

## Caricature

I was still in what so called the “rosy saga” of the new migrant, still stunned by this new country: by the beauty of the separated houses surrounded by green front yards, by the many open spaces such as parks and playgrounds, by the easy to find parking, by the goody goody drivers who obey the rules. It was only three months after our arriving to this country, when I was lucky enough to get a seat at Sydney University. The only convenient way to commute between my home and my Uni was by train, and because our house wasn't near enough to the station, it became my husband's job to drop and pick me up. We agreed to call him when I reach the station, so he will come and pick me up. The first two days passed peacefully. On the third day, prompt changes in my timetable caused the delay of my arrival till about 10pm. The station wasn't a main one, few commuters and few trains were to pass in that time of the evening.

I was the only commuter to stop there; I headed directly to the phone boot, and to my bad luck the phone was out of work. I stopped puzzled, I tried once, twice, thrice, . . . I asked the help of every saint mum used to call when in such a trouble, all my prayers gone in vain. I decided to leave the station. By its gate, I stopped like a sailor who has lost his compass . . . I walked few meters to the left . . . No! No... it's the right direction. I remembered that we passed a church yesterday. I returned back to the gate and tried left, still no trace of a church. Few meters and I was in front of an intersection, puzzled again, damn this country! All its streets are the same! All it's houses engineered by similar standard as if there were only one designer who tailored them all! No distinctive tracks: no bakery here or a stall there! No unique building, no any thing to break the monotony of the place... even churches hardly differs of the surrounded houses.

What if knocked the door of any house and asked for help! But...all the stories I have heard from relatives and friends discourage such a step. They filled my mind, in these three months, by stories of rape and robbery and kidnapping, to the extent that makes me wonder how come such things happen in a nice peaceful country more than it happens in a city ruled by the Princes of War, Beirut! I was not aware yet that the people here have no big issues to keep their minds busy, so they entertain themselves by chatting about these stories, and exaggerating them. Some other reason that made my situation worse is that I am coming from a city where, due to fifteen years of war, the night became associated with fear. Normal people don't hang around at night; its nights are for the gun carriers and thieves only.

What shall I do? How should I behave? The only option left to me is to take a risk; I will knock the door of any house and what ever happens let happen... I approached one of these, when I stepped nearer towards the entrance I was faced by the bark of a big dog that makes my blood freezes in my veins, so I retreated disappointed, and sat to a trunk of a tree squeezing my head in my two hands. I heard the noise of a car approaching. Do I stop it and ask for help? Before I made my mind it was far enough not to hear my call.

What can I do? What will happen to me in this barren place? A mad idea stroked my mind. I will throw stones to any of the houses, this could carry the residents to call the police, then my problem will be solved, my “bright” idea faded before I could find a stone, not even a small gravel

I heard a train approaching. I went back to the station, only one lady came out .She was around my age, I felt relaxed, I approached her, when I came nearer she started hurrying, it was clear that the lady was intimidated by my weird situation. I followed her begging: Please help me! Please help me! She didn't give a damn about me.

Oh my God what I have to do? Could it be that he came while I was away and when he didn't find me returned back! If this is what really happened it means that I am left to my own destiny. I was frightened to death; I stopped under the high light of the station waiting the say of fate in me. A period of time had passed, as if it was ages. My imagination weaved the scenario of stories even worse than those known in Agatha Christie or Colombo. I saw myself once in the mouth of a hungry beast or estranged dog or attacked by a rapist or a serial killer. I could be under the mercy of group of flying foxes or fierce Rats...My God could it be that I fled Beirut nightmares to fall in a thing fiercer, and more frightening!

A car flashed my eyes. He stepped out calling my name; his voice was full of worries. He was worried because I didn't call, so he came looking around, hoping that he will be able to find me. And to my good or bad luck, it was him in that car that I missed before.

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