

## Struck by an Evil Eye

She entered our world within a forgettable moment of time and scattered what we have treasured of beliefs and creeds for hundreds and thousands of years. Things are not the same after that intrusion. How this happened? Why we are spellbound with any action or gesture she makes, I don't know.

My father got upset, he ordered us not to utter her name "Take her out of your minds. She is wicked and evil" (he comments)

No matter how hard we tried, she was always there, nearer than a blink of an eye. Her presence always shadows our conversation no matter how serious or trivial the subject goes

We are all born in Australia. We were all brought up in Sydney, though we never left off our fathers' and grand grandfathers' skins. We were proud of our roots and hold mute despise to this western culture. We were content by what Father decides for us, he knows what is good for us better than any one else in the world.

"His wisdom" viewed no good in having higher education for girls. Without questioning I complied to that "wisdom". I was convinced that a well-mannered girl, descendant of a dignified origin doesn't need any higher education. Since I sensed life, I perceived my mother to the kitchen. I never asked my self if she has any other concerns outside that kingdom. She was happy, content in tracking her mother, grandmother and grand grandmother's footsteps in looking after our needs and endeavouring to gain praise for the delicious complicated meals she prepares. I never heard her complaining or sensed her seduced by the successes that our neighbour Zahra or her cousin Mirvat had achieved in public life or the daring they have over their husbands."The crown of my head, the apple of my eye Abu Faisal" (she sincerely repeats)

I never demand to have a job like most of my classmates. My essentials were obtained. "She" accompanies me to shopping when the need rises. My going out is organized and reasonable, I am not imprisoned nor having unconditional freedom, I may contribute in helping my younger siblings in their homework or do a baby sitter to my auntie's children when she asks me, of course, without being payed for the job. Refund is still a shame in our tribe, while we heartily crave to have it. I might go out to watch a hit film or play with cousins, but after spending several day arranging and submitting full report about the theme, the actors, where and when it is displayed etc.....etc....I never felt offended by these procedures, I had surrendered to his leadership away of any headache. I submitted to his orders, and never felt persecuted or oppressed and I never felt that there is any thing wrong in these restrictions to complain about. I don't remember that I ever scratched their commandments, and never wondered what's wrong in eating meat on Fridays

Then she entered our life. Once upon a day, she accompanied my brother and some of his friends in their way from University.

- I didn't invite her. It happened accidentally, we were involved in a hot conversation and we found ourselves here (Faisal said)

- Do you expect me to believe your story?.....”Masha’lah”. An architect as well!. Mistarjleh<sup>1</sup> yani<sup>2</sup>, what a low kind of woman!...Sure she got no man to control her!

No! She wasn't a low or “mistarejleh”. She was well-brought-up in a strongly attached family, built of father, mother and children where the father is the head of his tribe in an excellent patriarchal mode. She was one of us, has the same skin colour, the same dark eyes, and the same curly dense hair. She even speaks our mother tongue unbroken, clear, fluent like any old villager who never left his village. We were stunned by her courage; we were shocked by her carefree being. If she were blond with blue eyes, if she were born in this western civilization, if she were from a broken family, if she were rebellious rejected by the guardians of morals and virtues in our ghetto, hence the case could be different. But to be brown, with honey eyes, a new comer to the country and from a village distanced few miles from where we come from, made her extremely influential

She goes to University, she studies architecture, a male domain in our perception. She stays late at night and accompanies boys to their houses and invites them to hers. This makes her different and exotic.

The mercury key ring that she always hold, the only long thick braid of hair tied to her back, fascinated my little brother. My mother closed her ears by her both hands when she heard her arguing loudly taking clear side with homosexuality and euthanasia. The dare she showed in her conversation thrilled me. Each one of these boys weighs double her size, and their voices ten of times louder than hers, though she was never intimidated by them or felt inferior, at the contrary, she was always certain of herself, defends her beliefs with enthusiasm and confidence. She never sounded hesitant or seeking approval or stating false compliments. She was really different

Days weren't the same any more....

I tried to break “their” protocol by not accompanying “the tribe” to Church that Sunday. “He” broke with furious rage that made me comply and go, to avoid his ferocity, but my going was different this time....

My little brother refused to eat what mother put on the table that day. His “majesty” went mad and started cursing us as a whole and in retails. The little one shrank and silenced reluctantly after my mother whispered something in his ear. My mother started to ask why she is rooted in the kitchen all the time, so he frothed with rage and reached the brink of a heart attack. She shut up, after that, she became always grumpy and distressed...she stopped tidying our rooms and started asking us to do the job...she started rebuking us every time we ask her for a glass of water or juice. Faisal stopped asking me to iron his shirts, he started preparing his own sandwiches every morning. My father hit hand by hand and said in a mourning tragic tune “....we are struck by an evil eye

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<sup>1</sup> Mistarjleh: a demeaning expression for female that acts like men

<sup>2</sup> Yani: it means