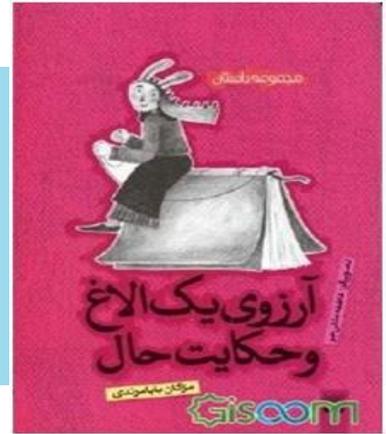


The Story of Situation and Wishes of an Ass



Author: Mozhgan Babamarandi

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Subject: Short Stories

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Age group: 14+

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- **Sample English text is available**

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:

The narrator is accustomed to reading lots of books, but not her school books. In the English class neither the topic of “Passive, Active verbs” nor the subject of “modals/would, should, could” make sense to her. Her classmate, Catherine, who is sitting next to her, tries to help her. Catherine gives her address. The narrator realizes that to go to where her classmate lives she has to walk on the opposite direction from her own home. However, the distances of their homes from school are equivalent to each other. The next class is “theology”. That is how she finds out that the classmate is of a minority religion, and that is why Catherine looked so surprised when the narrator took a bite of her bread. As soon as the bell rings she runs towards Catherine's home. She notes that Catherine’s neighbor is dumping a bowl of soup in the garbage can. She knocks. She steps in. Catherine sits down next to her with two bowls of soup and offers one of them to her guest. *This book covers 9 stories. The writer, while using irony, tries to express teenagers’ problems. Perhaps we can say that the difference between this book and the writer’s other books is that the teenager characters in it are somehow reflection of their families’ characters and represent theirs. In other words, they (each teenager) play the role of a mirror which shows the small community (family) where they come from, in which they have grown up, where they have been brought up/have been raised. Therefore, they would react to problems the same way the grownups of their family would react... .The writer in this collection of hers also unveils the social problems such as inflation, high prices, sickness of head of the family, as well as the peddlers. The story titled, “Hope God will turn this command” of this book which participated in a contest named “The 12th Children and Teenagers Periodicals/Press” and reached the final phase.*

Expert of the Book:

It is cold. I give up reading my book. Mom's noises prevent me from concentrating. It is visible from the window that the sky coverlet has been split, and the Granny cold keeps shaking (combing) her cotton flakes. The sound of various kind of music is heard from the kitchen, traditional, pop, and rap. Mom, my darling, loudly goes along with them. It is unclear where and when she got all this expertise.

As usual, the author is by the window and his profile (side view) faces me. It's not known what he's looking at and what he is thinking about. Perhaps he's thinking about his newly released novel or about his short stories. I wish it would be a new novel. His novels are not at all comparable with his short stories; every one of his novels is a masterpiece. How can an author write a novel?! If I saw him, I would ask him. I've searched it on the internet. However, I have not found the proper answer for it. In addition, the verbal response of a famous writer is very different from that of the Internet. Is it possible for me to become a writer too, a very famous one?

If I see him, I'll tell him to cut his beard a little bit!

How does he really live? Where does he live? His home must be around Farmaniyeh or Niavaran districts. What does he eat? Just high-class foods! Maybe he always wears branded clothes... Is he watching the snow like me, in this snowy weather? Does he love the snow and the winter like me? I like to think that he is like me. To like whatever, I like.

Snowfall has increased. I calmly say, "I love you Granny cold. You caused the schools to be closed today. Come on! Do us, poor pupils, a favor. Help the schools be closed tomorrow, too. So it would link to the weekend (Thursday and Friday). This way I can also finish reading the lovely book which I am going to buy today."

The smell of pottage, fried onion, fried mint and fried garlic has filled the entire house. I am hungry and my stomach is making noises. I enter the kitchen. The

author's profile is visible. Indeed, I have set his photo up on the wall where I can greet him from every angle. I'm setting the table very fast. I say, "I am going to have my lunch sooner. Parastoo and I are going out to buy a book."

Mom says: "Is it really necessary to go in such a snowy weather?"

I say: "Didn't you allow me to go and buy a book after school? So, what's the difference between the morning and the afternoon? I think there is no difference also between a sunny day and a snowy one. Actually, a snowy day is more enjoyable also it is not crowded. The whole bookstore, dear reader, is allocated just to you..."

She says: "Probably on Enghelab Avenue..."

I am going to say: "So from where? Let you say, dear mother, which I dedicated my life to you / I deeply appreciate your kindness, tenderness, and favor too..." But I am not allowed myself to have a funny behavior. I know well that "I'm walking on the edge of the razor, " according to what Somerset Maugham says.

She says: "Stupid girl, why are you going to waste your money? How many books do you want to buy? You have lots of unread books. Let be read them during a few coming days..."

I say: "Okay, it is my own pocket money. I want to buy a book. If I am not allowed to spend it, why do you give me the money? Shall I say I'm a donkey, and then you stop nagging?" I feel like walking on the edge of the razor. I think by myself "where you are now Somerset?"

I can hear she is going on: "Have you got anything after of this mush reading books? No, I'm sure you are still stupid! You are not able to spend your money properly. We give you money to buy clothes for yourself, and then we see that you spend it on buying books again. You take the money to buy bread, then you put the rest of it in your pocket in order to buy books. Afterward, you think we do not understand. Your daddy and I do not bring the matter up yourself, but we understand everything well."

For a moment I imagine the author's profile is smiling.

Mom picks up the lid of the pottage pot. Its steam rushes toward her face. She steps aside and stirs it. Then, she puts the lid back on the pot.

I say: "Mom, shall I take a bowl of pottage for Parastoo and her family?"

I do not say that her father loves her spicy pottage and I want to compensate for his last time resentment.

I do not say that her father had shouted at us last time and had complained about our making too much noise. Your voice has spread to the entire house..."

I said: "Parastoo, how noiseless is your home!"

I heard: "My mom is always in the kitchen..."

I quietly said to myself: "So is my mom."

She said: "When my dad heard your name he said, "oh Mahtab? Whom you love. When she is here both of you will laugh out loud." We burst into laughter.

Mom said: "I do not know why you laugh this way? A girl must not laugh so loudly."

Daddy said: "It's unclear whom she took after. Sometimes she is suddenly being quiet when she reads her book and sometimes she laughs that way. When she laughs, all the neighbors realize that she has returned from school."

I put a spoon of the pottage in my mouth. How hot and spicy. I have to rotate it in my mouth to cool. But all my mouth burns. I throw it out. The table becomes dirty.

Mom says: "Stupid, why are you in hurry! Well, wait. Do not scare. Be sure all books have not been sold. They're all waiting for you. You have to go and finish them just on a snowy day."

I clean up the table. How ugly the food pours out of the mouths of people. It's not like the food at all. I'm laughing.

Mom says, "She becomes also crazy. She cleans up the table and laughs."

I'm telling myself how spicy the pottage was. It would be well that Parastoo and her family like spicy food. In previous time her father had said: "Parastoo, are Mahtab and her family Indian? Their food is spicier than ours."

Mom's voice comes: "I cannot stand before her. What should I do for her...?" I am certain that she thinks loudly: "Well, just the Book City in Haft Hoz district."

I jump up. All thoughts fly off from my mind. I say: "That is near. If it doesn't have, what will be?" I remember Somerset Maugham's quotation again. "The edge of the razor" and get silent.

She says: "That is it. If you return too late, you will have to face your daddy and answer to him!"

I say: "If you do not say anything he won't know it. He sleeps all afternoon. He is a good sleeper like yourself!"

I asked Parastoo: "Why does your daddy sleep so much?"

Parastoo laughed and repeated: "Sleep?" She laughed again I laughed too. Her mother's shadow, Mrs. Ata'ollahi, moved. She glanced at us from the kitchen. She looked worried. I thought that if there were not my mom, the voice of her cooking music neither to the street nor Haft Hoz then up to Book City would spread away. If her cooking voice and her rhythm did not go away, the sound of her shouting at me would surely go away.

Suddenly, we heard the sound of her daddy and saw his shadow quickly coming in and going out. But his voice had still remained (echoed) in the room: "Your voice has quite spread throughout the house..."

We were silent. I immediately put on my uniform and walked. I was just close to the door when I felt a burning in my hand. I looked over and I saw a small ant hanging off my hand, firmly sticking to it by its mouth. I burst into laughter.

I said: "I'm sure your daddy has sent it to punish me for disrupting his sleep,".

Parastoo said: "It thought you are an eating."

I said: "The ant that became a donkey!" And we burst into laughter. Parastoo laughed too. Louder than me I closed the door and ran to the house. But my laugh wouldn't stop. Anybody who saw me stared at me; think that I had lost my mind. I was also laughing at their look. I turned on my cellphone to call Parastoo. But it did not have a prepaid allowance. I brought it near my ear. Then I could laugh easily.

Mom takes a bowl out of the cupboard of her beloved dishes. She pours the pottage in it and decorates it. She says: "For Parastoo. Why do not you learn from her? The innocent girl is always into books. Silent and simple. But what about you, untidy, careless, naughty, stupid..."

I do not say anything. If I say something, she will not allow me to go out to buy the book that I've collected money for. I say:

"Snails can crawl along the sharp edge of the razor blade without being cut"

I think, but I do not know how to produce any stickers. So just be silent.

Mom says, "Here it was okay that we enrolled you in the language class. What, did you think you own just know English?" And we both laugh.

Mom warns me several times to return soon. For the last time, I look at the writer and come out. I say to myself: "Look, how important you are. In this snow just for the sake of your last book..."

Soon as I ring the bell of their (Parastoo's) house, she opens the door. Mrs. Ata'ollahi is standing behind her. I give her the bowl. She talks so slowly that I guess she is expressing her thanks. We are on the move. The snow is touching our faces. I get ahead. I'm in a hurry.

Parastoo talks. But I don't hear her voice clearly: "In this snow, for which book ?!"

I say: "The Wishes for a Donkey and the Status Story."

She says: "I have it..."

I say, "I know. But I buy this writer's books, I do not borrow them."

She says: "You can have it ..., my dad ..."

I say: "The one who is always asleep!"

We have reached Haft Hoz. I stand on the shoulder of the street to take a taxi to Enghelab Avenue. But the street is not crowded. Parastoo takes my hand and we enter in the Book City. How good here is that the snow does not come. It's warm. The author's profile photo is here too.

Parastoo looks at him. I say, "I just wish he would somehow cut his beard."

She says: "That's what my mom suggested and he did cut his beard." I laugh: "Your mommy ..."

She also laughs: "Now no more beard, only mustache."

The bookseller says: "We ran out of it. Don't look for it. Even in Enghelab Avenue."

I say: "But I have to read the book during these two or three coming days, I'm sure it is closed tomorrow too. I want to read a book instead of making a snowman."

The bookseller says: "Don't be so sure. Fast snowfall has a short life. But the snow that falls slowly and steadily will sit everywhere. It freezes and causes us to slip and fall down. With that snow, not this one we can make a snowman."

Parastoo tells me very slowly: "Let's go. I said to you that I have it. How many times have I told you my daddy is the author of this book?"

I say: "I know. And my dad wrote Tolstoy's War and Peace. I also have it."

She looks at me. She says: "I am really telling you the truth. This is my dad's photo when he was young. He is no longer the same. You even haven't seen him. Whenever you come, he takes his tools and runs to the basement. "

I say: "But his last name, your last name..."

She says: "He uses his brother's name, the one who died in his youth. His own first name stands for his last name."

We come out of the Book City. No snow. Not on the ground. Only the air is much colder.

Mrs. Ata'ollahi opens the door for us. A little later, the author's signed book is in my hands. Parastoo laughs loudly and describes Mrs. Ata'ollahi. But I'm laughing quietly and looking at the ground which is the roof of the basement. Mr. Ata'ollahi is coming up. He says: "Be comfort. Laugh. It's youth and its related laughs..."

I open the book at night. The radio broadcaster says that the snowfall has stopped.
But because of the extreme cold, the schools are closed. The author's profile is very similar to Parastoo. It's as if Parastoo laughs.

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