gut her cell phone aside and put her elbow on the back of her bag and kept looking at the road furiously drowning in the west. Masoud was looking at her through the mirror. She was enjoying of those barren plains, a mysterious pleasure. They passed an isolated gas station. In a spot, he had to press the break to let cattle of sheep pass the road. The black shepherd was standing on a cement platform by the road and without any hurry in passing the sheep across the road was staring toward the city or perhaps toward the settled storm. After passing the cattle, Masoud noticed a black spot in sky. He pointed to and said, "Come on, we are getting close to the airport."

Somayye stretched forward to see the spot and told quietly, “Thanks a billion, dad.”

“Dad” was the very word Masoud was longing to come out the daughter’s lips. At that moment, he felt Somayye was like when she had been at high school, he pointed to the surrounding plains and said, “I really liked to have a garden and a cottage somewhere around here. I wonder why people rushed to the villages in North of Tehran. Villages here are less busy and closer to Tehran.”

Somayye slit her eyes and pressed her lips together, and said, “I don’t see any gardens around here.” Immediately after that disapproval of his father’s word she added, “But, yes, when from the plane you look down, you see many green lands here.”

Just those words were persuasive and encouraging for Masoud.

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When Masoud and his daughter entered the saloon saw a police room. He saw Kochemeshki, sitting there and talking with one of his colleagues. He turned and his look knotted with Masoud's through the open door of the room. He waved, for Masoud excitedly and got up and moved toward him rapidly. Kochemeshki retired from the police three years later. Masoud told Somayye, "Wait a moment."

Somayye knitted her brows and looked at the old man getting close to his dad disgustingly. Masoud put the suitcases on the ground to greet his ex-colleague. He said, "Hey lad, aren't you retired?"

Kochemeshki replied, "I couldn't bear retirement, Masoud. I work here for a contract. Entertained with having something to do, I would satisfy. Here has a tranquil atmosphere, you see."

Masoud replied, "Of course." then he returned to Somayye and put his hand on her shoulder and said,

“My daughter, Somayye. She is flying to Frankfurt.”  
Kochemeshki shook his head to Somayye and said,  
“How are you?” He looked again at Masoud and said,  
“You arrived here on time in such a storm.” Suddenly  
with a changed mood, Kochemeshki said, “At long  
last, the children will fly and follow their own lives.”  
Masoud took suitcases handles and said, “That is  
absolutely right. We arrived on time as we did not  
come through the expressway. We came through  
villages of Kahrizak and Hassanshire , otherwise we  
would not be here now.”

Kochemeshki look up at the departure flights boards.  
Before Lufthansa, it was written, “on time”. He  
moved back and said, “So, I am here then. After  
leaving of your daughter come here and let’s have a  
tea.”

Somayye heaved a sigh of relief and said, “Nice to  
meet you.” Then she moved rapidly toward the stairs.

Masoud said, “See you” and pulled his daughter’s suitcase while reviewing the years he was working with Kochemeshki. Kochemeshki was of the police type who preferred to stay in the office and doing formalities rather than being on missions as he himself knew that if a criminal begged him, he would unlock his handcuff. Masoud reached his daughter and looked at the passengers sitting and waiting for their flights. He knitted his brows and said quietly, “How wrecked are the passengers of this international airport! Why are they all short? Why are they wearing in such way? What do they have to do abroad?”

Butter did not melt in Somayye’s mouth. She grinned and looked down at passengers’ faces. She said, “To see high-class people, you have to go to the arrival flights saloon. They are well-to-do out there. They come to pay a short visit to their relatives here and then go back again.”

Masoud put his brows upward and preferred not to make the story long. They reached the gate. He had to depart from Somayye. She had to go to take her boarding pass. Masoud took two shoulders of his daughter and kissed her cheeks, and said, “Don’t cut your hair short. I try to get the permission for having a passport and come to visit you in two weeks.”

Somayye said, “You repeat this every time.”

Masoud replied, “Well, you know that they let us leave the country very with a lot of difficulties and just for pilgrimages. But this I seriously do my best.”

Somayye shook her head and said, “Why do you need their permission?”

Masoud exhaled his breath and said, “When you were a child, you asked me once whether I had ever beaten you or not. Do you remember?”

Somayye said, “No, but I know why I asked that.”

Masoud said, “I wish I bet you not to let you be inane



to this degree.” He laughed and said, “Go. I’ll make it possible to come to you by all possible means.”

Somayye replied indifferently, “Let’s see. Take care of mom. Take her to doctor.”

Masoud said, “None of your concern. You’ll be late.”

Somayye’s eyes overwhelmed with tears. She put her yellow handbag on her shoulder. She took the handles of her suitcase and pulled them on the granite floor of the airport. She passed the gate and without looking back kept going. Masoud waited a while and looked at his daughter’s leaving the soil of Iran. He inhaled profoundly and said, “She has the right. Why do you want to go to her? Everything came to an end for you. You have to wait for your retirement and then approaching of death.” He left the gate. After a short melody, a woman announced through the airport speakers, “Dear passengers of flight ١١٣٨ to Frankfurt ...”

Masoud was asking himself to go and visit Koochemeshki or not. If he desired to meet him, he had to return downstairs. Otherwise, he could directly go to the parking zone by the lift. He did not have the patience to chat with a retired police. So, he preferred to get into the lift. He looked around to see if there was a place in the saloon where he could have an ice-cream, then saw a coffee shop at a corner. He thought with himself, "Where to sit and have the ice-cream." There was no place he could sit and look at the planes with their white wings and their weird shapes that made every viewer happy. So, he turned to the lift and thought it was not clear when he was going to see Kochemeshki again. If he was going to come across him, he could come up with an excuse for not visiting him. He had his last look to the information board and saw the numbers changing from Farsi to Latin, the numbers that each was for a flight, Frankfurt, Baku,

Najaf,...

Out of a sudden, every inches of his body trembled. He stopped and looked down at the granite floor. That car number appeared before his eyes from blurred memories of his past when he spent his time patrolling in streets with colleagues like Kochemeshki. His mind leaped forward and presented him numbers. The number was of the very changing number of the Volkswagen. It was itself.

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Somayye's CD was in the car player. It was a piano solo that the sound of piano pedals could be heard from among the played notes. He could often hear that solo at home from Somayye's room. Whenever he opened her room door a little, he would see her focusing to add some sentences in English to her dissertation. Masoud had missed her daughter a lot and he had been standing to watch her in that

stealthily manner while she was writing in a foreign language. From the spot Masoud had been watching his daughter, he could see the frame of her room window through which the leaves and branches of a plane tree and hopping of sparrows on them.

Masoud was returning slowly the very way in which he had driven anxiously with Somayye, accompanied by her playing and the sound of pedals. It was about an hour left to the sunset. The rain spotted his front window and was washing the dust of the air as though each rain drop was piercing a line of the big mass of the dust and the drop was bringing that to the earth on a spot determined for that like a gravestone on the earth.

He stopped before that restaurant, and parked his car on the sandy way leading to the restaurant. He got out, opened the car trunk and pulled his wool coarse-grained hat over his ears. He took out an empty

engine oil container of Castrol brand. He locked cars door and set out but not toward the restaurant, then passed the restaurant and began walking alongside the collapsed wall while moving the container for and back. He felt a strange euphoria in his heart. By leaving of Somayye, he felt a heavy responsibility was unloaded from his shoulders. He did not see Somayye whom had been always frowning and nervous and pretending to disappointment of this country and her wasted life during the past five years due to hits she had gotten by batons of anti-riot police during the demonstrations of the presidential election. With that after-the-storm flight to Frankfurt, at that moment, the Somayye of years ago who was the very daughter Masoud had known and who had not known anything about “The Movement” was placed in Masoud’s heart instead of this new Somayye. That flight took that heavy frowning and dissatisfaction

with it. The smell of wet bricks caressed his nose and the reeds crashed under his feet scattered yellowish powder-like substance, sticky and gluey substance.

He walked along the long wall for about a quarter. The hemlines of his pants were covered with the yellow substance. The drivers of trucks and trailers passing by him blew horns for him. He passed some capitalized and faint words written on the wall and could read these words in reverse direction and with difficulty, "Victory until war." Finally, he got to a metal door on which with chalk an arrow had been drawn and in bad handwriting was written, "Bell". The head of the arrow was pointing to a semi-broken door bell. Pressing the bell, he heard the sound of a buzzer from somewhere distant. He looked inside through a crevice in the door. The atmosphere of the yard was full of sunlight and shadows of everything. A woman cried, "Someone is ringing the bell."

Masoud moved a few steps backward and kept waiting. He heard the sound of someone's footsteps on sands approaching and then sounds of pulling the chain through the door latch. Then, the door was pulled open. A 10 to 12-year-old boy with green eyes and frown stood in the door and said, "Yes?"

Masoud raised the Castrol container and showed it and said, "My car is blowing white smoke further up the road. I need water and a soap to wash my hands." The boy turned back and looked at somewhere on the other side of the yard and shouted, "Go inside, a stranger is entering."

Masoud noticed the trembling of his brows. He hit the Castrol container on his knee gently. Across from the yard, someone with a drawling tone asked, "Who is that?"

The boy browbeat him and by moving his hand signaled them to go inside. Then, he opened the door.

Masoud stepped inside and looked all around with he saw a one story building with scarlet bricks and having a lot of corners with a leader leaned toward the roof instead of emergency stairs and windows all covered with curtains. He thought the building had been built like the buildings of Railway Organization Complex. At the back of the building, there was a farm torn by the storm. A sharp smell of grass was diffused in the air accompanied with a smell of dust. The boy signaled to the faucet and said, "I'll bring the soap" and ran toward the building.

Masoud moved toward the faucet, saw the hanging Christmas lights from the building threshold stretched down to the ground. There was a dining table next to the entrance door with ribbons and wrapping papers on it. Some stones were put on them not to let the wind move them. Masoud noticed the curtains of two windows moved aside slightly. He sat by the faucet



which was some inches above the ground and turned the cap of Castrol open and placed it under the faucet, then, turned the faucet on. The water flow was weak but it was falling into the Castrol container noisily. The breeze was blowing toward Masoud's face with the very sharp smell. It was blowing with a familiar smell to Masoud but he could not match it in his mind with where he had smelled that.

The boy returned with a bar of soap. His look was more suspicious than before. He stood above Masoud and put his stomach forward. While squatting, Massoud looked up and closed one of his eyes. He asked the boy, "Did the storm ruin your celebration set ups?"

The boy turned his upper part of his body to the Christmas lights and said, "We hanged Christmas lights from everywhere possible. The storm took all away and just these two are left."

Masoud put the Castrol container away from the faucet, scrubbed his hands with soap and asked, “Whose party is it?”

Worryingly, the boy looked at the windows. Masoud understood that he talked a lot with him. The boy muttered, “My sister’s birthday party.”

After lathering his wrists with the soap, Masoud said, “Is you father home?”

The boy answered, “Here is not our home, and it’s my uncle’s.”

Without any hesitation, Masoud asked, “So that wrecked car at that corner is your uncle’s?”

The boy tightened his eyes and looked at the wall at the back of the restaurant and giggled and said, “I and Farangis destroyed that.”

Masoud repeated to himself, “Farangis” and thought with himself, “Girls with their sorrowful destinies!” He looked at his wrist watch and thought, “His

Somayye was in the sky at that moment.” He washed his hands thoroughly and recapped the Castrol container and asked the boy, “Where is your uncle?”

The boy said, “Inside the home.”

Masoud asked him, “Run and call him to come here that I can thank him.”

The boy said, “It’s impossible. He can’t come out.”



*Morteza Karbalaee*  
*Iran (1977)*

**Biography:**

**Morteza Karbalaee** describes as one the freshest, most original voices in contemporary fiction among Iranian acclaimed novelists. He turned his hand to fiction when he was very young. His first short-story collection, "I am Single, Lady" released in ۲۰۰۳, honored in Iran National Award for the Book of the Year. He is the author of ۱۶ books in the novel and short stories published by great publishers in Iran and won different literary prizes. They in turn attracted the

attention of critics and audiences. He tries to establish his own style, considered as phenomena in Fiction sphere by critics.

Morteza lives in Tehran and is busy to write a novel revolving around Ibn Arabi, one of predominant figures in Islamic mysticism.

**Awards:**

١-The Winner of Isfahan Literary Festival for the book "Mr. Mofid ", Iran, ٢٠٠٨.

٢-The Winner of Mehregan Literary Festival for the book "A woman with green stockings boots", Iran, ٢٠٠٧.

٣-Honored for the book" I am Single, Lady", IR.Iran National Award for the Book of the Year, Iran, ٢٠٠٤.

٤-Honored for the book" Ghara Chuban", Haft Eghlim Literary Prize, Iran, ٢٠١١.

٥-Nominated for the book" A woman with green

stockings boots" Golshiri Literary Prize, Iran, ۲۰۰۷.

۶-Nominated for the book "The Fox and Arabic Moments" Ruzi Ruzegari Literary Prize, Iran, ۲۰۱۰.

۷-Nominated for the book" Drinking Mist in an Orange Garden", Critics in Press Award, Iran, ۲۰۱۰.

۸-Nominated for the book" Lend your Skull ,Brother " , Ghalame Zarrin, Iran, ۲۰۱۱.

### **Some of his Works:**

**Among the famous works can be cited:**

۱-A woman with green stockings boots (short story)

۲-The Fox and Arabic Moments (short story)

۳-Gysuf" (short story)

۴-Imagines (novels)

۵- Mr. Mofid (novel)

٦- **Drinking Mist in an Orange Garden (novel)**

٧- **Silhouette Shepherd (novel)**

٨-**Infantry at the Piano (novel)**

٩-**Lend me your Skull, Brother (novel)**

١٠-**The Way of the Carriage (novel)**

١١-**Flushed Face (novel)**

١٢- **Mourning for the Knights (novel)**

١٣- *of a Girl Named Aram(novel)*

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