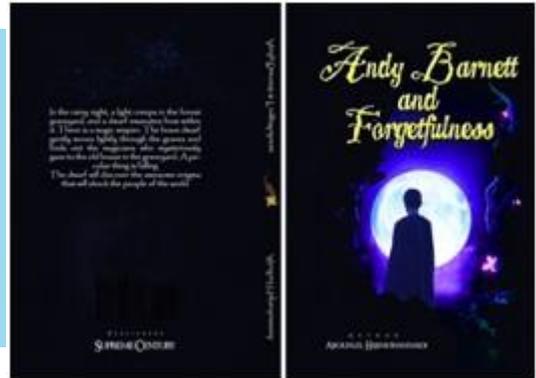


Andy Barnett and Forgetfulness



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Abulfazl Hajimuhammad



Abolfazl Haji Mohammadi (1986 /Gorgan-Iran) is a novice novelist, and this is the second book of his. As an ambitious writer, he tries to address readers in the global arena. That is why the characters of his stories do not belong to any specific territory. He uses the genre of imagination and fantasy to narrate his fictions. Haji Mohammadi currently lives at his birthplace in Gorgan, Golestan Province and is working on the compilation of the second volume of the present work.

About the book:

While staying in a mysterious house in a cemetery, during a rainy night, a dwarf who is a wizard step into the graveyard. The dwarf sits among the trees under the rain, and with his magical power realizes the formation of a mysterious chamber. Once he finds out about the presence of a demonic creature in the cemetery, he immediately searches for its cause, and after a bit of research, he finds it suspicious for Andy to be present in the graveyard's house. The dwarf, who is a wizard himself and comes from a parallel world with our world, realizes that the reason for the presence of the evil is the access to the same child (lad). So in an attempt to save him, he casts a powerful spell causing Andy to forget everything. A deep forgetfulness that causes the lad to forget all his extraordinary capabilities and in this way the satanic power leaves the graveyard. Now Andy does not remember a significant part of his life until the age of twelve, but gradually he hears unfamiliar sounds and cries around him, which frightens him. Finally, after a few days of turmoil and fear, meets a wizard, who offers Andy to join the world of wizards to get rid of the annoying screams. Andy at the Wizards' house, along with three friends of his age, is trained to take the Magic School's entrance exam. But the story is different for him and his friends. Andy's presence causes his friends to experience weird and unusual things, too.

After unexpectedly finding themselves having entered a forbidden place, they have to appear in a wizards' court. They are found guilty (of entering a forbidden place). After being forcibly prosecuted by this magic court as a punished they are sent to a forest cottage to be trained by a strict powerful witch. Andy and his friends are now in

a big forest house where demons are present. , Andy and her friends get familiarized with the demon's school. At the demons' company, they experience diversified

adventures. Finally, the spell of forgetfulness leaves the little Andy's body, and he gets to realize the horrifying truths. Since then Andy's fame has grown more and more and all the magic newspapers speak of his strange and incredible power, but the wizard, who first invited Andy to magic, is aware of the dangers of this reputation. He knows that the evil wizards would again come after Andy. Therefore, he returns him to the forest cemetery to meet again with the dwarf. To stay away from the enemy's eyes, Andy travels with the dwarf to a parallel world .In this fiction, the author tries to help his readers experience new subjects in the field of imagination. Andy Barnett, the main character of the story is the young boy who is capable of speaking with the dead. This strange power causes the evil wizards to conspire/plot against him and, using a magic spell, Andy and his father are dragged to a forest cemetery. Andy's father, who does not know that he came to the graveyard by an evil force, is suspicious of everything from the beginning.

Expert of the Book:

Magical Rain

William Barnett was a tall man with black hair and brown eyes. He owned a home appliances store in Butterbahn. His friends and acquaintances all knew that he would use any opportunity to travel around. This time he decided to explore the dark jungle that lay close to an ancient village called Tourin. At times the jungle would get so dark that even a ray of moonlight could not penetrate it. Having heard about overnight screams of strangers in the jungle, William was so excited to visit the mysterious place but once he stepped into the jungle, he realized he was not so gutsy he had thought he was.

At sunset in the fall when William was taking a stroll in the dark jungle to get back to the village inn, he suddenly heard a horrendous sound. He recalled the time when he had told his friends that if he heard such a thing, he'd summon the person who was the source of the sound and take a snapshot with him but now that he was running away among the woods, he sneered at his stupid assumptions blaming himself for going a long way from the village. For a while, William ran through the trees that started to look scarier at any moment. He was unable to find the way back. Unlike his claims, he'd never been a courageous man. He was trembling with fear. William was frightened at the sound of feet being dragged on dry leaves of the jungle but once he realized it was a village girl from Turin, he was relieved. She was a beautiful girl with unibrow and eyes the color of the stars. She was walking in the jungle so contentedly as if she was not scared of anything horrible in the world. William blamed himself for being a coward again. At first sight, the girl realized that William was lost.

‘Are you OK mister?’

‘Er...I...yes,’ he replied agitatedly.

‘But you don’t look OK. Are you lost? I’m going back to the village,’

‘Who me? I never get lost,’ said William trying to show off his bravery.

‘So, go back to the village because the dark jungle gets into a bad mood at night. Even now you can hear it if you pay attention. Good night.’

She had only taken a few steps away, ‘Where are you going?’ I lied. I’m lost.’

William asked her with a beseeching tone.

Bewildered, the girl stopped and asked, ‘So, why do you make believe you are a hero? Come on! Get a move on!’

On the way, William came to learn that she was Tom Jackson's daughter, the village headman. Williams was so envious of his chivalry. Fear was meaningless for him.

Her name was Telma. She told such things about the jungle that William thought to himself he would never have set foot there had he already knew them. Savoring the sweet taste of love for the first time, William tried hard to prove to Telma that he came from a reputable family but Telma loathed narcissistic men.

In the following weeks, William returned to the village under different excuses. One day he said he was taking photos of the kids and monuments; another day he would say he was attending the nuptials of one of the many people he had made friends with. One day Mr. Jackson, Telma’s father, pushed him to a corner.

‘What about building a house here and joining us as an honorary member of the village? Pull yourself together, selfish boy! My girl doesn’t like you. If you go on like that, I’ll have my dogs chase you. Get a life, man!’ said Mr. Jackson.

For a while, William tried to suppress his feelings for her but he didn't allow himself to be disappointed. Preferring his heart to his brain he forced his wisdom to follow his passion. He used to make fun of lovers but now he had become one. He promised himself not to judge others anymore. William insisted so much that finally one of the villages known as the wise elderly mediated for him. He first told William to pledge he would stop misdemeanors and stop being arrogant. When looking at himself from outside, William thought the old man was right to give him

such advice. He went away and confined himself to a corner. Yes, the wise elderly was right. A girl like Telma would never marry an egoistic man who just cared about his own whims. He made up his mind to face the facts and fight himself. Truly fighting oneself is the greatest battle of all times.

Several months later the wise elderly who was badly ill made good on his word and got Telma's consent. The fruit of the marriage was a boy called Andy. After he was born, Telma uncovered a secret that she had kept from everyone. She gave William her memoir but got his word not to read it until after her death. Telma spoke as though she was expecting to die any moment soon. For days and even months afterward they lived a happy life but finally, after three years of married life, Telma died in an accident.

William could not believe his eyes when her body was being taken to the Tourin cemetery. He couldn't believe it was over. He kept moving around expecting to see Telma among the crowd. William got so depressed that he would shed tears in an abandoned house at the cemetery every day. The house that villagers said was haunted by wandering ". William was not afraid of these rumors and even he would sit near Telma's grave overnight and read the memoir which started with this prelude,

"I'm Telma. The girl born to hear and see. My body is on the ground and my mind in the sky. It's me Telma. I hear the cries of the universe. The galaxy whispers in my ears. I'm brimmed with things people have never been able to see. I'm full of memories that if hears, I'll be called insane. It's me Telma. The daughter of the galaxy, the daughter of the sun and the rain, the daughter of thunder and wind."

Four years later when William managed to overcome the bitter memory of Telma's death, on fall night he felt he was burning with an intriguing feeling. He felt like visiting the cemetery again. He was so adamant as though he had no other choice or as if the haunted house at the cemetery was calling him for a rendezvous with Telma. He was filled with a sweet feeling. At dawn, he got in the car with Andy and headed for the Tourin cemetery. He was cognizant of the fact that staying at a

cemetery would not suit a six-year-old boy, still, he couldn't help going there. He felt he was not in control and being pushed by a metaphysical force.

Williams reached the cemetery but he still felt something extraordinary which he was not able to resist. After two days of stay at the cemetery, he was still doubtful. That day when he started his walk through the woods, he mostly talked to the people about his recent equatorial journey. He replied to all the questions properly and helped a lady bearing a heavy backpack. As he reached the remote parts of the jungle, he came across strangers. Some of them were wearing suits and some others had long robes on. First William thought he had entered an old movie shooting location but he was wrong.

Among those strangers, some of them were pointing at the sky and saying things that William could not accept. 'Rain pours down and wash'. How on earth would it possible to await rain while the sun was shining and there were no clouds? They left. William noticed the last group walking up the jungle path. There were three poor men with worn clothes on. One of them was wearing a big beard covering his square shoulders with a tread-bear and faded coat. The second one had a blonde mustache and a short neck. He was so short that his long and gray robe touched the ground. The third man was down in the dumps. He was frowning in such a way as if it was the end of the world. The heavily-built man was called Howard. That's what the frowning man called him.

'...Howard, my friend, since the cursing wolf has found his way to the jungle we have lost our permit,'

'By thinking about the permit you just get upset. There's nothing we can do about it,' said Howard.

'How can I stop thinking about it? How are we supposed to make a living? Look at these clothes. They are supposed to belong to defenders of the spell but they have proven useless since long ago. If the poor magicians' committee had not reached out to us, God knows what would've become of us.'

With a soothing tone, Howard said, 'We'd better wait so the magical rain washes away all the spells and that goddamn wolf shows up.'

William who had made enough observations today stepped forward with hesitation and said, 'Good day gentlemen! Nice weather!'

'Good day mister. That's right. Great weather. It's gonna rain tonight. So, if you have nothing important to do, do not leave your house,' replied the big man.

With a smile on his face, William replied, 'It's impossible. There is not even a patch of cloud in the sky. I'm sorry but were you talking about a wolf?'

'Yes, we were discussing to see how likely that'd be for us to see a beast,'

'You may hear strange sounds around here but there's no wolf.'

'Thank you, sir! Are you from the village?' asked Howard with a smile.

'Since the day I've lost my wife, I hardly ever go to the village,' said William sadly.

'Oh, sounds like you've been through a big loss. Good-bye, pal!'

William bade farewell and headed for the village. This was his daily routine. At sunset, he would go to Mr. Jackson's house to take Andy back to the cemetery. On the way William had on multiple occasions turned toward a sound from tree branches. Once after a scarecrow moved his eyelashes, he immediately turned but the scarecrow was standing still. William was coming to believe that everything is weird.

That night when it started to rain, he remembered the poorly-dressed men and the weather forecast that had promised of no rain till next week. Tonight it was raining cats and dogs. William visualized the men's faces who looked as though they whispered in his ears warning him of that night. William stopped those thoughts when he stood behind the window facing the cemetery. The night was falling over the jungle. William was not surprised at the dark jungle was known to be so dark but the sound of a wolf howling was not an accident. Oh, by the way, the poor men also mentioned the wolf. First William tried to calm down but he started feeling scared when unpleasant thoughts filled his mind like floodwater. Frightened, William picked up his gun and flashlight and set off. He told himself several times

that he is just scared of an imaginary incident. He could hear the howls getting closer and closer. What had happened? Why did everything look so weird? Suddenly he recalled his first encounter with Telma. Tears and rain trickled down his face. He remembered how scared he was then when Telma came to his aid. William gulped down his saliva at the sound of a horrendous sound from a tree overhead. He was wondering if the people's tales of "could be true. He thought he heard the sound which felt good as it would make the mysterious wolf get away from the cemetery.

It rained all night. William who spent the night with strange dreams woke up to Andy's voice. He was talking to someone.

‘Thank you! You saved my toys. I’ll make it up to you. I will give you a big fat rat.’ Yawning William got out of the room and said with surprise, ‘what's up to Andy?’

‘These cats are really good at forecasting the weather. Had he not told me to pick up my toys yesterday, all of them would be drenched now,’ said Andy pointing at a kitten.

After the cat mewed, Andy added, ‘You are welcome Pico. Don’t mention it!’

‘Who is Pico?’ asked William surprisingly.

This kitty. His mom calls him Pico but his dad says he must be called Jerine but I don’t care about his dad. Pico sounds better. They have stopped talking to each other over picking a name for him. They are cross now but Miss Venice says’

‘Who the hell is Venice?’

‘Pico’s mom. She says Polouk...oh, Polouk is Pico’s daddy. She says Polouk always starts a fight and then comes for conciliation. He is afraid of his wife but he is a kind man. Mrs. Venice is bad-tempered. She wouldn’t let anyone comment. But we agree over the choice of Pico as a name,’

Smiling, William said, ‘But cats cannot talk!’

Andy looked at William in great surprise. He thought he knew nothing.

‘So, how come they talk to me? Don’t know why nobody believes me except mommy Telma. Of course, her friends also believe me but sometimes I cannot sleep

‘coz the poor Yurgen sits on her grave and sings. Once I cried out of the window and asked her to stop. I told her I didn’t like her voice. The tall woman laughed and said no one likes my voice. They treat me so nicely, especially the tall lady.’

Thinking that kids like making strange stories, William pretended that he believed what he had heard.

Leaning on the door William cast a look at Andy who was following the cats out of the house. Andy would wave his hands happily as he was passing the graves and would say something. William smirked and went back in. Andy kept walking. When he reached an old oak tree in the middle of the cemetery, he came to an abrupt stop. He looked as if he was petrified. A branch moved, a head came out. It belonged to a midget with a woolen hat and white beard. The midget asked with admiration, ‘so, I’m glad I visited my father’s cemetery.’

The midget who had kept aloof for a while was doubtful but he eventually said, ‘Yes, it may be harmful but would save him.’

The midgets were murmuring something when a horse of smoke jumped out of the branches and started galloping around the cemetery. Andy was still standing still staring at the ground. The midget consulted himself one more time and finally made up his mind and uttered strange words. In the end, he pointed at Andy and said, ‘Mood Boora Karbias!’ Then he smiled proudly and said, there you go! That’s the strongest spell for midgets’ forgetfulness. It’s better this way. I should be going now. The parallel world, I’m coming back. Bye, little Andy. Take care! You must be very important.’

Andy made a move all of a sudden. He felt pain all over his body feeling his feet were numb. Now after that strange spell who would believe Andy understood the cats’ language? He had lost his power and didn’t even remember having that power before.

At ten in the morning when William was holding Telma’s memoir he was walking through the graves. When he reached the grave of the wise elderly, he stopped for a moment. He must do this. William had learned to act that way toward anyone

who'd been kind to him. The wise elderly had helped William marry Telma. On his tombstone, it was written, "Oh, you, the passer-by! Like you. I was also passing this way but when you are reading my tombstone, I've already started a better life." William muttered some good wishes for the old man and kept going. He stopped at a grave on which Telma's famous saying could be read. "It's me Telma, the daughter of the galaxy," taking a sigh, William sat there and opened Telma's memoir,

"After a warm sunny day now that the heat is gone and the night has fallen, heralding the arrival of the stars, it's such a pity that black holes, deep and dark, swallow everything. What does this deadly newcomer want of the sky? What is this sound from its black throat? Why is it fighting the creation? It may harm the graceful face of the moon with its claws. It's the moon that makes life possible in the dark of the night. Its rays shine over everything lovingly. It shines over the mountains and the seas, the plains, and deserts. It shines over a white butterfly that's sitting on a flower, over the ant carrying a grain toward home overnight.

It's a strange night tonight as the sound of the sky can be heard so clearly. Is it my sense of hearing that has come to its peak or am I dreaming? Mars is stormy with a pounding scream in the air. Jupiter's calm. The sound of water boiling..."

Hearing a familiar voice William stopped suddenly. It was the same poor man about whom he had thought all night and day...It's hard to believe that a wandering midget is able to force the hateful wolf to flee. I like these pig-headed midgets so much.

The short man who was called Mathew said, 'How on earth can a creepy creature from the horror world come to the dark jungle? How could a midget emerge from the parallel world? Interesting, isn't it?'

'What the hell does this cemetery have to attract so much attention?' asked Frank, the drowning man.

Hurriedly William arrived.

'Greetings! You are great at forecasting the weather,' said William.

The three men turned to him surprisingly.

'Good day pal! I just expressed my hunch and looks like it has come true,' said Howard.

I was hoping to see you again so I could hear more of it,' said William excitedly.

'To be honest, we don't know much either like you,' said Howard.

'I guess you are hiding something gentlemen,' said William doubtfully.

Looking at William, Howard tried to find the right words.

'Sometimes curiosity brings nothing but fear and pessimism.'

William thought he was being threatened. He looked as though he was analyzing the recent events.

'Don't worry. I didn't mean anything. Be optimistic like us,' said Howard.

'How can I be optimistic? Everything is weird. Strange sounds, the howling of a beast, the rain which I never expected. I feel the world has changed. Even my son is daydreaming. He thinks he can speak to cats and he is very serious.' Howard looked as though he had found the answer to the mysteries inside himself. He turned to his friends then feeling anxious he turned to William and said, 'Take your son out of here right now. Do you understand? Right now!'

William had just realized that whatever worries the poor men should worry him too.

'Excuse me sir, but can you tell me why?'

Howard was staring at the jungle fearfully as if he something had him concerned.

'Just listen to me! Alright? Please!'

He then left hurriedly and once again asked William to run away from the cemetery before it was too late. William felt he had gained insight after the brief conversation. He ran toward home. Quickly he picked up his stuff. As he was leaving the cemetery he knew that this would be his last stay in that haunted house.

The Familiar corpse

One could hear the voice of a woman in number 7, Mailman Street who was reminding others of their duties in the absence of William during the last month of the summer. William had gone to the North Pole that was his biggest wish ever. Flora Cooper who had married William after Telma's death had two daughters named Dianna and Dennis. With her small and round glasses, she looked pretty serious. She was tall and thin. The only thing she shared with William was the fact that they both preferred a house with a classic design.

Andy was 12 and despite the passage of years since the mysterious incident at the cemetery, he still didn't realize the wonderful power he possessed. Like William, Andy had black hair and brown eyes but he looked innocent with unibrow like his mom. He shared many characteristics with her mom but his face didn't show all of them. His bravery, lengthy contemplation, and self-sacrifice reminded William of Telma. Andy was neither thin nor heavily built. He imagined he had a special sign: the sign did not actually exist. He would only see that in his dream. Something like a book was being written out of his left hand's lines.

Andy didn't realize what had become of him during childhood. He didn't realize how he had survived dangers miraculously. He even didn't realize the wonderful power within himself. Still many didn't know there is a boy living in house number 7 that is a wonder boy even if he didn't realize that.

The nights of Mailman Street were the weirdest nights for Andy. Every night he would hear whispers but as he would look out of the window, he wouldn't see anybody out there.

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