

The Butterfly Was My First Word



Literary & Translation Agency

Illustrated by: Nayreh Taqvi
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- **Sample English text is available**

▣ the book has been the final candidate for Parvin E'tessami's Prize.

Mozhgan Babamarandi



Mozhgan Babamarandi has started writing for children since 1995 focusing mostly on teenagers. She is a well-known figure in Iranian children & teenagers' literature and her books are published by famous Iranian publishers. Her stories reflect her own childhood. Her books contain ethical and social themes. She is fond of short-story format and this is the prominent format of her books which are published in Iran.. At the time being, she lives in Tehran. She is the author of more than 28 books of novel and collection of stories for children and young Adults .Among her books are:

1. **The news presenter was silent**, Rowzaneh Publication, 2018
2. **I was my grandma's mom**, Peidayesh Publication, 2018
3. **Daddy's Laugh Paint**, Monadi Tarbiat Publication, 2017
4. **In the name of god, Raise exam sheets**, Monadi Tarbiat Publication, 2017
5. **The yard was full of bird and song**, Monadi Tarbiat Publication, 2017
6. **Ghelghelak's cocoon was beside grandma**, Amir Kabir Publication, 2016
7. **Whish under the all snow was viola**, Soroosh Publication, 2015
8. **The Story of Situation and Wishes of an Ass**, Peidayesh Publication, 2015
9. **The aunt oldwoman liked storytelling**, Elmi-Farhangi Publication, 2015
10. **The Seven Steps**, Soroosh Publication, 2012

Babamarabdi was awarded many literary prize including:

- Winner of Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults 16th Festival for novel “I will become a Spiderman like Rostam”, 2013
- Winner of Salam Bacheha Festival for book “Hi Grandp”, 2009
- Appreciation of the book ” Gold Fountain Pen” at Roshd Educational Festival, 2003
- First Prize in story for “Hi Grandpa” at Press Festival, 2001

About the book:

Parisa is greatly attached to her elder sister, Parvaneh. All her grades in school are 20, except the mathematics. She dreams of becoming a painter and an author (when she grows up). A suitor comes for Parvaneh to propose marriage. Her family gives a positive answer to the proposal and accepts it. Parisa deliberately burns the food at their party. But the aunt of Peyman, the groom, finds out everything. Shirin, Parisa's classmate, recounts about her sister who is married and lives in Isfahan. Parisa is afraid of losing Parvaneh. Her math improves with Peyman's help. And she wins in a composition competition. Her father's colleague and the groom's aunt hear her composition (which is broadcast on the radio) from the radio. She thinks she will definitely become an author. The wedding ceremony takes place the day before the Norooz. Parisa wakes up early in the morning. While she is watching two doves with their chicks eating seeds (feeding themselves) in their little flower garden, Parvaneh and Peyman arrive at their home for Norooz visit.

Expert of the Book:

Monday, Jan. 4

I received my report card this morning. When I saw my grades, I was walking on air. I had made 20 on each course but mathematics which was fourteen.

All Shirin's scores were twenty, except the composition and drawing. She had made sixteen for composition and twelve for drawing.

When the bell rang, I raced towards home. I unlocked the door with the key. Mom was cleaning up the greens. In a hugging way, I threw my hands around her neck and held my report card before her eyes. She said: "I cannot see in this way".

I held the report card a little away. She saw it and admired: "Well done! But why is your mathematical score always low?"

I said: "I'm out of this course."

Mom did not say anything. I sat down by the window. I was waiting for Parvaneh. It was snowy. The sparrows on the wall of the courtyard were cold. They were fat. Parvaneh was saying: "They don't become obese, due to the coldness of the weather; they fluff up their feathers to resist the cold."

Mom was setting the table. I heard the sound of a turning key in the lock of the courtyard door. I ran to the hallway. I held the report card before Parvaneh's eyes: "Hello."

Parvaneh closed the umbrella. She said: "Hello" and looked at the report card. She tweaked my cheek and admired: "Bravo! My little sister". Her hand was wet and cold.

I said: "All my scores except for the math are better than Shirin's."

She said: "What if the mathematics was upper than seventeen?"

I replied: "I want to be a writer. The authors don't need math."

Mom shouted inside the room: "It's no longer a little."

Parvaneh took off her coat and hung it on the wardrobe placed in the corner of the corridor. She entered the room and said: "Always, always, always, it will be my little sister". And she kissed me: "Well, what do you want for a prize?"

I replied: "Cinema".

She said: "So wait till Thursday when it's my day off".

I thought I had to wait three days. Actually, Thursdays are good. I could sleep late at night, don't have to worry about the next day's lesson and don't have to wake up early morning on Fridays.

Mom said: "Go there if the weather is good."

Parvaneh put the pottage bowl in the middle of the table and said: "How good! It snows. It's cold, and we are having our hot pottage inside the room."

I sat beside her and looked outside. She was right.

We cleaned up the table. Parvaneh said: "Parisa, take the crumbs and spread them alongside the small garden in the courtyard."

I went to the courtyard. It was too cold. I spread the crumbs and returned. I said: "Today, there are so many sparrows."

Parvaneh said: "Maybe they will have a party." And she opened her book. I also took my book and notebook out of my bag. Mom said: "You know Parvaneh, they will come on Thursday."

Parvaneh closed her book and said: "Will Come?!"

I asked: "Who?"

Mom said: "No one".

Parvaneh said: "We have guests, but I also do not know them, either."

Tuesday, Jan. 5

Daddy talked with Parvaneh last night. He said: "Make a decision. We won't force you, but for how long you want to refuse everyone. He's a very good boy".

Parvaneh was embarrassed and her cheeks were red. Her head was down and she was looking at the carpet flowers. Today, she went herself to the courtyard and

spread bread crumbs for the sparrows. When she returned, she said: "I want them to pray for me."

I said: "Pray for what?"

She replied: "Nothing, I said that".

The sound of the sparrows was raised. I approached the window quietly. There were so many sparrows in the courtyard. They were all hungry. I have the sciences exam tomorrow.

Wednesday, January 6

I made 20 in the sciences lesson. Parvaneh arrived. As always, she didn't take my test sheet to examine as usual. She didn't eat lunch, either.

Mom said: "Come on! My daughter. Eat!"

Parvaneh said: "I cannot".

Mom said: "There is much time from now till tomorrow. If you don't eat you will feel weak?"

I said: "Will we go to the cinema tomorrow, for sure?"

Mom said: "No, we have guests."

Parvaneh said: "We will go and come back soon."

Mom said: "Why are you in a hurry? Go there next week."

I got angry with my mom.

Thursday, January 7

I came back from the school. It was snowy. I went to the kitchen. There were lots of fruits and sweets.

I asked: "Aren't we going to the cinema?"

Mom replied: "I don't understand. What will happen if you go another day? Your father will get angry if he finds out".

I said: "Does It mean that I have to wait until next Thursday?"

Mom asked: "Is the sky going to come to the Earth?"

Parvaneh said: "My dear mom, I need time to think. Parisa, get ready! We are leaving." We went out together. It was not snowing anymore. But it was bitterly cold. Parvaneh was not like as always. She was not speaking to me. She was walking quickly while holding my hand. Obviously, it was clear from her face that she was not in the mood at all. She was not listening to my words.

We sat down in the movie theater hall. I knew that Parvaneh was not paying attention to the movie at all. I wanted to know what she was thinking about.

I came back home. As usual, I wanted to explain the movie to my mom. Mom said: "Don't you come near me. I'm not in the mood now. I do not have enough time, either. You also returned home too late. Quick! Go and take the dust-sheet off the furniture."

Parvaneh was placing the fruits quickly in a large crystal bowl; it was the same container just came out of the cupboard for special guests.

I entered the dining room. As I was taking the dust-sheet off the furniture that mom stepped in to turn the fireplace on.

I asked: "What's up, tonight?"

Parvaneh laughed. Her laughter was heard from the kitchen. She was nervous. She said: "They are fed up with me, they want me to leave..."

Mom said: "What are these words? Instead of saying that, put the sweets in the dish." She went into the kitchen and returned with a dust wiper. I knew that she wanted to check the dust status.

I went to Parvaneh. Mom shouted: "Dress up!". And she entered the kitchen and said: "Parvaneh! Don't you dare to come in front of the guests in these clothes?"

Parvaneh replied: "But what's wrong with them?".

Mom said: "I think you want to drag our name through the mud and stretch out their tongue on yourself."

I was surprised. Whose tongue was supposed to be stretched out? I wanted to ask, but I didn't dare. Mom came towards me, held my arm and dragged me after her. We climbed the stairs, entered the room which Parvaneh and I shared. She opened

the closet, pulled out my pink dress, which had two lines of frills, and ordered: "Put it on".

I said: "Is it supposed to go to a party?"

Being in a rush she ordered angrily: "That's it, put it on".

I put on the dress. I looked at myself in the mirror. My shoulders were full of frills. How much I liked this dress! The waist of the dress was hanging from both sides. Parvaneh came into the room. I stood there with my back towards her, without uttering a word. She bent and knotted the big bow behind my dress.

I came out of the room to go downstairs. I stood behind the living room window and opened the window. Snowflakes were sitting on my hands. They were full of flowers and stars. As soon as I wanted to watch them carefully, they were going off (they melted before I could examine them).

Parvaneh always said: "They are like dreams, Aren't they?"

Mom said: "Close the window in such a cold weather."

I closed the window. How could I not notice mom's entering? (I wondered when mommy came into the room that I had not noticed her). I left the room to the hallway. Parvaneh was coming down the stairs. She had untied her hair. She had gathered that part of her hair which was around her ears and had tied them with a nice barrette (hairpin) behind her head. Her dress was very light blue. A thin belt was laid on her waist. How pretty she had become! Her black eyes were shining.

Daddy opened the door and came in. Parvaneh and I said: "Hi."

Daddy said: "Hello to both of my dear daughters". And he looked at Parvaneh.

He exclaimed: "How beautiful you are. I wish you happiness. You look exactly like your mother when she was your age."

Mom came out of the dining room and said: "I know. But the time passes too fast."

I noticed sadness in daddy's voice.

They rang. Mom slaps her face and said: "Come on! Dear Parvaneh, go to the kitchen and make tea. Don't you come out before I tell you? The new white veil is

beside the kitchen, over the baskets. Mrs. Shirin sewed it this morning according to my instructions. Her hands bring good luck. Parisa, go and stay with Parvaneh. "

I said: "Why should we hide?"

While pressing the door opener button daddy asked: "Do not you know?"

We went to the kitchen. Mom had placed the porcelain cups on a golden tray. The kitchen door was left ajar. I could peek everyone. But I did not know anyone. A young man had a big bouquet of flowers in his hand. A lady in mom's age was carrying a big box of sweets. After a little while, mom came to the kitchen. She ordered: "Dear Parvaneh, bring tea."

Parvaneh was pouring tea. She was pale and her hands were shaking. She poured tea in the saucers instead of into the cups. The tray was filled with tea. She noticed the look on my face and remarked: "I behave like a kid, Don't I?" She emptied the saucers and the cups. She cleaned the tray. She refilled the cups. She put on the veil and went into the room. I heard the sound of "Here you are. Here you are."

Mom called me: "Dear Parisa, why don't you come here?"

I went in and said: "You had told me not to come". Mom bit her lips. After I saw the guests, I sat beside my mom. Parvaneh was still offering the tea. She got close to the young man. She offered him tea, too. He was looking at Parvaneh. He wanted to take a cup of tea. His hands were shaking, too. I imagined that the tea was going to pour on his pants like in movies. But it didn't. Instead, he put the cup and saucer firmly on the table. The tea swung, some of it poured on the saucer and some on the table, spots of tea spreading more and more.

Parvaneh lifted up the corner of her veil and left the room carrying an empty tray. Mom followed her out. Daddy asked the man: "Well, what's up?"

The young man was just looking at dad. He wiped his face's sweat with his handkerchief and then he was sweating much more. Mom came out of the kitchen carrying napkins. I went to Parvaneh. Her face was red. I sat down next to her at the table. Suddenly, someone said: "My beautiful daughter-in-law, how are you?"

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