

Waheeb Nadeem Wahbah

The sparrow's House



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It is a tale like all the tales of princesses who appear and disappear in moments, or those who wait for their knight returning to them from faraway lands.

At the beginning of the story, my little princess was trying to hide her sadness and some tears, saying: ...

But my friend the bird made my mind absent-minded and my thoughts scattered, only the eye could see his return this evening to his house, which was dug between two stones at the top of the stone building, and did

not find his young ones inside the nest as usual.



The princess said: "You did not hear me; I was at the beginning of the story."

I got up from my place and ran with all my physical strength, my sight preceding my steps, my sight that

follows the bird as it circles and circles, rises and rises and hovers in space, hovering in the same place as if it carries the same question: "Where are the little ones?"

The princess runs after me and in her broken voice asks me: "Do you understand the language of birds?"

A faint smile accompanied me despite my anxiety and fear for the fate of the children as I said to her: "Allah alone gave the Prophet Solomon, the Wise, peace be upon him, without the rest of the people

and prophets, the vast kingdom and knowledge that has no limits. God has subjected to him all creatures, the jinn, the winds, and the language of birds, and he alone understands the language of birds."

The Princess: "I am the princess of tales, I will tell you... Solomon had great majesty after he called upon God Almighty, saying: 'My Lord, grant me a kingdom such as no one after me will have.' So, God answered his call and gave him the great kingdom, and part of that great kingdom was the carpet of wind. As

for Solomon's carpet was something amazing. The carpet was made of wood and all the kingdom's needs were placed on it: soldiers, horses, camels, and tents. It was said that three hundred thousand chairs were sitting on his right, and three hundred thousand chairs were sitting on his left.

The birds would also come and align their wings on that extended carpet so that the heat of the sun would not harm them, then this majestic carpet would rise into the atmosphere of the sky."

I said: "I do not understand the language of birds, and I do not own the carpet of the wind."

Princess: "So, how did you understand what happened with the sparrow?"

I say: "I understand the scene very well" (pause)

Yesterday I saw the raven hovering over there in the same place. Perhaps the raven messed with the ruins and snatched the little ones... Perhaps..."

Princess: "I know the story of King Solomon and the hoopoe.

"Do you know the story?"

I say: "Yes; You may be referring to

the story of the jinn who decided to steal Bilqis' throne. He said to Solomon the Wise: I will bring it to you before you rise from your seat! " Then said the one who has knowledge from the Scripture: I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you!"



!

Princess: "How did we get over to what happened? How can we return the little ones to the nest in the blink of an eye?"

I say: "The most difficult thing in my opinion is what is the judgment on those who snatch birds from the forest breezes and the freedom of the sky, and ordinary people from the rest of creation without guilt or crime."

The princess: "I know what the raven said about Solomon's hoopoe. He saw him traveling to a far country with his friend the hoopoe who came from that country, and his friend told him about the kingdom of Bilqis and

the beauty of her country. When they arrived, his friend the hoopoe said: "Can you see that big pearl?"

"Does Solomon have a pearl of its size?"

Then Solomon's hoopoe said, "This is the pearl of Solomon, which your ifrit snatched from the hand of the jinn who caught it, and did not put it in Solomon's storehouses. Woe to you all!"

Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, a violent wind blew, shaking the bushes and blowing dust toward the stone houses.

And behold, the raven and the sparrow were fighting near the nest of the young ones of the bird.

The princess: "If Solomon, peace be upon him, were here, he would have understood their dialogue and known how to judge fairly between them."

I say: "I do not possess the wisdom of king Solomon, peace be upon him, but the rule says: The criminal always hovers around the scene of the crime. Perhaps the sparrow was hiding, waiting for the thief who had snatched the little ones to return."

The princess approaches the battle site between the raven and the sparrow, but the sparrow flees far away, while the raven circles and does not leave the place.

The princess asks: "Why does the raven not get scared of me and leave like the sparrow?"

I say: "It is strange and amazing that the raven can recognize human faces, and not only that, but it can classify humans into good humans and bad ones."

Princess: "The ravens immediately kill any raven that is infected with an infectious disease so that it does not harm anyone or transmit the infection to the rest of the ravens. This is the greatest proof that the raven is the most intelligent of birds."

I say: "The important thing, my dear, is what man learned from it, and that is the story: The raven is the one who taught man burial, and this is one of the strange and amazing facts about the raven. He is the one who taught Cain, son of Adam, peace be upon him, how to hide his brother's private parts. For he had buried another dead

raven before Cain. From this man learned how to bury the dead."

"Listen, my friend," said the princess after this conversation with me, "do you think the raven will inhabit the sparrow's nest?"

"My princess friend, if you only knew, the ravens have courts in which a group of ravens try the raven who has deviated from the laws of innate justice that this bird has created, since for every crime committed by one of the ravens there is a special punishment that is carried out, once the decision is made by the group."

Princess: "If the raven was the one who messed with the nest and was responsible for the destruction that occurred and kidnapped the young ones, what is the punishment according to the justice of the ravens?"

I hold my breath patiently and say: "The crime of destroying a nest... The ravens' court obliges the nest destroyer to build a replacement nest for the owner of the destroyed nest."

Princess: "The sun thinks of the sunset, the wind blows softly and the sparrow searches in vain. If only we could help him. Don't you think, my

friend, that's better than waiting? (She is silent and smiles lightly and continues) Or perhaps you think that the raven will return the kidnapped baby sparrows to the nest?"

I say: "Truly, this is the just task of life. How do we give help before darkness comes? The sparrow flies between the tree and the stone building a thousand times. We can make a house for the sparrow and hang the house made of delicate wood and carefully painted to attract his gaze, which closely watches every movement, sound, and any passing imagination..."

(The princess interrupts): "We will make him a prison."

I say: "No, my princess friend, we will make a house with an open door so that he can come and go freely, and we will put water and food so that he can get used to the house and us."

Princess: "The sun is setting; the time is not in our favor. Let us work and work and gather everything we can to make the house."

Death and life are in the hands of the Creator alone, the Master of time and space.

Here, one of the neighbors heard the words scattered in the space of God and said: "Come... come... I have some tools, wood and paint. When I was young, I owned a small industrial workshop."

I could not believe what I was hearing. The princess ran towards the man before me, she was steps and steps ahead of me and she said:

"Come, before sunset, let's make the house and hang it on the wall of the high building."

I said to the princess: "We need the long ladder to reach the top of the building."

The man: "Don't worry, I have a ladder."

We go into the workshop and work together, until the house is finished and looks beautiful.



"Now we are ready to hang the house high. We have the long ladder,

the iron piece that will be stuck between the two stones, and the small rope to tie the house from the wind."

The man who designed and built the house, and we helped him, said these words while he was walking with the long ladder carried on his shoulder and the piece of iron in his hand, and I had the rope and the hammer with me, and the princess was walking behind us and did not stop asking questions.

How did this neighbor come at the right moment? I say to myself: "Fate writes the destinies of all beings."

The man climbed the stairs very quickly, the princess carried the wooden house for the sparrow. At the third or fourth step of the ladder, the princess raised her hands up and took the wooden house from her and continued ascending while I waited for him until he reached a place close to the ill-fated nest.

He took the piece of iron from his back pocket and freed the rope tied around his waist until it reached the ground. I tied the hammer and the house was leaning on the top of the ladder. He raised the hammer and

pounded the piece of iron until it was fixed between two stones. Then he hung the house and placed it inside the ring, until the house was hanging in front of the wall and in the small rope. It was attached firmly to prevent the house from shaking or coming out of the curved iron ring.

When the kind neighbor appeared before me and the evening announced the beginning of darkness, the sparrow was watching the scene from somewhere with a look full of tenderness and love that could encompass the world, and a hot tear

escaped from our eyes from joy when
he returned to the wooden house.



I said to the kind neighbor: "Fate
brought us together for a noble

purpose. Do you know the story of King Solomon, peace be upon him, with the phoenix and the pot?"

The kind man said: "No, I have not heard of it. What does the story tell?"

I said: "The story of the phoenix and our master, King Solomon, peace be upon him. The events of this story revolve around a bird called the phoenix, which always did not believe in fate and destiny. It always challenged our master, King Solomon."

Our master, King Solomon ,said to her: "There is a handsome young man from a rich family who will meet the girl of his dreams in a country other than theirs. He will fall in love with her."

She said to him: "I can prevent them from this marriage."

He said to her: "Well, I'll let you do what you want, and here are the days between us, we will meet here, we come back and meet and know what you did."

I said: "What do you think, dear neighbor, the phoenix did to prevent fate and destiny?"

He did not say a word, and as usual after the question I continued the conversation: "What did the phoenix do in the face of this challenge? The phoenix flew to the place where that girl was born and stayed near her house until she knew where she was born. Then the phoenix kidnapped the girl from her family and flew away. She flew with her far away on an island where there were no people. Then she flew with her to the highest tree and built a nest for her to live in. Indeed, the girl lived on this tree for many years with the phoenix. The phoenix used to attend the council of

our master, King Solomon, peace be upon him, every day.

Then I stopped telling the story while the princess smiled and the neighbor waited. I said to the good neighbor: "What do you think happened?"

As usual, he did not say a word, and as usual, I continued to tell the story: "One day, something strange happened. A ship had lost its way, and on board was the king's son, who had come down from the ship to investigate the place it had reached. But he was surprised with a beautiful girl who did not know how to speak, who only knew sign language. He

continued to communicate with her in this way until he liked her and she aroused his curiosity. That was the beginning... He spent a lot of time with her and left her when the phoenix was about to come.

One day they agreed that he would hide Inside the belly of a corpse lying on the deck of the ship. When the phoenix came and found her crying, she asked her “Why are you crying?” She said to her: "I feel lonely."

The phoenix said: "What can I do to make you not feel lonely?"

So, she motioned to her to bring her the corpse lying on the deck of the ship to keep her company in her solitude. So, the phoenix went and brought it. Until one day our master, King Solomon ordered the gathering of all the kingdom: the animals, the humans, the jinn, and the birds. Then he asked the phoenix: "What did you do about the agreement between us?" She said: "I separated them" Then he said to her: "Bring the girl." When she went to the girl, she said to her: "Come with me." She said: "How will you carry me?" The phoenix said: "In my mouth."

She said: "No, I am afraid that I will fall from you. I will go inside the carcass, and you will carry me."



Then the phoenix agreed and carried her while she was inside the carcass and flew with her until she reached

the council of our master, King Solomon and brought out the girl. King Solomon asked her about the king's son, so he was brought out from inside the carcass.

King Solomon said to her: "You could not prevent destiny."

From that day on, the phoenix was punished by preventing her from mixing with the rest of the birds.

The man smiled and said: "Do you really think that fate brought us together or doing good deeds to save the sparrow and our compassion for

him after the kidnapping and his deep sorrow for the young ones?"

Darkness covered the place and the dimness revealed secrets. The princess was by my side all day and now it is the beginning of the night and we are still together. I know nothing about her.

She accompanies me in my movements like my shadow. The broken-hearted bird, the tragedy of the ruined nest, and the loss of the young ones brought us together. Maybe it was the raven... who knows?

I said to the neighbor in the princess's earshot: "And what about my meeting with the princess?"

The neighbor looked, and confusion preceded his words: "Isn't there any previous acquaintance between you?"

Princess: "No. I wanted to tell him my story, but just as the little ones were snatched from their home, the sparrow caught this man's attention and we were busy with the bird's story, and I did not tell him my story yet."

The neighbor's words faltered in shock and with quick steps, he moved away. He was far away from us until he was out of sight.

I looked involuntarily towards the princess. She looked towards me like a flash of lightning and entered into the heart of the story and disappeared.

Night, darkness with a black paper cover wraps around the place. I see no one in front of me. I feel tired and leave the place.

I return now to my home. I want to sleep, my head is heavy with

stories of strangers who do not own a home, even the sparrows.

Despite my slow steps, I reached my home. I put the key in the lock, I feel a tremor sweeping through me, the door is not locked. It can't be! I have closed it tightly with my own hand. The voice comes from inside: "Why all this delay in returning?"

She is here in my house. She preceded me, and I was trying to gather my scattered thoughts.

I said: "Who are you?"

She said: "I am the princess who wants to tell the story. Didn't you tell

me the story of the phoenix that is born and returns every thousand years? But when the story ends, it begins.

The story says: So, it is; far away in the land of the far happy East, the gate of the sky is opened wide and the sun pours its light through it. Behind the gate is an evergreen tree. The whole place is beautiful. No disease, no old age, no death, no evil deeds, no fear, no sorrow live there. In this garden only one bird lives. "The phoenix has a long, straight beak and a head adorned with two feathers extending backwards. When the phoenix wakes

up, it begins to sing a song in a beautiful voice."

I said: "I understand, but what does this have to do with the story, and all my preoccupation with my bird, and how can I revive life, singing, and a comfortable life in his heart again?"

She smiled, changed her seat, shook her head mockingly and said, "You humans have been living for thousands of years in the heart of the tale of the Thousand and One Nights, and the tale returns and is born anew every night like a phoenix."

I said: "My Lady Princess, your story is as strange and wonderful as the

crown of a hoopoe bird."

She said: "Listen to the rest. Thus, after a thousand years the phoenix wanted to be born again, so she left her home and went towards this world. She turned towards the east and chose a tall palm tree with a peak that reached the sky, and built herself a nest. After that she dies in the fire, and from its ashes comes a new creature, a worm with a color of milk that turns into a cocoon, and from this cocoon comes a new phoenix that flies back to its original home and carries all the remains of her old body to the altar of the sun at Heliopolis in

Egypt."

I said: "Truly, there is no escape from fate no matter what we do. The universe is in the hands of the Creator, and the story returns in every age and time, and fate, destiny, and life are inevitable. And Allah, glory be to Him, is Wise."

She said: "Before we part, my friend, and before I tell you my story that descended upon you from the heavens above, I would like with all my heart and longing to hear the story of the hoopoe's crown, who was the

true and faithful companion of our master, King Solomon, the Wise for all eternity."

I said, "Listen, my immortal princess of tales, to the story of the hoopoe's golden crown and what happened.

One day King Solomon set out for his house in the desert. Halfway through the journey, he was seized with a fever, and felt very sick, and fell down on the ground. The king looked around him, searching for someone to help him, but there was no one there. Suddenly a flock of hoopoes descended near him. When the

hoopoes saw the king, whose body was boiling with fever, they came near his head and began to flutter and flap their wings above him with force until the king's body cooled down and he regained his strength and stood safely on his feet."

King Solomon said to the hoopoes, "You have saved my life, and I want to reward you for that. Ask for whatever you want and I will grant it."

The hoopoes asked for a day to consult together to decide what reward they would ask the king for.

The next day the queen of the hoopoes came and appeared before the king.

The king asked her: "Have you thought well, and have you reached a decision? what is it?"

The Queen of the Hoopoes answered: "Yes, Your Majesty, we have thought well, and we ask that golden crown shine on our heads."

King Solomon said to her, "I will grant your request, but know that these crowns will cause you trouble. If you decide one day that you do not

want them, come back to me so that I can help you."

The queen of the hoopoes came out from her meeting with King Solomon, and golden crowns sparkled on her head and on the heads of all the hoopoes.

From that time on, the hoopoes felt very special and walked proudly, proud of their golden crowns and their new beauty.

They would stop at every well or pool and admire their reflection in the water.

One day a hunter saw the new golden crowns on the heads of the hoopoes and said to himself, "I must seize them and take this gold for myself."

The hunter followed the hoopoes and noticed that all day long they are gazing at their reflection in the water and bragging about themselves.

The hunter decided to hunt them in a special way. He placed small mirrors among the trees, and next to them he placed hidden traps. The hoopoes saw the mirrors and hurried to examine their images, but when

they came closer, they fell into the trap.

So, the hoopoes began to be hunted, one after another. The hunter plucked the gold from the heads of the hoopoes and hurried to sell it to the goldsmith.

The hunter's neighbors heard about the golden crowns and they also began to hunt the hoopoes and pluck the gold from their heads.

Then the hoopoes were confused about where to escape from all the people who were trying to hunt them.

The queen of the hoopoes noticed the misfortunes that had befallen them, and then she remembered King Solomon's promise to her. She went to his palace and told him all that had happened since she had asked him for the golden crowns.

King Solomon felt great compassion for the hoopoes and said to their queen, "Indeed, the request you made has brought you disasters. You were foolish and arrogant, but I still remember that you saved my life, so instead of the golden crowns I will give you "crowns of feathers."

The queen of the hoopoes came out of King Solomon's palace with a crown of feathers on her head. From that day on, the hunters did not try to catch the hoopoes.

After sleep flew away and left the mind, thought and heart, I became with the princess inside the story.

She said: "Sit down and relax. The story of the crown and feathers for the hoopoe is due to his piety to the parents. Listen, and among what is claimed is that the crown on the hoopoe's

head came to him because of his piety to his mother.

Among what is narrated is that his mother grew old with him, and he used to bring her food and drink, so when she died and he wanted to leave, so he was carrying his mother's bones on his head. So, God rewarded him with this crown as a reward for his righteousness towards his mother."

I said, "Now, my princess, what do you think happened to the bird and the story?"

The princess: "Repeat to me the story of the eagle with our lord King

Solomon, and I will complete the rest of the story for you."

I said: "Before your sad story, the story of the eagle, this eagle took me high, as if he is now fluttering above my head, and he is guiding our master King Solomon to a place where he can rest."

Princess: "You made me yearn to repeat the story, and thus we have not departed from your sad sparrow, and it is my story, which is like the stories of hope to live on the planet Earth in peace."

I said: "The story of our master King Solomon and the eagle says, O my princess who resides in the heart of stories, that our master King Solomon, peace be upon him, wanted to go out one day for a walk - and God had taught him the language of birds and made him a king over them - so he said to the eagle: "Fly, O eagle, and search for us the most beautiful spot that the eye can see ,so that we can go there and relax."

The eagle said: "I hear and obey, my master."

Then he flew away in the sky, and after a while he came back.



saying: "I have found the desired place, and it is the most beautiful thing my eyes have ever seen. Will my master please come with me so that I may show it to him?"

Our master King Solomon went out, and when he reached a

large swamp, a huge tree stood beside it. The eagle said, "This is the place I mean."

Solomon said: "Wonderful! Do you claim that this is the most beautiful place your eyes have ever seen?"

The eagle said: "Yes, my lord! It is the place where I was born and under whose sky I grew up. It is my homeland."

The princess said: "After the sparrow got used to his wooden house, he started building a nest for the coming season.



Now, after I have told you the story of the sparrow, I return to my homeland, the land of tales, and the wise King Solomon returns to his vast kingdom, and you return with my story, the

house of the sparrow, to the world.
We have spent a long, hard day
between hope and disappointment,
and we must close the book and
sleep."

Translator

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