

******* THE THIRSTY FLOWER *******

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******* IN THE NAME OF ALLAH *******

Sky was bright and sunny. The beautiful flower was taking a nap in her expensive vase while spreading her leaves and petals under the pleasant, soothing warmth of the spring sun, and enjoying the cool gentle breeze. A little bird came flying down and landed beside the flower.

“Hello! What a pretty flower you are!”

The little bird said:

“Oh, hello sweet singing little bird! Hard fly! Where are you coming from?”

The flower said:

“I am coming from a land far away; where it’s very hot. I am traveling with my friends. We’ve been on the way for three whole days and we are going to find spring.” The little bird told the flower.

“Ah Really! Then, welcome little bird. Spring is here and everyone is happy.”

“Now will you sing a song so as to make me happy too.” the flower demanded:

“Well, of course my dear friend. I will presently sing a song that would remind you of the aroma of the evergreen forests and the tall trees of the mountain-highs. A tune that will charm you with the greetings of the ruddy puppies and majestic tulips of the far-away lands.”

The little bird began to sing, not knowing that the selfish, arrogant cat of the landlord had spotted her and was lurking in ambush to catch her.

While singing the little bird had shut its eyes and was reviewing the happy memories of the past in her little brain that the wicked cat got closer and closer. By now it was towering over behind the little bird. All it had to do was pounce on the poor little birdie. The flower was so sacred that she could not say a word. So she covered her face with her hands, as she couldn’t bear to witness such a horrible scene.

At this very moment the cat took a pounce on the little bird but...

Suddenly, a dog’s bark came in through the window from the street.

This caused the little bird to jump up into the deep blue sky and the miserable cat landed on the vase.

The vase was therefore knocked over to the ground and broke into pieces. That frightened the dog and it ran away. Seeing this, the wicked cat leisurely walked back to its corner of the house to rest.

The beautiful flower too, fell to the ground. Many hours passed. Some people walked passed the poor flower but no one paid any attention to it.

Little by little the sun pulled itself behind the mountain and stars filled the sky.

The selfish cat stopped outside the house and went towards the flower, sniffed at it and then left uncaringly.

The flower cried out and said:

“You damned wicked cat! Now that you’ve knocked me down, go and tell the landlord to come and take me home, because I am very thirsty.”

The cat turned its back, twitched its ears, looked to the ground, and dashed off.

The following day, the flower was still lying on the pavement. Some people trod on it while passing. The flower who was feeling desperate and hopeless shouted:

“Don’t you see where you tread your feet? Look where you are stepping. I, too, have feelings and feel the pain.”

But people would not hear what she was saying.

A little boy who had his new clothes on and was holding his grandfather’s hand was passing there. He too kicked the flower to one corner.

The flower protested and said:

“Oh, little boy! Why on earth do you kick me too? I’d have thought that some affection and love was still left in you.”...

But the little boy too, like everyone else, wouldn’t hear what the flower was saying. Desperate and helpless the flower waited. At last the landlord got out of the house to go to the shops. He had walked a few steps passed the flower that he stopped, turned around and took a look at the flower. Then he looked up to the windowsill. There was no sign of his valuable vase. So, he realized that the flower was his... but didn’t even bother to pick it up. Instead he mumbled these words to himself, “What a shame! It was a beautiful and expensive flower.” Then he went on his way and left the flower unattended.

Seeing her owner’s indifference the thirsty flower shouted out, “Hey, landlord! It’s me. You’re beautiful and sweet-scenting flowers that you spent a lot of money on. Remember.”

But the landlord wouldn’t listen to what she said.

The flower said to her: “When he returns, I’ll stop him and show off my dazzling beauty to him.”

An hour went by and the landlord returned. The flower tried to move a bit, but was unable to, because people had broken her twigs and crushed her leaves by walking over her. The flower mustered up all her strength in her voice and called out: “Landlord.”

The landlord turned around and looked at it.

“Take me home and look after me.” The flower pleaded.

The landlord sneered at it and turned its back.

The thirsty flower's eyes filled with tears and she moaningly uttered the following words:

“Curse the days that I gave life and color to the drab existence of your house. Curse the days when I filled your room with my sweet fragrance.

It seems that you have forgotten the days when you prided in showing me off to your guests and friends. Or when you would have punished your children if they damaged my leaves. Do you remember the days when you would earnestly clean the dust off my leaves? If you do, then...

I am the same flower. The very same, lucky and much privileged flower. The flower stopped saying more and looked beyond the veil of tears covering her eyes but the landlord had long gone.

A few minutes later the street's dustman cleaned the pavement and swept the flower into the gutter. The gutter was smudged with dirt and scum left from many days which bothered her immensely. A few more days passed and dust covered the flower's body all over. The flower became crinkled and thirst and hunger made her more unwary than ever.”

The flower screamed out: “O Lord, I am thirsty! I am hungry! I am heart-broken; I have no way to anywhere! Please God, help me.”

The following day the dustman appeared again and this time he cleaned up the entire gutter and collected all the rubbish in his trash-trolley. The thirsty flower too was among the trashes in the dustman's trolley, traveling to an unknown destination. On the way, the flower was thinking about her fate; remembered the good old days and a wry smile appeared on her dry lips. She then speculated her unclear, sad future and her heart sank deep.

She remembered the good happy days when she lived with her brothers, sisters and friends in the flower shop and chatted about the big green garden, which was their home. They would talk about their mother's love toward them and how kindly she took care of them. She remembered the multi-colored butterflies, which used to sit on her petals and play with her.

She remembered the sweet-singing bird that would sit on the branch and tell her stories of far- away lands. She remembered the loving caresses of the morning breeze gently waking her up from sweet sleep. And she remembered the brook that quenched her thirst, always.

The flower was deep in these distant thoughts that suddenly the trolley jerked heavily crossing a bump in the street and the flower was thrown out of the cart and half-dead lay on the ground. A while later under the penetrating heats of the summer the flower became thirstier than ever and she fell to a deep sleep. A kind of sleep that you could smell death from it.

Some time passed, before the loving hands of a kind woman picked the flower up and took it with her. In a few moments they reached a small and neat house. The woman cleaned up the flower carefully and put it in a vase; gave it some water and opened the window.

A few hours later the flower was little by little, coming round. When the

flower did finally open her eyes she first saw the face of a woman smiling who was sitting on the edge of the bed of a sick boy.

The woman smiled at the flower and said: “Hello beautiful flower. Welcome to your new home. I found you half-dead in the street. When I saw you I was reminded of my poor son who has been ill for some time but it seems that he is going to regain his health. Last night for the first time after his illness he slept well; if he slept comfortably again tonight, it would mean that his ailment is over and he could go to school in a few days time.”

At this moment, the woman’s husband entered the room and asked his wife: “...That water tanker outside by the door labeled with, ‘peace be upon Imam Hussein!’ Who does it belong to?”

The woman replied: “I had vowed to donate a charity if our son became well. Therefore I put that water-tanker outside so that thirsty people passing by could quench their thirst.”

“You did well my wife. May God reward you best?” The man said.

The sweet-scenting flower looked out into the street. There was a water-tanker on the pavement and everyone who drank water would utter these words: “Peace be upon Imam Hussein.”

The flower asked her: “Who is this Imam Hussein that everybody, who drinks water, drinks it with the remembrance of him?”

At this instance the little boy asked his mother for some water. The mother fetched some water and as her son was drinking, she spoke the following words:

“Peace by upon Imam Hussein who was martyred while thirsty.”

Peace be upon his two infant-sons. Ali-Akbar and Ali-Asghar who were also martyred while thirsty.

The boy went to a deep, comfortable sleep after drinking some water.

The hands of the clock on the wall moved heavily; and slowly it passed the mid-night mark. The boys’ parents were sitting by his bedside and were looking at him.

That night, the sky was carpeted with stars. It was as if all the stars were congregating round the boys’ room and looking inside.

A star came down and sat on the flowers’ twig. The little boy, in his sleep, smiled at the star and the star smiled back, but the parents did not notice it.

A little while later the sweet and heavenly melody of AZAN “call to prayer” coming from the Mosque’s minaret¹ echoed in the street. The man got up, made his ablution and performed his Morning Prayer. Then after having his breakfast got out of the house.

Now, the star was sitting on the little boy’s hair. The beautiful flower washed its face with the morning dew of spring to wake itself up. Then the little boy got up. The tears of joy rolled down the mother’s face. The flower became de-

1- A prayer tower in Mosques.

lighted. The stars, which were by now fading away, put hand in hand and twinkled.

The roosters crowed merrily and the sun, happier than ever before, came out from behind the mountain. The morning breeze took the news of the little boy's recovery from house to house and street to street. The golden rays of the sun painted the walls and the birds, which had just woken up sang joyfully; and butterflies kissed the cheeks of the beautiful flower.

The little boy sat up in his bed and looked around. Then his look fell upon the beautiful flower and smiled.

"What a beautiful flower! Mother please give it to me." The little boy said slowly. The little boy's mother brought the vase of flower and put it by his bed. The little boy leaned over and smelled the flower and the flower in turn rubbed its beautiful and colorful petals against the little boy's cheeks. This tickled the boy making him giggle.

"I've brought this flower especially for you. Promise to look after it well." The mother said:

The little boy promised. Then stood up and watered the flower from the jug on the table.

Allah's praise unto Imam Hussein (p.b.u.h.) the water- bearer of paradise.

THE END