

A Rose on the Rug



Literary & Translation Agency

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Ibrahim Hassanbeygi

(1957/Iran-Gorgan)

He is one of the well-known and experienced writers in Iran who has written for children and young adults more than 30 years. He authored more than 50 books and at least 10 of them translated and published in other countries. His travels to all around Iran gave him the opportunity to collect drafts for his later stories. Hassan Beygi's books are characterized by a simple narrative with theme of Islamic revolution and Iran-Iraq war. He has published 85 novels, adult short story collections and children and young adult books, which some of them are popular and high seller among teenagers and young adults. His novella: "the Rosebud on the Rug" was honored by the Munich National Library in 2000. His books have been translated into Languages such as English, Arabic, Turkish, Russian, Chinese, Turkmen and Azeri. Ibrahim Hassan Beygi currently lives in Malaysia, devoting his time to writing.

About the book:

“A Rose on the Rug ”is a story about a Turkmen girl and the process of weaving a rug which she is weaving with all her sentiment and effort. Safora, the Turkmen lass, from the moment the pot’s flowers dried up, felt that her father suffered from depression and thus, to make her father happy, she decides to weave a rug decorated with rosebud design in spite of the opposition of her mother. The only problem is that there is no rose branch to use it as a model. Finally, the father brings a rose branch for Safora and the lass starts to weave the rug. Ultimately, Safora, with much toil during the nights and days, weaves a rug with flower design and gives it as a gift to his father to use as the prayer rug.

The book is a short social story and another story of buds of wish and hope, suffering and grief, love and waiting and thousands of untold words that go along with blood drops from the hearts of anonymous carpet weavers of this land in the course of history that have flourished in various and amazing carpet designs. The subject of story is trying to achieve the serious goals of life. It is a social issue and manifests itself in the story outline. In the framework and outline of the story, we are faced with a girl who overcomes many obstacles to achieve her objectives. She makes her best efforts and creates success and triumph out of the warp and woof.

The first character of the story is Safora. There are three other characters in the story that accompany her throughout the story’s ups and downs. The role of the mother is against Safora. She blocks her way and plays the adversary. The other character is the father who supports the efforts of the girl and acknowledges her work. The last character is her brother who barley affects the story and maybe he

could be removed and the father could play his role.

The center of gravity of this story is the dialogues. The dialogues push the story forward. Page processing and descriptions are pale and perhaps the semantic capacity of the story cannot accommodate it. A social story that is rooted in effort and work, one must endeavor to achieve what one desires, one must gamble her life. The victory does not come by easily. But it is beautiful like a sunrise, it goes to the heart as the morning prayer, and like the sound of a rooster at dawn, forwards the call of awakening and triumph to your ear.

Expert of the Book:

Safoora was sitting on the carpet-weaving frame. She didn't feel like working. Unwillingly, she took up the red and white yarn and tied knots on the wrap-threads. It was hot in the bower as if fire was pouring from the felt ceiling. A tractor was heard carrying the newly harvested wheat to the Obeh (village).

Safoora stopped weaving for a while and stared at the round shape patterns of the carpet thoughtfully. She was thinking of a red and pink rose on a rug. The thought occurred to her when the flower in the pot dried. The flower was brought from the town the other day. She liked it very much.

The plant was nothing but a green stem with a few small buds at first. Then one of the buds blossomed: a beautiful red rose surrounded by other half-opened buds.

Everyday when the father came back from the farm, he sat on the porch by the flowerpot and looked at it. Then, he asked his son, Eraz to water the flower. Mother always used to say that too much watering a flower would finally spoil it and that came true because the flower died out a few days later. However no one knew the reason for sure. Each said one thing or another. But father was hurt anyway. He no longer sat on the porch on his return from the farm. He leaned against a pillow in the room after washing and took a nap just like the time when he had not bought the flower, as he used to lie down for a rest.

Safoora tried to read the mind of her father and guessed, perhaps, he was dreaming of planting a rose in another pot, and having a garden full of roses, like those he had seen in the town one day.

Once, Safoora had been to town with her parents, she had seen beds of flowers in the doctor's office and city squares. She had also seen tall trees and

flowers in different colors that had given her the idea to make a small flowerbed in their own yard.

When she said what she had in her mind to her mother, her mother frowned and replied, " How can we water them? Impossible! "

Mother was right. Their village didn't have the piped -water system.

People got their drinking water from the reservoirs and for other uses the salty water from the wells or the river was used. Safoora knew well that salty water was not good for flowers. This was, probably, why rarely any flowers were grown and raised in their village and only few people kept flowers in vases.

" Come and have the water, it is cool, my dear! " Safoora turned her eyes from the carpet and came to herself when she heard her mother. Mother handed her the bowl of water. She took it and drank it up.

The water was cool and refreshing but there was the smell of their neighbor's water reservoir.

Safoora put down the bowl, and then wiped the sweat from her face and forehead with the side of her long scarf. She took the comb and thumped on the carpet to press the knots already made. The rhythmic thumping sound of Safoora and her mother working at the carpet-weaving frame was heard out of the bower. The pleasant smell of " Tchackdermeh (A kind of Turkman dish) was heard inside the bower.

Mother looked at Safoora's eyes. They were expectant. Mother kept on looking at her and her half opened lips, which were ready to bring up the same request. Mother wondered what to say so as not to hurt her daughter's feeling. Therefore, she gently said, " Look, Safoora! Weaving a rose on the rug is neither my job nor yours. No woman in Turkman Sahra has ever woven such a thing on her carpet. Such a design has no precedent in Turkman carpet weaving so far. Then how do you want to weave such a strange pattern, a rose, on your carpet? "

Safoora answered patiently, “ This is simply done elsewhere. They even weave the pictures of trees and sparrows on their carpets. If they can, then I can too.”

“ What is wrong with our designs that you want to ... “ Mother said.

“There’s nothing wrong with our patterns. But I just like to weave a rose with the red and pink and green yarn on a prayer-mat for father.”

Safoora interrupted.

She sighed and went on, “Then father would not feel sad because of that rose which died out. Moreover, he will always see the rose on the stem on his prayer-mat while praying.”

Mother added, “You know well enough that we cannot afford the task. No shopkeeper will lend us yarn and raw silk to weave such a rug. Then, get along with the work and say no more about it.”

Safoora lowered her head, closed her eyes not to see the half-finished carpet on the weaving frame. Safoora had made up her mind to weave the rug with the design of a rose on the white background of a prayer mat for her father.

When Safoora told her father what she had in her mind, he kept silent and uttered no word. He just smiled and patted her daughter on the shoulder. Perhaps he, too, didn’t believe that anyone in Turkman Sahra could weave the design of a rose on a rug.

Safoora got to her feet, touched her back and stretched herself to get rid of the numbness she felt from sitting for a long time and weaving. She felt pain in her upper arms and backbone. She went out of the bower. Father was washing at the well. Mother was busy setting the tablecloth and getting the food ready to serve in plates for lunch. Safoora’s brother, Eraz was sitting in the shade of the bower. Safoora walked to him. Eraz had placed a tin by him on the ground. The tin was filled with pot soil and in it some green stems were coming up.

When Eraz saw Safoora, he said, "I'm growing potatoes." Safoora grinned and looked at the plant. It was small and green. She asked, "Do poppies also blossom?"

Eraz thought for a moment and said, "I don't know maybe they do. If they blossom, I'll give you the flowers. You can look at it and weave the design on your rug." Safoora thought and asked herself, "What color is potato blossom? If only it would be red or pink as red and pink are the only yarn and raw silk I have."

Weaving carpets was what Safoora and her mother did when the father went to work on people's farm every day.

Safoora didn't give up weaving however all over her body ached because of sitting at the carpet-weaving frame. She wanted to finish the weaving of the carpet at hand soon to find free time to start weaving the prayer mat for the father with the leftover yarn she had saved.

One night, when they were together, she told her mother that she wanted to put up a small carpet-weaving frame and start weaving her own rug. Her mother asked her surprisingly,

"What about the yarn you need for the rug?"

Safoora folded her hands and said, "I have enough yarn leftover from the carpets."

Mother not yet satisfied said, "What about the time? We have a new order to carry out as soon as this one is done." Safoora almost begging said, "But mother before the next frame is put up, my rug is through." Mother who had got impatient and didn't like to talk about it anymore said, "That's enough Safoora. You'd better get the beds ready for your father who must be tired by far."

Father who had heard the conversation and had remained silent said to his wife, "Take it easy and let her do what she likes. Weaving should not be difficult for Safoora. Maybe she can do what she claims."

When father smiled, Safoora got a new life. Mother remained quiet and said not a word. Safoora took it as their permission to weave the rug.

The carpet at hand was taken down from weaving-frame and Eraz and Safoora started the job. They nailed and put up a small weaving-frame for the rug Safoora intended to make. When the work was done, they were both happy. But this happiness didn't last long.

“Where can we get a rose from?” was the first problem.

Eraz lowered his head. They knew that there were few houses, which kept flowers in the pots, and none would give them a rose. Of course, there were also some white poplars by the riverside, which bore no flowers.

“What should we do now?” Eraz wanted to know.

“I wish I knew. I need to have a natural rose to look at and weave it on my rug.” Safoora said. As far as Eraz could see there were no flowers of any kind on the farms around but the new-mown hay.

Towards the evening, Safoora was sitting in the corner of the bower close to her small carpet-weaving frame. She was deep in her thoughts. She didn't notice her father coming in. Father entered the bower, took off his fur hat and stood there looking at her. Safoora's head was down. When her father touched her on the shoulder, she looked up and found her father sitting on his knees by her. “Well, what happened to the prayer-mat you wanted to weave?” father said.

Safoora looked away from her father, gazed at her carpet-weaving frame and said, “I don't find a flower. A rose can give a start to the job.” Father shook the carpet-frame and said, “You have made a strong frame. Don't worry, I'll buy you a flower in the pot when I go to town this time”, and he smiled.

Safoora couldn't return her father's smile even with a pretense. She felt that he pitied her. She knew that he couldn't do anything to help her with the problem. When the father noticed Safoora's silence, he took hold of her hand and they both stood up. Then he held her face in his both hands and looked directly into her eyes and said, “Now come on, smile. As I told you I'll buy you some flowers from town.”

Safoora looked up and said, "But I may not have much time to start and finish my rug."

Father smiled again, scratched his chin and said, "Take it easy my dear. God is great. Trust in God."

Safoora was sitting by the carpet-weaving frame rolling the yarn into a ball and putting one over the other. All of a sudden her father entered the bower carrying a rose in his hand. He took the flower to her face. Her eyes shone and she snatched it. It was a rose with a half-opened bud. Safoora smelt it and said joyfully, "Where did you get it father? "

"I went to Eraz's school and asked the school janitor to give me the flower from the pot and he did."

"Really?"

"Yes, I went there and asked him for branch of flower. At first he said he wouldn't because the flower and the pot belonged to the school principal. But when I told him why I needed the flower, he cut a branch and handed it to me."

Safoora said, "I pray God to keep it fresh for long."

"It won't dry up so soon, the school janitor said. We should keep it in a glass with water to help it stay fresh for a few days."

"So I should start weaving the rug before the flower gets dry."

Father moved to leave the bower. Just before leaving he turned back and said, "Start Safoora, start! "

Safoora wove and wove. She worked from early in the morning till late at night. The first night she was scared of the dogs wandering around the bower. The next night, Eraz laid an old mat by her and slept there in the bower so that she wouldn't feel alone.

Her rug had a white background with red and green margins. In the center, the flower stem and leaves were woven in green shades.

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