

ANAR

WHITE RAM, BLACK RAM

*(Tales of Utopia and Dystopia)*

Translated by

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**"Yurd"**

The Author

Anar Rezayev was born on the 14th of March 1938. Anar's parents, his mother, Nigar Rafibeyli (1913-1981) and his father Rasul Reza (1910-1981), were respected and distinguished poets. Born Anar Rezayev, Anar has dropped his second name and uses only his first name for his literary and professional work. This is not an

uncommon action in Azerbaijan for artist of Anar's stature.

Anar is a prolific writer who has written many works of literature ranging from short stories to novels. His work was first published in the early 1960s. His skill and talent is not limited only to writing novels and stories. He is also an accomplished literary critic, political commentator, dramatist and film producer. Anar is probably the best known popular author in Azerbaijan.

His main literary works include the novels: *"Longing for the Holiday,"* (Bayram Hasratinda), *"The Rain Stopped,"* (Yaghish Kasdi), *"White Port,"* (Agh Liman), *"A Person's Person"* (Adamin Adami), *"The Sixth Floor of the Five-Storey Building"* (Beshmartabali Evin Altinji Martabasi), *"Opportunity"* (Majal), *"I've Come to You"* (Sizi deyib galmisham), *"Without You"* (Sizsiz), *"Summer Days of the City"* (Shaharin Yay Gunlari), *"Hotel Room "* (Otel Otaghi).

He has also written a considerable number of short stories which include *"Me, You, Him and the Telephone"*, (1967); *"The Morning of That Night"*, 1964.

His script writing abilities are apparent in the scripts of the following films: *"The Land. The Sea. The Fire. The Sky"* (Torpag. Daniz. Od. Sa-ma)<sub>f</sub> *"The Day Passed"* (Gun Kechdi) and *"Dada Gorgud"*. Anar was the producer and scenarist of the film *"The Life of Uzeyir [Uzeyir Hajibeyov]"* (Uzeyir Omru).

His long distinguished writing career has been honoured. He has received the following awards: Honoured Art Worker (1976), State Prize (1980) and "The Istiglal" (Independence) Order (1998).

Anar has a very busy life; he is a member of the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan and President of the Azerbaijan Writer's Union and participates in many national and international academic and political conferences and seminars.

## PREFACE

Anar's story "Black Ram - White Ram" is broken into two tales which gives us descriptions of Baku and it's the life of its citizens by following the footsteps of Malik Mammadli. Malik Mammadli works as a successful tele-journalist producer for the "Modem" TV channel in Baku. Anar's imagination takes us to a new and different Baku.

Both of Anar's fictional tales are set in some future time and are diametrically opposite in their description of the life of Baku and its citizens. We learn little about Baku or Malik's life from Malik. An anonymous narrator tells the tales.

The first tale is a Utopian description of an idyllic Baku; the second tale is a decidedly dystopian description of life in each of the three distinctly different political areas into which Baku city is divided.

The black and white rams mentioned at the beginning of each tale are symbolically indicative of the binary opposites of Utopia and dystopia ... good and evil, darkness and light, hope and despair.

Both of Anar's tales centre on the time of the "Novruz", spring holiday, celebrated at the end of March in Azerbaijan and in many other countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

"Three", that is the number three has important significance in the story. Malik's family is three in number, his wife, his son and his daughter. In the second tale, Baku is separated into three parts. One member of his family is living in a different division or zone of the city. Each division of the city uses one of the three colours of the flag of Azerbaijan.

There is a tradition in the telling of folk tales in Azerbaijan that the tales end with a statement about the falling of three apples - "*one for the Shah, one for me another for me!*" Near the end of the second tale, we are confronted with the statement '*and three apples fell*' - but the three apples could symbolically represent a different member of Malik's family in a different Baku zone, or three different political systems, depending on how you read the story.

The Baku, described in the first story, is one full of gaiety, joy and a healthy economically-successful society. The descriptions of Baku in the tale give us vivid pictures of the Baku streets and the culture of Baku citizens, which existed at that time in the story when Azerbaijan had few economic and political problems. We are given very colourful descriptions of a modern city with its many avenues, squares, theatres, museums and sports centres. We can clearly visualize them as we walk with Malik on his way to and from work and as we see the city from the height of the "Clouds" restaurant. Azerbaijan is a centre of the Turkic world and its culture.

In the first tale, we meet Malik Mammadli as he is wakened from his sleep by the sound of the national anthem coming from his radio. He is full of joy at the coming of the Novruz holiday. We are introduced to Malik's family and to his city Baku, which Malik loves so much. In this tale, Malik does not meet his family. His family is separated, Malik is in Baku, his son is an engineer in Shusha, his daughter a university teacher in Tabriz and his wife, a theatre scene painter, is in Karkuk.

Malik Mammadli is a happy man he looks forward to the "Novruz" holiday. He joyfully reflects on the success of his son and daughter but regrets that he will not see them or his wife during the Novruz holiday.

He accepts the separation of his family as part of the necessity of living and continues with his life in Baku. The separation of his family is an important factor in the second tale. He reflects on the past and thinks about the bad times, the times of strife and war, but he is happy that those bad days have passed.

Malik is not a religious man in any strict sense but he frequently prays to God... "My God! Thousands of thanks to you for this day. Don't deprive my nation, friends, family of this happiness. Don't let any of us say "What must I do?", "How must I do?".

In this first tale, Malik experiences the joy of a Utopia, a perfect city, the city that he loves, he experiences Baku ... The first tale is a song to a future more beautiful idyllic Baku.

At the beginning of the tale, we are told about two rams, a white ram and a black ram, in the first tale Malik has mounted the white ram. The first tale sets us up for the more dramatic second tale.

In the second tale we are taken to Baku, to a Baku a long time away from the Baku of the first tale. Baku divided into zones ... zones with official names - "Behishti Badi - Kuba", "Baku Commune" and "Baku City".

We read of the ill-fated days of the past years of Baku's history but we are left to wonder about the set of circumstances, which had caused Baku to change from a happy cheerful place into one, which had been divided into three separate political zones, zones which were divided by electric wire fences and borders. As in the first tale the second tale starts with Malik once again being awakened from his sleep but in this tale not to the sound of the National Anthem ... but to the sound of the Azan. The first tale opens in the Behishti Badi - Kuba zone.

There is an Orwellian 1984 aspect and mood about the first two zones mentioned in the second tale. The third zone mentioned is perhaps reminiscent of Huxley's Brave new World in its encouragement of rampant materialism and degeneracy.

There is nothing in any of the descriptive passages of any of the three Baku zones which indicate that these are pleasant to live in. In this second tale Anar does not give us the glorious descriptive passages of avenues and squares of Baku, which were apparent in the first tale.

This second tale centres on the search that Malik had to find his wife, son and daughter. Malik had come to Baku from Turkey to look for his family. He knew that each member of his family was living in one of the different Baku zones. Each zone represents an extreme... Religious fanaticism, a communist personality cult, moral degeneration.

One could not pass freely from one zone to the other so each member of his family was confined to their own zone so his family remained separated. His wife was forced to separate from him by an intolerant religious regime. His son was a virtual prisoner of the communist regime under a dictator and his daughter had succumbed

to the materialist degenerate life of the westernised zone.

Perhaps Anar's tale is a symbolic construction of intolerance, political excess and extremes of many regimes and governments in this modern world.

Malik would visit every one of these three zones and in each one would experience the numbing sensation of knowing that this place, this zone way once his beautiful and vibrant Baku of old. He would find his family but could not reunite them.

The melancholic second tale ends by showing us that Malik is a man who seeks hope but finds nothing but despondency and he loses his hope for the future in the search. The story ends in despair.

*F.Alexander Magill*

## *TALE ONE*

Then two rams will appear fighting. One is white the other is black. The white ram will run off the black ram. Climb upon the back of the white ram. Then you will ascend into the world of light. If you climb upon the black ram, you will descend into darkness.

Malikmammad tale

Malik Mammadli woke to the sound of the National Anthem. To be more exact, he was not fully awake: he heard the music while still half-asleep. It is very strange every night, before going to bed, he tuned the Time Service of the computer to the hour early in the morning when the Anthem played. Every morning he woke to the sound of the Anthem, but before getting up and while asleep, he was full of an unknown joy. Why did the sound he heard every day make him feel so happy?

Although asleep, Malik realized that today was Novruz. He as well as the people in the editorial office, the city, and in the country, would live this day with the greatest feelings of spirit, joy, pride and tranquillity.

Even in his sleep, he thought, do not be ungrateful, he thought, was not he living every day and every night, for these last years with the same feeling of happiness as those other people around him?

Well, it was high time to get up. Malik jumped out of his bed. As course of habit, he listened to the end of the national anthem standing to attention.

He was aware that millions of people, from Darband to Ramadan, from Gazakh to Gazvin, were also listening to the anthem on the twelve national Television and Radio channels and they all shared the same feelings of pride and joy he had.

Of Course, Malik had tuned his computer to the Radio-TV channel, where he had been working as a commentator and author-producer for three years.

The 'Modern' Radio-TV concentrated their attention to cultural problems. The other Radio-TV channels showed much more interest to specific spheres of interest though these were observed universally on other channels. The private channels had their own specific programs and so their own particular audiences.

Of course, the only official state channel-AZRT tried to reflect the life of Azerbaijan and its place in the world.

Touran concentrated on the Turkish world, Khazar on the life of Baku, Absheron on life in the provinces. Araz devoted most of its programmes to South Azerbaijan. The music programme Ulduz specialized in sport and other youth entertainment programmes.

On Hilal the programmes were mainly devoted to religious matters, such as, the history of Islam, the commentary of the Holy Qu'ran, the lives of the Prophets, Imams, and the Saints.

Programmes about ethnography, folklore themes, cultural heritage, and ancient customs were more numerous during Novruz than other programmes, but Unity broadcast its programmes in foreign languages and in the language of the ethnic minorities of the country.

Savalan R-TV broadcast from Tabriz, Kapaz R-TV broadcast from Ganjah.

Malik Mammadli was the most professional tele-journalist and producer in the country, and was offered employment by all the media channels, but he had recently chosen an aim for his life - to make his Modern TV audience aware of the culture, literature and art of Azerbaijan and the wealth of art from other countries.

He never positively answered any of the many invitations and offers made to him by the country's political parties and in general, he did not get involved in politics.

Malik firmly believed that since the restoration of the historical territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and in particular, after most of the social, economic and ideological problems had been solved, politics had become, to some extent, a pleasant occupation, like sport, collecting post-stamps, or butterflies.

Really, in former times, when the ownership of property was limited and when citizens did not pay enough attention to national values the electorate of the rightists was great; when there was corruption and some people became poorer, the propaganda of the leftists was stronger. Now these problems were solved, and most voters either voted for the rightists out of habit, or voted in sympathy with the recommendations made by their parents.

The five parties in the National Assembly represented the people; two of them, to use an old expression, were right-of-centre, two of them were left-of-centre, with the remaining party centrist.

The two rightist parties prioritized national and Turkic values and were the strong supporters of the Market Economy.

The two leftist parties were the heralds of social equality and took most of their support from the working-class.

A Centrist party was ready to accept the values of the other two parties.

A coalition of the Centrist Party and the independent deputies was in power.

Malik shook his head, is it worth thinking about political problems on such a lovely sunny day?

Since the extraction of the sea oil and gas deposits, and the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan and two more pipelines and after the sale of oil brought in an income, the citizens of the country had an average monthly salary of \$1000 and were not very interested in politics.

Now, Azerbaijan had overtaken the Arabian Emirates' levels of welfare for its population, and had reached the leading European countries in cultural development.

During the last two years, the public health service, school and university education, public utilities (flats, electricity, gas, water payments), transport (excluding taxis) were free for the public.

The previous bloodstained events of Karabagh, the difficult economic position of the country during that period were now only in the realm of memories. By the way, while thinking of Karabagh, Malik remembered his son calling from Shusha the previous day.

His son Beyrak was a transport engineer, his daughter Bourla was a teacher of literature, his wife Aypari was a theatre painter.

Unfortunately, none of his family were in Baku for Novruz, Beyrak was in Shusha, Aypari in Tabriz and Bourla in Karkuk.

Beyrak was heading the construction team for the building of the funicular railway from Jidir Dyuzu to the Topkhana Forest in Shusha.

Yesterday on the phone, when Malik asked Beyrak about the construction, he said that, the Jidir Dyuzu side from Kihrs to Ghirkh pillakan, and the Topkhana side to the palace of Ibrahim Khan were ready, and the only remaining thing was to join the two sides, so it would be finished in a month.

Long live the people of Mingachevir city. They have produced such beautiful wagons and carriages for the trains and they really are worth seeing. Therefore, in summer, when you come to Issa Boulaghi's rest house, you will pass over the Gargar river by the funicular railway.

Beyrak was a dreamer, some years ago, when the thought of constructing this funicular railway came into his head, no one considered it to be a serious proposition, but now, you can see that it has been constructed, now he wants to build a teleferique cable way to the Kirk Kiz yaylaghs, and why shouldn't he?

Recently, Shusha has become one of the biggest tourist centres in the Caucasus.

The gentle climate, the life-giving springs, the hunting in winter, the alpinism, and historic monuments

attract tourists from all parts of the world. The five-star and other smaller hotels built by Jidir Dyuzu, Arimgaldi, Topkhana, Issa boulaghi forest, hardly meet tourists' needs. Tourists have to make reservations several months before they wish to visit the area.

At the Uzeyir Hajibayli music festivals held every year in autumn, it is difficult to find vacancies in the hotels, not only in Shusha, but also in Lachin, Aghdam and Khankandi.

Beyrak spoke more about Akhir Charshanba<sup>1</sup> than the funicular. It was the first time he had spent Akhir Charshanba in Shusha, and he was speaking about the race between the fast Karabagh horses on Jidir Dyuzu and the polo-like game Chovkan play. He also discussed the bonfires, which illuminated Karabagh and burnt all night until the morning and the children's tradition of jumping over the fires and throwing special grass onto them. He talked of the voices of the singers that filled the air, of the Karabagh Shikastasi, a kind of national music, of the Karabagh nightingales, eight to ten year-old children who received the Khari-bul-bul award for their success over the older singers.

Beyrak said, "You know, the professors of Navvab Mugham Conservatory were very glad."

Beyrak spoke so passionately that Malik felt as though he was presently experiencing the two holidays that he previously spent in Shusha.

Malik washed, shaved, did his exercises and then checked his e-mail on the computer.

He had received many messages wishing him happy Novruz from his journalist friends in Turkey, Iran, Russia, Georgia and Europe. He glanced through the e-mails, but began to read a letter from Karkuk; it was from his daughter Bourla. She had been teaching Azerbaijani literature and language at the Fuzuli University in Karkuk:

My dear father, mother, Beyrak,

Happy Novruz Holiday. I wish you all good health on this fine day. I had promised that this year we should spend Novruz together in Baku, but what a pity, that was impossible. Tomorrow I am flying to Urumchu, I've been invited to the Mahmoud Gashgarli University. I'll fly on to Moscow from there, and then from Moscow to Bakhchasaray. At Gasparali Ismayil University, I've got some lectures....

Malik thought, Zalim kizi, you go from this side into the world then go out from the other. That university is yours, - this university is mine ... and then continued reading.

... I ate my heart out for not being able to come to Baku, during the Novruz holidays this year. I miss you so much. How long must we only see one-another on the computer screen and write to one-another? Don't forget that you are always in my heart. I kiss you warmly-

Bourla.

Malik felt regret, when he thought about 27-year-old Beyrak and 25-year-old Bourla who were both married and they have not given their parents the chance of feeling the joy of being grandparents.

He looked through the cultural pages of today's newspapers on the office computers. Maybe there was news he could use in his program.

The 'New Day' newspaper reported the international Caspian-Black Sea Cinema festival held in May in Nabran.

"Damn it, we are not even able to throw light on these festivals, and competitions, theatre contests or celebration days and now another one appears. How many holidays and ceremonies can one have?"

The Dada Korkud rites in Gobustan every three years, Koroghlu sports games every two years in Moughan; The Days of Nizami in Ganjah; The international academic discussions on the theme of "Islam in the Caucasus" in the religious centre Ashabi-Kaf; the festival of historical plays in Narin-gala open-air theatre in Darband.

The Days of Sabir in Shamakhi; Days of Molla Panah Vaghif and Samad Vourghun in Gazakh; the poem

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<sup>1</sup> The last Tuesday of the year

and music conferences of Vaghif, Natavan and Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, the Yunis Emre ceremony in Gabalah; the Laughter festival in Sheki; the dance contest in Lankaran; the memorial day of Serge Yessenin in Mardakan; the Shahriyar week in Tabriz; the Khatai symposium in Ardabil; the Mugham nights in Maragha; the ashig competitions in Tovuz, Salyan and Toufargan.

"Come out, and carry out all these, even, if you cannot participate in all of these ceremonies, you must report them lest the other channels should beat you to it."

The 'Oghuz' newspaper informed its readers about the Turkic world during Novruz. In Kazan, a ballet performance was being prepared based on Gara Garayev's third symphony and Violin concerto. The Rudolph Nouriyev theatre invited one of the most avant-garde choreographers Roger Dupon to perform his work.

Turkmenistan opened a museum devoted to the oil-workers of Azerbaijan who had provided a great service to help with the discovery of Turkman oil in Nebildagh.

An international academic conference on the 'Eurasian moral space and historical Russian-Slavonic-Turk-Tatar cultural relations' began in Moscow.

In Istanbul, there was a week of Georgian films. The newspaper asked why there was not a week of Azerbaijani films shown instead of the Georgian films.

The Worker's Lamp demanded that the government should explain the reasons for the delay in the construction of sanatoria for workers in Kalbajar. The Workers' Trade Union also published astatement on the subject.

There was an announcement about the youth football game between the rightist Grey Wolf and the leftist Amakchi teams in the Azad Azerbaijan newspaper.

Malik thought that no matter who loses the game they would blame the referee.

The Chinar monthly magazine published a report on the preparations for July's joint exhibition of Caucasus painters; a photograph of the Ahmad Javad monument-'Spring' which was on the way to the Goy gol, was also published.

The front cover of the Turk country magazine, displayed the monument of Nazim Hikmat in Istanbul, but inside the magazine were coloured photos of the Talish Culture days, held in Sheki, and illustrations on the Lazghi-Avar national art exhibition opened in Nakhchivan.

The Land of Fire monthly, reported on the scripts produced by the four biggest studios of the cinema township of Karabagh, Azerfilm, Touran film, Khazar film and Gobustan film, but in the Sheytan bazaar weekly, there were the usual rumours and gossip about the inhabitants of the Karabagh coast villas and film stars.

Without any laziness Malik cast a glance to the site of the Pari Jadou weekly, again horoscopes, spells, magic, sorcery, predictions gleaned from all kind of superstition .... Malik thought, "Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one can find people who read and believe this".

The Nine Season's spring collection was also published; it showed the current styles, fashion and collections of clothes in vogue. Why was the magazine called Nine Seasons? He recalled that every issue of the collection had the legend - 'Fine feathers make fine birds'.

The Azerbaijan Hearth monthly informed that the Armenian Shirvanzadeh theatre in Khankandi, presented Mirza Jalil Mammadgulu-zadeh's play 'Kamancha'. Malik thought it was good to choose just such a play, which as it called for compromise, understanding and overflowed with the great humanist aim of telling the truth.

The cruel events of the 1990 have not dropped out of people's memories and may never, even though the Azerbaijanis have returned to their native lands, to the lands previously occupied by Armenia.

After the rights of the Armenians in Daghlig Karabagh were equitably resolved, there was no need for conflict. After the Georgian Azerbaijanis obtained the same rights, and after the territorial integrity of Georgia was restored on condition that all the cultural-economic requirements were met and there was mutual understanding, there was complete stability in South Caucasus as well as in North Caucasus.

In a short time, reconstruction work bore fruit, due to cooperation between people unemployment was eradicated, the tourism industry along with the other branches of industry developed rapidly.

Now the Caucasus had really become a Mecca of tourism. Only two of the many tourist companies had

any great opportunities, the joint Silk Road multi-national company and Caucasus Tour company.

The Silk Road Company arranged a travel tour 'from Baykal to Balkan'. Although the tour often started from Baykal, it sometimes began from the land of Yakout Sakha lands or from Orkhan monuments in Mongolia and ended in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus.

Although tourists could travel by plane most often they preferred train or bus:

The 'Three Axes' express train carried passengers from Eastern Turkislan, Altay, Kazakhstan, Central Asia to the coasts of the Caspian Sea. The large ferryboats 'Azerbaijan' and 'Turkmenistan' ferried trains and buses to the Turkan port of Baku. From Baku they either travelled on to Turkey on the Baku-Tbilisi-Batum Sirp railway and from there to Europe, or to Turkey by Baku-Khoudafarin - Sadarak - Igdir route and then to Europe.

The Caucasus Tour company offered a comfortable monthly travel service from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea and from Neft Dashlari in Azerbaijan to Bakuriani, Elbrus, Tiberda, Dambay in Georgia to the lake of Goycha and Dilijan.

Tourists were offered souvenirs of the works of Guba metal masters, Guba carpets, the handicrafts of Lahij coppersmiths, Shaki silks, Baskal silk headdresses, vines from Georgia, cognacs from Armenia.

Malik cast a glance at the Bildirish Notice board. The week of Husseyn Javid plays in the Mirza Fatali Akhounzadeh State Drama Theatre was continuing with success. The Uzeir Hajibayov State Opera-Ballet Theatre announced a tour of the soloists from the Lascala theatre of Milan. In the Husseyngulu Sarabli Mugham Theatre, a different note from seven mugham chains would be performed every day of the week, Chargah, Segah, Rast, Shour, Bayati Shiraz, Houmayin, Shushtar...

The Georgian Theatre would host Shakespeare's Coriolanus on the stage of the Husseyn Arabli Theatre. A nostalgic show of Chaplin and Fellini films was about to begin at the Cinema-club.

Holiday concerts were held in the Kara Karayev music-centre, the Niyazi concert-hall, Fikrat Amirov Oda music-house, the Tofiq Kouliyev variety-theatre, the Rashid Behboudov Song-theatre, and the Vaghif Moustafazadeh jazz-club. In the Theatres of the Ichari Shehir, the old walled city, the following plays were performed, the Orta play, Karavalli, Kilimarasi, Zorkhana and Shabih along with other ethnographic holiday plays.

Holiday exhibitions opened at the Shah Ismayil Khatai history museum, the Nizami literature museum, the Sultan Mahammad National Art Gallery, the Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev world culture museum, the Sattar Bahloulzadeh modern art museum, the Ilkal art museum, the Ziya Bunyadov Army museum, Hassan bay Zardabi and Mikayil Mushfig libraries.

Malik made notes on his electronic notebook; of course, he could not visit, watch or listen to all of the performances and exhibitions. That is why he decided to go to the Ilkan open-air art museum, situated at the bottom of Korgud Mountain, and send his colleagues to the other exhibitions and performances.

Statues of stone horses and rams recently found in Lerik were included in the exhibitions. - its out of this world ... he just had to see the statues but would he have the time?

He was not even able to visit the recently opened departments of jeweller's art, coppersmith work, tracery, potter work and calligraphy of the National art museum situated in Ichari shahar. Yesterday, a presentation of the second edition of Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov brothers took place in the Pushkin culture centre.

Unfortunately, he has never found time to read the new translation of the novel. Even worse, he was not able to listen to Abraham Gouberman's report 'Religious Tolerance in Azerbaijan'<sup>1</sup> in the Landau Jewish centre, yesterday. Is he able to find time?

He was invited to the Hafiz Shirazi party at the Behzad Iran house of culture; he had not been able to go there, either. There is special pleasure in listening to Hafiz in the Persian language.

The videophone rang. Malik picked up the receiver and saw Aypari's worried face on the small monitor. After greeting, asking her mood, holiday wishes, Malik asked:

"You seem worried. Why are you so disappointed?"

Aypari said:



"Of course, I'm upset. Some of the stage decorations have been delayed. We couldn't prepare the performance for Novruz".

Aypari had been in Tabriz for several weeks. New staging was being prepared for the Koroghlu opera at the Abdulgadir Maraghayi theatre, and Aypari had been invited as the stage designer.

They were going to perform the premiere during the holiday, and now, the decorations for the Chanlibel stage had not come yet.

Malik changed the subject to divert her thoughts, "What happened? Did you find someone to play Nigar? He knew that they had someone.

Aypari answered, "Oh, didn't I tell you? At last, we found someone. She is a third year student of the Urmavi Conservatory. She has little experience, but her voice is not bad."

Once again she returned to the previous topic.

"Oh! My God! Everything was ready, you see, how they spoiled our work. I told them to send the decorations by the Ghir express-bus, but no, they saved money, and sent them by the ordinary Dyur-At bus; that's why the performance is late."

She could not calm herself.

Malik consoled her, "Oh, well, don't be dispirited. When one door closes, another opens; I'll come to Tabriz in a week to see your premiere."

"Only come only by the Ghir-At express-bus."

"Where will I find that kind of time? I'll arrive by the morning plane and return by the night plane. Beyrak phoned me, but Bourla sent me a message. She is flying to Urumchu."

Aypari answered, "Yes, *I* know. She sent me a message, too. Beyrak also phoned. He said, the last charshanbah was excellent. Here also, it was very flamboyant. At night, the fires on Eynal-Zeynal Mountains were so beautiful. I've also drawn some sketches. Tomorrow we will light a torch at the top of Ark Hill.

Malik said, "I know, don't you remember? I prepared a programme from that place a year ago."

Aypari said, "Surely, I remember. Well, again happy holiday and kiss you Good-bye."

Now, the little monitor showed the pretty smile on her face.

Malik took the elevator to the first floor, went out into the yard, took a remote control from the pocket of his coat, directed it to the garage door and pushed the button. The doors of the garage opened.

He pushed the second button of the remote control and the driver's door of his car opened. Malik's car was Jeyran. However, Beyrak and Aypari had insisted that he bought a Maral, Beyrak had been driving Maral for several years and never tired of praising the qualities of this car to his father. But, though Jayran it was cheaper and faster it was lovely for Malik. The Maral produced in the Ganjah automobile factory is built in conjunction with Ford, but the Jeyran produced in a Sumgayit factory is built with the participation of Fiat.

He turned on the engine and drove out of the garage; the garage doors closed automatically behind him. Turning left from the yard, he drove the car into Sheikh Mahammad Khiyabani Avenue. Malik once read that the Bayat quarter, where his flat was, used to be called the Eighth kilometre micro-region. What a strange name, why the Eighth kilometre micro-region? Maybe, if you measure from some place in Baku to the region it would be eight kilometres. Micro-regions, what strange words were used those days for districts. Regions were called the first, second and so on ... micro-regions. Oh my God! What a strange view these buildings have! Malik had seen these old names in cinema archives and chronicles, one by one, he recalled the names of the present quarters of the city, Afshar, Gajar, Gashgay, Shahsevan, Kangar, Bayandir, Borchali, Zangazur and Igdir. But, no matter what anyone else thought of the Bayat quarter, in Malik's eyes it was more picturesque than all the others. Just behind the 30-storey building where he lived was Kara Yazı Park and the 'The Flying Waterfall' in the park was worth seeing.

Malik took his mobile phone from his pocket and phoned his long-time tele-journalist friends. He had internet connection with friends living in Ankara, New York, Moscow and Tehran. He had made agreements with CNN, TRT, Eurasia of Moscow and Irani-nov of Tehran to show the Azerbaijan Novruz program only from the Chaghdash TV channel, not from the others. It would not only be a good advertising, but would also bring some benefit.

The directors of the other channels will get very frightened, Malik smiled, and thought, 'Shame on you!' he scolded himself for such selfish thought but calmed himself thinking, 'however, they must have thought something'. By the way, most of the people working in other TV stations were good professionals and were his close friends.

He passed through Khiyabani Avenue, he moved into Chanaggala Square. Turning near the grandiose statue of Kamal Ataturk in the square, he entered Karagoyunlular Boulevard.

Karagoyunlular Boulevard was one of the seven most famous boulevards in Baku after the factories of Kara shahar were moved to the Three Hills area in the suburbs. Khazar Boulevard extended from Bayil to Zigh and is mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records, this coastline boulevard is the longest in the world.

The Fuzuli Boulevard stretches from Jafar Jabbarli square to Narimanov Avenue and is the most luxurious and splendid boulevard in the city. The city's most expensive flats and most splendid hotels the Fuzuli Palace was once called the Republican Palace, the Drama theatre and the new Opera building are situated there.

The biggest cinemas in the city, the Aynour, Dalgha, the Jafar Jabbarli city-theatre and a number of exhibition halls were located on the right and left sides of the boulevard. On Fuzuli Boulevard at the intersection point of Alibay Husseynzadeh and Ahmad bay Aghaoghlu streets stand the statues of the two friends from whom the streets took their names.

Fuzuli Boulevard and Khazar Avenue extended along Khazar Boulevard were so brightly illuminated that even this strip of light could be seen from seventh heaven, from spaceships.

In contrast, Karabagh Boulevard is more melancholy and calmer. The memorials situated along this boulevard were chosen for their originality. On the monument to the martyrs killed in the Karabagh battles was an eternal flame in the form of an ancient fire.

The Khojali tragedy memorial displayed burnt ruins and piles of blackened stone and firebrands to represent the destruction of the city, smoke rose into the air from the firebrands. Part of the Shour symphonic mugham by Fikrat Amirov played every hour to enhance the sombre atmosphere of the memorial. The memorial of the Dik-uchar Helicopter tragedy was also extraordinary; the faces of the people who died in the tragedy were engraved on the monument. A grandiose the Triumph Arch, erected in front of the railway station, gave some consolation for the bitterness of the tragedies.

Of the various monuments and memorial places in Baku, Malik liked, most of all, the monuments, situated in Karabagh Boulevard, and the National Square. From the Bilajari side of the city, moving on to January 20<sup>th</sup> avenue towards the centre of the city, in the National Square, stands the Diranish Monument, which replaced the monument to the 11<sup>th</sup> Red Army regiment. The Diranish Monument made from the rear end of a tank, was so placed that it appeared to rear up like a horse. If you looked at the monument from the front, you could see the tank lifted by the bare hands and strength of the people who opposed it. The Diranish monument, in the National Square, the carnations, painted at the places where the people had died, along January 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue evoked memories of the tragedy of those far off years. The people of Baku still felt the effects of the tragedy.

The 'Seven beauties' boulevard situated in the area of the Azerbaijan cinema next to the Puppet theatre, was the smallest but it attracted most tourists. The exhibition halls and restaurants in the 'Seven Beauties' mode theatre were in competition with one another to try to be more attractive and fascinating for customers. However, the main attraction of the boulevard was the 'Seven Beauties' fountain. At night, the many-coloured figures of the seven beauties that represented Azerbaijan's seven climates appeared to be dancing in unison to light effects accompanied by Gara Garayev's music. Tourists threw coins into into the fountain pool in the hope that they would once more return to Baku.

The second most popular tourist attraction was the tower in Jafar Jabbarli Square. Every day, at twelve o'clock sharp, to the accompaniment of Uzeyir music, coloured china characters, of the Arshin Mal Alan Opera came out of windows in the tower and bowed to the people gathered in the square. The Sabuncu station, which for a long time was an unused railway, was converted into the Arshi Mal Alan Culture and Shopping Centre.

Araz Boulevard started at Vahid Azerbaijan, a square that represented a united Azerbaijan. In front of the enlarged

Seljug stadium, the former republic Stadium stood the equestrian statues of three great Seljuk rulers, Sultan Toghrul, Alp Arslan and Malik Shah. The Tofig Bahramov Sports museum stood on the right side of the entrance to the stadium. This museum displayed more than 40 Olympic and world championship medals and a number of prizes won by Azerbaijan athletes. Near the stadium were the Salavan and Shahdagh hotels. In front of the Salavan hotel stood the statues of six well-known historic Azerbaijani statesmen, Aranshah Javanshir, Ghizil Arslan, Shirvanshah Ibrahim, Jahan-shah Garagoyunlu, Aghgoyunlu Uzun Hassan, Shah Ismayil Safavi. Six other statues of historic Azerbaijani statesmen, Nadir shah Afshar, Garabaghli Panah Khan, Ibrahim Khan Javanshir, Shakili Haji Chalabi Khan, Gubali Fatali Khan, Ganjali Javad Khan, stood in front of the Shahdagh hotel. The Araz Boulevard ended at this point. Six obelisks erected along the Araz Boulevard commemorated the liberty struggle of North and South Azerbaijan. The Mashrutah Obelisk to the Sattarkhan movement of the 1905-1906, the 28<sup>th</sup> May Republic Obelisk, the Azadistan Obelisk of Khiyabani movement, the 21 Azer Obelisks of 1945, the liberty Obelisk of North Azerbaijan of 1991 and a symbol of Azerbaijan unity the Khoudafarin.

The seventh well-known Boulevard was Ashiglar Boulevard, previously called the Erminikand Boulevard. Malik was approaching the entrance to the boulevard in his car.

Every morning on his way to work, he parked his car and spent half an hour walking along the boulevard. There was a monument to Ashig Alasgar, at the entrance to the boulevard. This monument mirrored the thoughts of the verses of Ashig Alasgar.

*On Wednesday, near the spring, I fell in love with a blue-eyed lady*

Near the monument stood a spring with the images of Ashig Alasgar and the blue-eyed lady.

As he moved along Ashiglar Boulevard, Malik enthusiastically repeated the verses written on the spring, he had known these verses from childhood.

Gourban says:

My heart is ablaze from this.  
What have I done, that my lover is separate from me.  
Is it because of the parting that  
Her neck is awry?  
nowhere I saw  
The violet to be straight.

Karajaoghlan (personal name),

Much did I cry,  
I laughed not.  
I looked for a remedy  
For my ailment,  
But, I couldn't find.  
In such a day! I wasn't begged,  
Help me. Don't send me there sad.  
Your breast is whiter than the snow of mountains,  
I want to lie and to die on it.  
Oh! Fog, leave these hills,  
Let their tops bare fruit.  
Let my eyes not see you,  
Nor my heart weep for you.  
Ashig is from Karabagh,

Your mole is connected with snow,  
None arrive, none depart.  
The roads cut off by snow.  
On our back we have a kirmani sword,  
Of its javelin can breach stones,  
The state issued a decree about us,  
The decree is the Shah's, but mountains ours.  
They are as high as angels, and with sweet accent,

This world is an Old sorcerer,  
It has been a play since the beginning,  
This world is in the clothes of Youth,  
And can easily deceive you.  
Death is true,  
One cannot avoid this order.  
Don't put iron rings,  
To the silken net.  
It is months and days  
That pass from the life.  
We hurry to know:  
How much time till spring?  
If I die today,  
Everybody will say,  
What an unlucky man!  
One or two, only,  
Can grieve for me.  
The flowers blossomed,  
In my lover's garden.  
I'll die if I don't gather,  
I'll be killed if I do gather.  
It's the second half of the day,  
The evening is coming.  
You see, what happens  
    Veysal will leave this world,  
    But his name will remain.  
    Wish my friends,  
    Would remember me.

Every spring had inscriptions of a given ashig performer. On the spring one could read the words of Ashig Gourbani, Abbas Tufarganli, Pir Sultan Abdal, Sari Ashig, Garajcaoglan, Dadaloghlu, Amrah, Ashig Ali, Ashig Basdi, Molla Jumah, Ashig Veysal. Malik was pleased that the grief and sorrow of the ashig goshmas, garaylis, bayatis, in Fuzuli gazals, in the sad poems of ancient poets, in the sorrow of Segah, Shushtar, and Humayin were eternally recorded. Because, a man needs some sadness, sorrow and regret, though the days of his life and nation are very happy and careless.

Maybe now when our sadness and sorrow has passed, and remained in the past, new

literary works will not shake our hearts, as did the old ones. Very fine editions of book, very bright monthlies, weeklies... but it is a pity that you do not find works which shakes the hearts of people. Maybe, it is the substitute for our luxury and prosperity. Who knows?

Through habit, he took a sip of water from each of the springs. He returned to his car, he turned into Firudin Ibrahim Street from Ashiglar Boulevard, passed the statue of Mirzah Jalil Mammadgulzadeh, the Gachaq Nabi Sports Palace, Sheik Shamil Garden and arrived in Ganjah Square in which stood a monument to the memory of the Ganjah uprising of 1920.

In front of the Samad Vourghun Garden, in Bulbul Garden, a statue of the great master had been built and two statues, the statues of the poet and singer - standing face to face greeted each other.

Malik drove into Fizuli Boulevard passed by the Military Academy in front of which the double statues of Aliagha Shikhli and Samad bay Mehmandarov stood.

He cast a glance at the new building of the Opera building in Fizuli Boulevard. Seven multicoloured stained glass panes were places in the seven large window bays on the facade of the Opera house. The stained-glass windows showed scenes from the operas Leyli and Majnun, Shah Ismayil; Ashig Garib, Koroghlu, to the ballets Kiz Kalasi, Yeddi Gozal, One Thousand and One Nights. These scenes were very attractive at night. Architects and painters had placed these stained-glass windows above the pool situated in front of the theatre so that the coloured-glass pictures reflected on the surface of the pool in front of the Opera house.

Malik went to Abulfaz Elchibay Avenue, passing by Dournalar Park the Park of Cranes. In Dournalar Park, the double statues of Vaghif and Vidadi looked as though they were absorbed watching the flocks of cranes flying to far-off countries. He drove to Safavilar Avenue, passed through Kizilbashlar Square, and headed towards Shahidlar Mountain. The Shahidlar Museum situated below the graves of the martyred victims of March 1918 Karabagh and January 20th, exhibits, pictures, photos and documents showed the tragedies that people suffered in the twentieth century, in 1905, in 1937, the twenty-one Azerbaijanis murdered in 1946 Black January of 1990, Baghanis Ayrim, Goukark, Khojali.

Fixed on either side of the stairs to the museum on Constitution Street were the remains of the metro carriage in which musician Rafiq Babayev died, a scientist's Zhigouli crushed under the tracks of a tank on Sumgayit road, an Ambulance riddled with bullets during the Bloody January, the bus blown up on Yevlakh road.

After ascending Shahidlar Mountain Malik reached his office and gave the keys of the car to an attendant who put his car into the garage.

He had some time to spend before starting work. His office was in the near East's recently built tallest radio and TV tower. He took a fast lift to the top of the tower and entered the Bulud restaurant. The Bulud rotating slowly; it took half an hour to complete a revolution. One could sit in the Bulud and view a 360-degree panorama of Baku and its suburbs. There was an open-air cafe, the Buludustu above the Bulud restaurant, but it was impossible to sit there in such a cool March day. As the restaurant made its rotation, Malik ate his breakfast, drank his aromatic Astara tea and every day looked out on his native city.

First, he looked lovingly at Azadlig Square as his crew had installed several cameras there that day.

The building, which was once Government House, was now the 'Palace of Fires'. On each of the four towers of the Palace, there were four eternally burning torches. These sixteen torches represented the ancient territories of Northern and Southern Azerbaijan, once called Khanates, on the right side of the building, Baku, Ganjah, Garabagh, Shirvan, Shaki, Nakhchivan, Lankaran and Guba, on the left side, Tabriz, Ardabil, Zanjan, Maragha, Urmiyah, Garabagh, Maku and Khoy. It was said that on Shahidlar Mountain, there had once been a monument of a certain revolutionary, Kirov, now there were three shining torches, the symbol of Baku.

While the 'Bulud' restaurant was rotating slowly, Malik could see the torches burning at the five entrances of the city. On the intersection point of Balakhani and Sourakhani highways, on the Hirdalan highway, in Sulutapa,

on Lankaran highway - in Kardagh, on Sahil road, in Turkan, and in the sea, Big Zirah and Small Zirah islands, on the hill once called the Tin of Macarov. After the surface of the Caspian Sea had subsided, the Tin of Macarov hill and the remains of Sabayil appeared and one of the three-torches was placed at the sea-door of the city.

The Bulud restaurant slowly rotated to a point where Malik could clearly see Narghiz Island. Malik remembered that once there was an intense argument about the name of the island. When Narghiz changed from its former name, Big Zirah, there were some objections as it might be confused with the Zirah islands in the Caspian.

Then someone remembered that a certain writer named Anar called this island Narghin in a story. This Anar it was said was the Chairman of the Writers' Association, but later worked as a conductor in Sourakhani-Azizbayov bus service until the end of the life.

Anyway, this name was accepted, Narghiz Island, as it was close to both the old name Narghin and to the celebration of the Flower Holiday held there every year.

Narghiz Island was a famous sanatorium and entertainment centre. Some people once objected to the idea of a sanatorium. The island has a tragic history. During the Soviet period, many innocent people are said to have been executed and then the bodies were thrown into the sea. For that reason, a monument was erected to the memory of the victims of repression.

Some people said that the repression victims were really victims of their own wishes; they wished to see their nation happy and free.

The people of today, children and adults, would have a good rest there, amuse themselves, and make the spirits of the victims happy. Therefore, the name was accepted, and thousands of people came to the adults and children's entertainment places by ship and boat, especially in the spring and summer weekends.

At the highest point of the island, the Devil Wheel a Ferris wheel so big that it was clearly visible from Khazar Boulevard, Bayil, Zigh and of course, from here the Bulud restaurant. The Devil Wheel painted in the seven colours of the rainbow, when seen from the city only half of it was visible, because the other half only appeared on the other side of the island. The devil wheel reminded one of a rainbow of seven colours.

When the wheel reached its highest point people could clearly see the whole island, the expanse of the Caspian Sea, distant parts of the city and on the flat part of the island a colourful flower map of Azerbaijan.

The Min bir ghejah<sup>2</sup>, Omar Khayyam, Bahlul Danandah entertainment centres presented interesting programmes until the early morning. In the Vatahah seafood restaurant, one could taste not only the fish of the Caspian and the Kur River, but bounty from other oceans, seas, lakes and from mountain streams of other parts of the world.

Naturally, during the morning, the entertainment places on the island closed. Delegations who visited the island laid wreaths on the monument for the victims of Repression. The monument's guards of honour threw flowers to the sea from each of the four sides of the island.

It was possible to go to the island by sea-trams, which started every two hours in working days, and every hour at the weekends. The sea trams Kizil Balig, White Balig, Ata Balig, Shahmaya, Sazan, taxi-boats, motorboats, sail-boats rushed to the island from the city. Of course, the people who owned yachts and boats could come to the island any time they wished, but in windy or stormy weather, they were not allowed to make the crossing. Private boats dropped anchor by the bridges of yacht club on Bayil Cape and the different colours of the beautiful ships reminded one of a flower garden. The most graceful ship was a gigantic ship hotel called 'Sail'. She was built in the style of an old schooner and had three white sails. There were summer restaurants on the open deck and winter restaurants inside the ship.

The Bulud had rotated somewhat and now the Bayil Height could be clearly seen. On the highest point of the Bayil Height is the Grand Chanlibel Castle Hotel. On the roof of the Castle, there was an equestrian statue of Koroglu that could be seen from all parts of the city and from the sea.

It was possible to go to Narghiz Island and to the other islands of the Caspian Sea from different parts of the city (many rest houses, beaches and sanatoria were available for people who needed health treatment).

Even bigger ships sailed to Salyan from Baku. From Baku they sailed to Yevlakh along the Kur or Araz rivers,

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<sup>2</sup> One of thousand and one nights

tourists favoured these routes most. The Azerbaijan ships, Dada Korkud and Nizami made the round trip from Baku to Astrakhan, Anzali, Mahach-Gala, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The ships carrying passengers or tourists on a cruise sailed to and from the Baku seaport. The sea-trams started either from Bayil cape or from the bridge of the Khazar Museum Aquarium on the Boulevard. One of the big unused shelf-drilling rigs had been brought to the boulevard and hitched to the shore as a museum. The floors of the rig displayed the history of Navigation, Fishery and Oil production. Under the water line of the rig, there was an aquarium whose walls were thick glass.

The Bulud turned and Malik's attention fell upon the territory once called Ilich Bay, an area that oil workers left a long time ago. The American Disney Fairy Tale World now occupied that site. After long discussions with Disney and a financial compromise, the name of the place was accepted only in Azerbaijan Turkish, not Disneyland or Disneyworld but the 'Disney Fairy Tale World'. The humorous electronically controlled figures of Jirtan, Giants, Fairies, Witches, Dervishes Gyul Kah-gah hanim, from whose mouth flowers spew when she laughed, Pirim the hunter, Armudan bay, Karagash and pretty Fatimah who played hundreds of tricks on children to make them feel happy.

A cable way was constructed to connect Disney Fairy tale World to Korgud Mountain. On the slopes of Korgud Mountain, overlooking the town, at a place called the Golden Marquee there was a restaurant and the Korgud Hotel. The comfortable rooms looked like Alachig tents, Danya shacks and Mukhura tents. The White Marquee on the side of the mountain overlooking the Shikh Beach had tent rooms and the Epos Theatre. The Cyclops cave on another side of the mountain was also one of the prettiest entertainment places of children. When children saw the giant electric figure of Cyclops, they were frightened but they enjoyed the performance and laughed happily.

While the Bulud was rotating, the top of Korgud Mountain was clearly visible. The silhouette of the giant Dada Korgud monuments complex on top of the mountain could be seen. Dada Korgud complex consisted of five monuments illustrating the folktale. Dada Korgud with his gopuz, Beyrak with Banuchachak, Salour Gazan, and Bourla Khatun together with forty slender wasted girls, Karajah the shepherd bound to a big tree torn out by the root.

As the Bulud, rotated Malik remembered the places that he had walked through step by step, but he could not see from the Bulud.

The Sea-trams which started from Sangachal and stopped at Karadash, Shikh Beach, Bibi-Heybat, Bayil the city centre and passed by Ahmadli, Gunashli, Zigh, Hovshan, Turkan to reach their final-stop - the 100<sup>th</sup> well derrick on the Shah Tongue.

The 100<sup>th</sup> well derrick, which had long been out of use, was a place of interest. Tourists, who went to the top of the well by elevator or stairs, could see the Absheron through binoculars. In future, the sea-trams would sail to North Absheron settlements, then to the Jorat gardens and Sumgayit, returning by the Shah Tongue. Malik remembered the volcanoes of Lokbatan, Cheildagh in his imagination and reached farther places, the Jeyran-Batan reserve.

He knew that during this holiday, today, there would be picnics in special parts of the Jeyran-Batan reserve. The smoke rising from barbecues in the corners 'Cooking areas', the bread baked in tandirs, the smell of kebab, singing and dancing...

"Don't breathe the smell of kebab, and eat your cheese and bread, there is little time left", Malik said to himself and left: his world of dreams. The rotating Bulud allowed him to cast his glances to every quarter of the city one by one. He saw his thirty-storied building in the distance. He remembered Razin Cave in Gachaglar garden, saw the new skyscrapers of Gunashli, Zeytun Woods, too...

The Bulud turned and Malik looked again at Azadlig Square, the Odlar Palace. Azadlig Square had been cobbled with coloured stones to show a huge magnified picture of the Sheik Safi carpet.

In front of the square, on the boulevard, several centuries old Khan Plane tree which had been brought from Ganjah, the cradle of modern Azerbaijan independence. Two Plane tree shoots were planted on either side of the Khan Plane tree. Some commentators called those shoots the shoots of independence and responsibility as the

plane tree is the symbol of Azerbaijan. The Khan Chinar, can remain forever between these two ideals, independence and responsibility. The plane shoots would grow year by year and one day reach the height of the Khan Chinar.

Malik remembered that under Khan Chinar there was an indicator of distance. Roads distances were measured from this point. Six arrow road-sign indicators showed the distance in kilometres and nautical miles to the farthest place in six different directions. To the east, Shah Daniz, to the North, Darband, to the north west, Sinig Korpu, to the west, Sadarak, to the south west, Urmiyah and to the south, Zanjan.

On the facade of Odlar Palace, a symbolic figure showed where the statue of Lenin once stood. A stone monument showed the figure of a man climbing up a slab wall with a real three-coloured Azerbaijan flag in his hand. The monument design was based on a famous photo of the 1990s taken when a brave man stuck the Azerbaijan flag into the square. The well-known words of Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh were inscribed on the monument, *'The flag once raised will never fall'*.

After the reconstruction of the Odlar Palace, it became the home of the Milli Majlis. In the conference hall of the Milli Majlis,<sup>3</sup> the State Flag and Emblem hung; the main thesis of the Constitution was inscribed thus:

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN IS A UNIQUE, FREE, INDEPENDENT, DEMOCRATIC, WORLD STATE OF THE AZERI TURKIC NATION. CITIZENS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, NOT DEPENDANT ON RACE, ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE, RELIGION, SOCIAL STATUS, CLASS COMPOSITION, SEX, HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. AZERBAIJAN IS AN INSEPARABLE PART OF THE GREAT TURKIC WORLD. THE AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE AND ALL TURKIC NATIONS AND ALL THE ETHNIC MINORITIES LIVING IN THE COUNTRY ARE BROTHERS. AZERBAIJAN WILL LIVE IN PEACE, FRIENDSHIP, AND MUTUALLY USEFUL COOPERATIVE WITH THE STATES OF THE WORLD.

Of course, this thesis was a cause for specific discussion and debate, but by common agreement, parties and the neutral members of the Milli Majlis accepted it.

The right and left parties also came to an agreement in an important question, which related to Azerbaijani heroes buried in other countries. All parties addressed this question to the Government. The Government showed a positive attitude to the appeal and because of the discussions with foreign governments, the bodies of Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh, Alimardan bay Topchubashi, Fatali Khan Khoylu and Nariman Narimanov were brought from Ankara, Paris, Tbilisi and Moscow to Baku, and placed in the 'Panteon', the National Peace Tomb, in the centre of Baku. The corpse of Seyid Jafar Pishavari was brought to Tabriz and buried in a grand sepulchre. The transfer of the bodies of Nizami and Fuzuli faced some difficulties, but in spite of this, at last, their bodies and that of Mirzah Fatali were brought to Baku.

On the mountainous part of the city, the sepulchres of Nizami, Fuzuli and Mirzah Fatali stood side by side. The sepulchres were built in traditional Oriental style, the sepulchre of Mirza Fatali was built in a modern western style and for a long time the design of the sepulchre was a cause for much debate. Now people's eyes were accustomed to the design of the three sepulchres and the previous discussions were forgotten.

The Bulud rotated and the Dayirman, a department store drew Malik's attention. This store was built in place of the old mill. Last month windmills with coloured blades were placed in front of the building; the colours represented the characteristics of Absheron. They gave a special charm to the building. The Dayirman department store was one of the in Baku, and was competing with Caravan department store.

Dayirman built these coloured wind windmills in answer to the Caravan's advertisement reflecting the balanced movement of the camel caravan using a light display on the roof of the store at night.

Near the Dayirman the Garden of "March of 1918, once called the "Garden of the 26 Azerbaijanis' were killed in March 1918. Now the Kadar, the statue of grief was erected there, and the requiem of Kara Karayev sounded every hour, had found their real address.

The statues of some so-called revolutionaries, had somehow been miraculously saved, some people wanted the

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<sup>3</sup> Parliament



statues destroyed as they thought these were the statues of very cruel people, not revolutionaries. However, the statues were placed in the yard of the Museum of the Victims of Repression, which was once the main KGB building. Now the people who killed others were 'arrested', even as statues, they were imprisoned in stone for life.

Malik looked at his watch - it was half past twelve. He had an hour and twelve minutes left until the end of the year.

The tea seller registered Malik's credit card and bade him good-bye as he entered the elevator. He pushed the elevator button for the basement. When he left the elevator, he boarded a small railway carriage on the underground road reached the basement of the Chaghdash TV channel. He entered the elevator and went up to the seventh floor.

His long-time friend, the producer at the control desk, Arkhan was already in his place. They greeted and wished each other happy holiday.

Malik sat on his chair and began to watch the monitors. One by one, he looked through the monitor sequences and reflected on the different places along the road from Yanardagh to Kiz Kalasi and asked Arkhan, "But, where is Yanardagh?"

Arkhan replied, "There, just on the first monitor."

"This is the Yanardagh motel, I don't need any motel, and you forgot that the main object is the fire coming out of the ground."

"We have that one, too on the spare monitor. I thought you would begin from the motel." Arkhan replied

Alikan had become a little disappointed. Malik had a nice attitude towards his young and resourceful assistant, so he joked and changed the subject, "Maybe, you have become interested in the gipsy dances in the Yanardagh motel."

Arkhan said, "There aren't any gipsy dancers in the Yanardagh motel. There are only Fire dances. Gipsies perform their dances in the Karachi caravanserai."

"Just where is it situated?"

"In Gobustan, near the protected Sofi Hamid graveyard. Have you never been there?"

"Never - such places are for youths like you." Malik replied and thought that he must find time to visit this Gipsy caravanserai.

"You say it is situated in Gobustan?"

"Yes."

Malik was in Gobustan last summer to watch the Ishig-Sas performance. It was really worth watching this fantastic play shown every Sunday, there were many people.

Sea-trams, buses, cars, even helicopters carried streams of people to Gobustan. The foreign tourists who liked exotic travel came to Gobustan by phaeton and camel.

Arkhan said, "Here are the fires", the first monitor showed the fires of Yanardagh coming out of the ground.

"Show a close-up"

In eight or ten minutes, a young man the Agh Atli, the White rider - on the back of a white horse, wearing a white Bukhara sheepskin hat, and white Caucasian coat his name must be Nov-ruz, this year it was perfect - his name was Novruz, his second name was Bayramli. Yes, this Novruz Bayramli on the back of a white horse was to light a torch in Yanardagh fires, then gallop on his horse and take the torch to Baku, climb to the top of Kiz Kalasi, the Maiden Tower, and light the Great Torch, at the very instant the year would end. It was out of the question to be a minute or even a second late.

Malik looked at the time-schedule on the screen of his electronic notebook and said;

"Get ready! Start!"

"Ready, in a minute you come on the air, Malik bay", Alikhan replied

Malik started his commentary "Hello, **dear** audience, happy holiday, I wish you a good holiday, good days, months, and years in future ... let the coming year be as good as the year that's going; for all of us, for the whole nation, the state. You will be able to live the worried and joyful moments of this happy holiday by watching Chaghdash TV. Now our cameras will show you the sequences from Yanardagh. This natural fire, coming out of

the depth of our ground and flaming forever, gave us the name of our country Odlar Yourdu, The Land of Fires. Now, the fire coming out of this ground will be delivered to the Kiz Kalasi in Baku - the pride of our history. His commentary was a little bombastic; he reproached himself and continued his speech in a calmer tone, "Novruz Bayramli, on the back of a white horse, will bring the torch kindled here, to Baku."

Malik pushed the button and the off-screen announcer, began to read some information about Novruz Bayramli, while the text printed on the screen. The birth date, year, month, day, birth-place, education, occupation, marital status, et cetera, it was also mentioned that he was a Master of racing sport.

Yesterday, Malik looked at different photos of Novruz on the computer, but now the young man on the monitor seemed to him to be more handsome, his physique, thin moustache, joined brows. The white outfit suited the twenty-two year old man very much. The white thoroughbred Karabagh horse under him was playing on the spot.

At an exact pre-determined moment, the man on the white horse approached the fire, placed his torch in the flame until it ignited, then whipped the horse and began to gallop away from the fire.

The cameras along the road were following Novruz Bayramli step-by-step as Malik was speaking about the places he passed or about Novruz. The man on White horse started galloping from the bottom of the Shubani Mountain and set off to Kourid Kapisi by the old Caravan road.

Malik pushed a button on monitor number eight; the statue of the Grey Wolf next to the Kourid Kapisi appeared on the monitor. Malik began commenting, he spoke of the Boz Kourid totem and its significance for the Turkic nations. Then he ordered the cameras to be turned towards the 'September 15th' memorial.

"Dear, audience, these places are surely familiar to you. We've broadcast programmes from this memorial, many times, and you have probably come here on excursions. On the 15th of September in 1918, as you know, the Turkish people call September 'Eylul' an Islamic Caucasian Army entered Baku at this very place, fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the fighters of the young Azerbaijan Army and liberated the city from our enemies. Now this memorial shows the diagram of the battle for Baku and as you know, you can see the image of Enver Pasha, the architect of the victory march and the images of Nuri Pasha and Mursal Pasha - the victory commanders.

Three large avenues beginning here and intersecting with one-another have been named in honour of the pashas - Enver Pasha Avenue, Nuri Pasha Avenue, Mursal Pasha Avenue.

Novruz on White Horse would pass along these avenues. You see, he is galloping up the hill towards Kourid Kapisi. He passed by Kourid Kapisi and made his way towards September the 15th Square through Mursal Pasha Avenue.

Malik knew that, though this square was called September the 15th, though most people confused September with July, as they knew that Salvation Day was on September 15<sup>th</sup>. As the square has a statue of a Turkish soldier, some people called it Mehmelik Square or they called it Three Pashas Square as it was at the junction of three avenues.

Malik held the monitor remote control in his hand and began pressing buttons, I wonder, what the other channels are showing? AZRT - broadcasted official congratulations. Touran broadcasted holiday sequences from Dashkand, Gazan and Ashgabad, Araz from Tabriz.

Hilal reported the religious roots of the holiday. Ulduz was following the route of the young man on White horse. During breaks, it showed advertisements and clips.

As the young man on White horse approached Azereft Square, Malik gave instructions,

"Show the derrick in close-up, then the well sweep, separately."

Pushing the button for broadcasting he said, "Dear audience, now on your TV screens, you see the derrick in Azereft square. This derrick and its well-sweep is always working, going up and down continuously day and night", a close-up of the well sweep was shown on the monitor, "are the symbols of the inexhaustibility of our oil resources under the ground and sea, and of the honourable work of the oil-workers who extract the oil. Now

Novruz Bayramli will appear in the square ... going round the square he will gallop towards Kiz Kalasi by Khazar Avenue. As you see, the traffic has stopped on the avenue. Thousands of people on both sides of Khazar Boulevard are waiting for the young man on White horse."

As he went off the air, Malik gave instructions to Alikhan "Show Kiz Kalasi, first of all, a long shot, then panorama below." He started broadcasting again. "Our cultural, historical resources are as endless as our oil resources. Here is the memory of a thousand years - ancient Kiz Kalasi. At the bottom of Kiz Kalasi forty slender-waisted girls wearing colourful clothing and carrying green wheat grass, coloured candles, holiday trays gave a special charm to this rejoicing."

One of the girls came forward. Malik continued his commentary "Here is Bahar Hatun wearing green clothes. You see Novruz leaves his horse at the bottom of Kiz Kalasi, drinks sherbet from the jug given by Bahar Khatun then raising the torch in his hand, he climbs to the top of the tower."

Arkhan inquired about the cameras "Have we any cameras inside. Shall we show him ascending the stairs, in the tower?"

Malik smiled meaningfully as he replied "No. We don't need semi-dark views inside the tower. Show the people then the roof of the tower when the young man appears with the torch in his hand it will be more effective and immediately after that our surprise."

What they called a surprise was a cunning device of Malik's, when the young man Novruz, reached the top of Kiz Kalasi, he lit the torch, which could be seen from every part of the city. The instant the year was over, torches would be lit on the tops of the four Towers of Absheron, Nardaran, Ramana and Mardakan. At the same time torches would be lit on the Narin Tower in Darband, the Shamil, Tower in Shaki, the Torch Tower in Devechi, the Asgaran Tower in Karabagh, the Alinja Tower in Nakhchivan, the Gulustan Tower in Shamakhi, the Niyal Tower in Lahij, the Bazz Tower in Guney and the Ark Tower in Tabriz. Last year, and the year before that, it was the same sequence of Novruz events and Malik had asked his cameramen to shoot everything. Malik had kept the filmed records.

As soon as he saw the torch lit on Kiz Kalasi, he would show the previous year's sequences one after the other. The television audience would imagine that these events were happening at that very moment in time. That was Malik's cunning surprise. Though it was a bit of a falsification, his presentation was not a lie. All these events happened now just as they did last year and the year before that. Malik smiled with pleasure. In any case, we give the other channels second place.

The great torch lit and the Year was over.

Now the holidays would begin. This time, Malik had decided to show only the holiday celebrations in Ichari Shahr, not those held in the other parts of the city.

Behind Kiz Kalasi, in the Bazaar Square, ropewalkers were displaying their skills on light ropes, which were tied from one side of the square to the other. The Old Baku Museum was located in the reconstructed residences of the Baku Khans. The Museum exhibited the wax figures of gochou a chieftain, a dervish, Hambal and Dadash the porters, Gochou Najafgulu the assassin, lotou a swindler and the roguish Jabbar. Horse drawn carriages, phaetons, a gazalag, a konka, were exhibited along with the engravings of European artists of the Middle Ages, photographs of old Baku, and with the first photo views of Old Baku and the caricatures of Azim Azimzadeh.

In the square in front of the museum, two characters, Kechal and Kossa made people laugh. People came here in an endless stream.

Wrestling and Sword fighting were demonstrated in the hamam, bathing houses, of the Shirvanshahlar Palace, which was spread with carpets for those events. Tourists did not know which of these plays and performances to watch or whether to visit the pastry-shop in front of the paraffin statue of Mashadi Ibad, or the haberdasher shop in front of the figure of Hadji Kara, or to spend time in the Dervish or Kharabat meykhana, drinking houses and bars.

Malik gave instructions to Arkhan, "continue the programme yourself. I am going to Turkan; I'm late. A Happy Holiday to all of you."

He drove his car towards Khazar Avenue, which was now open to traffic, but was very crowded. He passed

through Azadlig Square, and entered Gara Shahar, where the traffic thinned out. He took a cassette from the glove compartment of the car, put it into the player on the dashboard, and pushed the play button. Malik listened to one of his favourite pieces of music. The music of Bach flowed from the cassette player.

With the city of Universities, Hovsan, behind him, he was moving towards Turkan by the coast-road. Malik played another of his favourite pieces Albinoni's Adagio. Malik began to think about the composers of these pieces, Bach and Albinoni. What was it that made these geniuses closer and native to him? The distance of the ages separated them, time, space, environment, customs-and-habits, cultural heritage, norms and manners of behaviour, in one word, 'everything' was quite different. However, what astonished Malik was how these men, Bach, Albinoni, Vivaldi, Corelli, and Mozart, in camisoles, tight pantaloons, lace collars, with powdered wigs on their heads, could express his feelings through elevated sounds. As if these people from distant countries, distant times, could feel the deepest feelings of Malik Mammadli, **the Azeri Turk of the twenty-first century**, and demonstrate those feelings through such miraculous melodies.

Was it not a miracle, the miracle of the distant ages, but it came to his mind, that it was also a miracle of twentieth and twenty-first centuries that he could listen to music here, in his car. You insert a small tape cassette, into an apparatus and a world of beautiful sounds and melodies become a reality, evidently, the people of that period would have been astonished by such a miracle.

Through the open window of the car, a silent south-west wind from the Caspian Sea was gently stroking his hair. On the right side of the main railway line, he saw the word TURKAN written in capital letters.

Turkan city, built instead of the former settlement, was to some extent the spiritual centre of the Turkic world. Turkan city held most of the interTurk cultural, economic, financial, and Mass Information Media organizations, the embassies of independent and autonomous Turkic republics and their permanent representatives.

At the entrance of Turkan, the road forked. The upper road led to Dinlar Square and the grand Ahmad Yassavi mosque built by Turkish government. Near the mosque, a small church, sovmiyyah, built for Christian Gagauzes people from Moldova. On the other side of the road a synagogue for Jewish Garaims, a Buddhist Temple a present from Tuva and the shaman Temple for Yakuts.

Near Dinlar Square, was the Manas Sport Complex, there were open and closed sports facilities and swimming pools.

The Otukan Forest began at Turkan airport and ended at the Silk Road Fair. The Otukan Forest contained many different species of trees brought from all parts of the Turkic World. Fortunately, these trees grew well and decorated the forest with different shades of green. Silk Road Fair sold goods not only from Turkic countries but goods from every part of the world.

Visitors to the fair could obtain anything they wished; Kazakh and Kirghiz dombas, Daghistani Yapijji felt-cloaks, Uzbek quilted coats, Turkman Ahal-taka horses, Chinese glazed tiles, Kazan carpets, Arabian spice, Japanese screens, Indian aromatic sandalwood sticks, even African masks. The latest technologies of the West, Japan, and Korea drew the attention of different companies.

At the Aral, Issik Gyol, Altay, Marmara, Aghri Dagh restaurants, cafes and bars, you could taste Uzbeks Beshbarmag, Turkish Imam bayildi and other cuisines. You could also drink koumiss, Zamzam water, and green Uzbek tea. Planes, ships and trains delivered the goods for sale at the fair to Turkan airport.

You could fly to all parts of the world from the International Binah airport, Baykonour planes taking off from Turkan airport connected with every Turkic country.

At the crossroad Malik, turned right through Salavat Youlayev Street and entered Orkhon Square. This square was constructed in a circular form. In the middle of the square were the huge enlarged stone copies of the Orkhon book inscriptions written in three different alphabetic forms, Boyuk Big, Kichik Small, and Gultakin Tonugug.

Four different buildings enclosed the square, the University, Theatre, Scientific Centre and Library. Specialists on the country-studies, history, language, literature, geography and the economy of the Turkic nations

trained at the Kamal Atatürk University. Theatre plays from different countries were staged at the Nazim Hikmat Theatre. Tonight the Mahammad Gazi play would be performed in the Kurd theatre.

In the Mahmud Gashgarli Investigation Research Centre, research on the joint history and literature of Turks, bilingual dictionaries, language, common alphabet and a common Encyclopaedia of the Turkic world were commissioned and prepared. At the Farabi library, one could make use of any of the largest libraries of Baku, Istanbul, Tashkent, Tehran, Baghdad, Gahira, Moscow, Petersburg, Washington, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Vienna. Microfilm of all books and manuscripts on Turkology from Matenadaran, and their copies placed on the computers.

Malik passed Orkhon Square and came to Hunlar Boulevard. On the right side of the boulevard, there were the embassies and permanent missions of twenty independent and autonomous Turk republics. On the left side of the Boulevard were the cultural centres of Yousif Balassagounlu, Younis Emre, Alishir Navai, Mahdumgoulu, Abay, Abdullah Tougay and Ismail Gasparali each respectively representing the following nations, Uyghur, Anadolu, Jaghatay, Kazakh-Kirghiz, Idil-Ural and Crimean Tatar. In the two neighbouring buildings, the Ziya Goy Alp Home and the Soultangaliyev club, right wing and left wing politicians gathered and hotly discussed many political questions.

Malik drove through Hunlar Square and entered Oghuz Square. Unlike Orkhan square, this square was quadrangular and built in the style of the Reghistan Square in Samarkhand. The form of the square, the architecture of the buildings and their glazed tile fascias reminded one of Samarkhand, Bukhara, and Khiva. On one side of the square stood the high building of the Turan Hotel and the other the tower of the Arkonokon Palace, between them the Turkish Museum, the fourth side of the square faced the sea.

In front of the Turan Hotel flew the pennants and religious flags of ancient Turkic empires, states. In front of the Arkonokon Palace the flags of the modern Turkic republics fluttered. The Arkonokon Palace, held the economic, cultural, academic, education, information, financial, health and sport Commissions of the Turkic World. The grand conference hall held the bureaus of airline companies and tourist organizations, the offices of news agencies and media-television correspondents. Important ceremonies were also held in the grand conference hall.

Malik stopped his Jeyran car in front of the museum and gave his keys to the parking-attendant. He passed by a poster on which he read 'The Exhibition of the Turkic World Resources-March 22 - April 22'. Showing his press card, he entered the museum. He was late for the opening ceremony but there were so many people in the room that it was nearly impossible to move. The display area for the Sheik Safi carpet in the great foyer was particularly congested. Malik had seen this carpet in London at the Victoria and Albert museum, but unlike that semi-dark hall, it was in a place full of light. The Sheik Safi carpet glittered, maybe, it glittered because, it had returned to its native land. Malik began to reproach himself, "Stop your fervour! Besides, it has not returned forever, only for a month."

After long and exhaustive talks, the Government of Great Britain permitted the carpet to be displayed in Baku, but only for a month and the carpet had to be accompanied by a group of guards. The oldest carpet in the world, the torn Paizirig carpet was hung behind bulletproof glass and was under guard. People of different nationalities were standing in front the Piri Rais map and listening to multi-lingual explanations from the tour guides. School pupils and foreign tourists, especially Americans, were very surprised by the fact that Piri Rais made his map before Columbus discovered America as the map showed the American continent. Malik made some notes on his electronic notebook and moved away thinking, "It is possible to come here in a convenient time and prepare a perfect programme,"

In the semi-darkness of the equinox of March he drove to Baku by the Kamar Road not on the Guney coast road.

Malik realized that he had not eaten since morning. One by one he remembered the restaurants situated along the road. When he passed one particular place he made his decision; he would go to the Baku Nights restaurant of Ayli Ghejalar, the Moonlit Nights Park on Zigh slope. He would have his supper there tonight. He was fond of that

restaurant. There were surely many restaurants, which had tastier and even more exotic cuisines, but what attracted Malik to this restaurant was the view from the veranda, not the menu of Baku Nights. He usually watched the city that he loved, with an endless love, from very high places, or from the night flank standing face-to-face with the sea. It was impossible to get the opportunity to watch the city from this very vantage point every day. He enjoyed looking at the view of Baku from the open veranda of the Baku Nights. He watched for hours, as he did not see these views every day. He ordered and ate his food, but even after eating he didn't want to leave. Sipping Qipchaq wine, he watched at the city's twinkling lights, the Khazar, the transport caravans moving like a flow of light along Fizuli Boulevard, sail boats and colourful ships in the sea were sailing back and forth, the Devil Wheel, the rainbow on Narghiz Island.

Sabail castle, restored and fronted with white Absheron stone looked as though it had risen from the legends not from the sea, but the heart of the past, history appeared in the waters of the Caspian sea.

As the powerful light projectors, of the Chanlibel Castle hotel of Bayil, lit Sabail, one was not able to determine whether what one saw was real or a dream. Malik knew that a poetry party would begin soon in Sabail Castle. He wondered whether the poets were able to write poems worthy of this legendary-castle.

One-by-one the torches of many boats sailing in the Caspian began to flare. Malik thought, "Well, this is new. I haven't seen this before. Why don't I have any information on it? It is the first time this has happened". Maybe they read the story of Alexander Dumas about him seeing a fire in the sea at Baku and became inspired, in any case, bravo to the man who thought of it."

Though he anticipated the moment, he was startled by the noise of a salute. Many coloured fireworks shot into the sky from the warships Babak and Sattarkhan. The fireworks rose into the night sky like many bouquets of colourful flowers.

Abruptly something strange happened among these coloured holiday views, as he heard lively, merry, music around him and as he saw smiling faces everywhere. A feeling of melancholy overcame Malik. What was the reason for the melancholy? An unknown voice, a message conveyed not by e-mail, telegraph, ether-waves or radio waves, but by an unknown means, an open warning about the frailty of life, the transience of life?

In the past few years due to the success of medical advances, the life expectancy in Azerbaijan rose to about 70 or 80 years of age, as it was in leading countries of the world. Malik knew that he would live at least for another 20 to 25 years, but it was also his plateau, his definite limit.

As in his childhood, Malik still believed in God. He believed in the existence of life after death, life in another world. He thought, maybe that world was much more beautiful, comfortable, and more pleasant than this world. In any case, a man, who lives the bad days in this world, and whose life was spent in trouble and torture, does not want to die, but do we say about a carefree man living in a carefree country in a carefree period?

Carefree... very often he would repeat this world in his heart, but was his life as carefree as that of other citizens? Was it really so? Surely not, to be free from social problems, job, flat, and every-day material-financial problems does not mean that our life is carefree. No system, or just society or luxurious life can save a man from hours of loneliness, the bitterness of unrequited love, jealousy, and brokenness of dreams. Malik remembered that he still had the pain of the loss of his parents who died some years ago and of his cousin who was buried a year past.

Of course, great misfortune would overcome him and his nation. Some years ago, political upheavals reached bloodstained peak, there was military curfew and the danger from separatist attacks and foreign aggression was real. If the bloodstained events had been worse, he could not exist today in the Ayli Ghejalar Park in Baku, maybe in Baku, in Azerbaijan, even in this world. Fortunately, the powers of avarice were overcome by the instinct of eternal self-defence in the nation. The speed of development of the nation slow to start became rapid, then fast and reached the confident level that exists today. Now, you cannot find any unemployed person, poor men or unhappy-miserable citizens in Azerbaijan, unhappy men do not exist, but are they really happy? The question is this, when a nation or people are unhappy, every child is unhappy, but when a nation or people are happy, no child can say separately, I am happy. Naturally, everyone is confident about the fate of his or her state or country and happy for it, but has not every person stood face-to-face with Loneliness, parting and in the end with death?

Malik thought. "What pessimistic thoughts I have on such a beautiful holiday. Don't think so philosophically. Look at the city, how charming! How sweet it is!"

The statues of Dada Korkut and Koroglu lit very suitably by light projectors, Sabail emerging from the waters like a mermaid, the burning Novruz torch on the top of Kiz Kalasi, the many coloured ships, the Nana band, the Devil Wheel on Narghiz Island, the camel caravan moving heavenly on the roof of the Caravan department store, the torches of Odlar Palace, it was worth coming into existence and living in this world to see these sights.

However, when the time come to leave the world, it should not be fearful, if we live our lives and work as men. We shall leave this world, but Kiz Kalasi, the pictorial Gobustan rocks, the narrow streets of Ichari Shahar, the Inner City, Shakespeare and Fizuli, Bach and Seghah will remain, but, in any case, I wonder, what will happen after we depart, how life will be then?

Malik remembered a poem that he once read in his youth,  
I wonder, who will light new lanterns,  
On the Caspian coasts,  
I wonder, who will sing new songs,  
And in what languages?

The poet's anxiety was in vain. We light the lanterns on the coasts of the Caspian ourselves and sing the songs in our native language.

Maybe under the influence of his grandmothers, Malik had believed in God heartily and candidly, since he was born. He was not religious, never carried out religious duties; he never performed namaz, never kept the fast in Ramadan. It never fell to him to make pilgrimages to holy places. Every night, before going to bed, he repeated the prayer that he had composed and sometimes he even repeated it in his heart on TV programmes. It was not time to go to bed, but he repeated his prayer in his heart with inner need, on the open veranda of the Baku Nights restaurant of Ayli Gzhejalar Park, which overlooked the Caspian, "My God! A Thousand thanks to you for this day. Don't deprive my nation, friends, and family of this happiness. Don't let any of us say 'What must I do, how should I do it?' We met a lot of torture, trouble, lived hard days, stood face-to-face with life and death. At last, we began to live a happy life owing to our will, intellect, honest labour and we achieved this day of ours. May these days go on forever and ever, my Almighty God! Amen!"

## TALE TWO

And he saw white and black rams approach fighting.  
Malikmammad jumped out and climbed on the back of the white ram.  
But the white ram threw him onto the back of the black ram.  
And the black ram carried Malikmammad into the world of darkness.

Tale of Malikmammad

The sound of the muezzin calling the Azan woke him up. He opened his heavy eyes; it was still dark when he looked out of the window. Someone knocked at the door.

"Who is there?"

From the other side of the door he heard someone calling him, "Sir, get up please, it is high time you performed the Morning Prayer."

It was dark last night when he entered the room. He was tired, went to bed immediately and slept like a log. Now he was trying to remember the room in his imagination. There was a bed, a wall-cupboard, a table, no chairs, but there was shabby matting and two long round pillows were thrown to the floor. Again, he heard the voice from the other side of the door, "Agha, the place for namaz is in the mosque on the first floor of the hotel." '

Malik lit a night candle. The kiblah, the direction to which a Moslem turns when praying was marked in the corner of the room and there was small carpet laid and ready for namaz.

Malik said, "I will perform my namaz in my room."

From behind the door the voice replied, "O.K."

Malik got up from his bed and approached the window, it was still dark outside. He made some notes about his plans and looked through his pocket calendar; it was March 22, the equinox. He remembered that once, very, very long ago, on this day he used to celebrate the Novruz holiday. He sighed deeply. He washed in the room where a washstand basin was placed and looked at himself in a small grubby mirror. It seemed as if his beard had grown considerably during the last few days, but he did not shave. He had not forgotten Arkhan's words, "You'd better go there with beard."

He did not hurry to leave the room. He let them think that he was performing namaz. He was aware that since he arrived in the zone that every step he made was spied upon. However, the technical level of his watchers was not so high that they would hide spying devices inside his hotel room.

The sound of the azan spread over and throughout the zone.

Zone! He felt a suffocating colic in his heart, the city in which he was born, grew up, studied, worked, loved, married and became the master of the household was now a Zone. To exact, one zone, even more exact one of three zones. His Baku had been divided into three zones.

Though the world called these three zones three political zones, the foreign mass media called them 'The First Zone', 'The Second Zone' and 'The Third Zone' These regions had official names, the First Zone BEHISHTI BADI - KUBA, the Second Zone BAKU COMMUNE and the Third Zone BAKU CITY.

Some years ago, while going on a ten-day official journey from Turkey to Baku as a tele-journalist, could he begin to think that his journey would last for several years, and that millions of Azerbaijanis remained in other countries would not be able to return to their motherland. Such horrible, incidents would occur that he would no longer smile as an Azerbaijani.

Now, did he imagine that his return to Baku after a number of years would be dreadful and exhausting; the torments that he had suffered the previous day were more painful than he thought.

Malik had lived in Turkey since he left Azerbaijan. At first, he had much trouble including financial difficulties. He did not manage to get any information about his family who lived in Azerbaijan. Even after the roads closed, but also after the post, telegraph, telephone connections were severed. He was not aware that his wife Aypari, his son Beyrak and his daughter Burla were alive after such fatal days.



The only joy of the last several years was the good news that Arkhan had brought him. Arkhan was the only acquaintance and person that he knew that during the last several years was allowed to leave Azerbaijan and go to Turkey. Malik did not know how Arkhan had come to Turkey and frankly speaking he was not even interested in that. He could only guess that he had connections with the secret service agencies of one of these Zones, otherwise, how could he leave the place and come here. Was Arkhan in the service of the theocrats, communists or democrats of one of the zones? Is it of any importance considering the good news Arkhan brought Malik?

His wife, son, daughter remained alive, through the ill-fated days and tragedies of those times, they were alive. In such situations, at such a time, what more joy could he expect than this?

Arkhan had brought the addresses, phone numbers of his family. Of course, it was impossible to make a call from here, in Istanbul, but what surprised Malik was their living not together but separately, at different addresses.

Arkhan smiled and said, "They not only live at different addresses, but also in different zones."

Previously Arkhan had worked with Malik. At one time, Malik must have done Arkhan great favours, but Malik, who had lived all his life according to the formula, 'throw fish into the ocean, if that fish doesn't understand, God will understand', did not remember the favour that he did. Malik was surprised that Arkhan had remembered the favours and he considered it a rare quality in a man.

Of course, Malik was sure that Arkhan had come to Istanbul to perform a special task, nevertheless Arkhan said that he found Malik on his own initiative and gave him some good news, but also gave him a warning, "If they know that I've met you, they will kill me."

Malik pondered quietly for a moment, "If they know? Who? The theocrats, the communists, the democrats?"

Malik did not ask him, firstly, Arkhan would not tell him. Secondly, he was not really interested in these matters. He was aware of both his illness and the shortness of this life. He had only one wish, to see his wife and children before the end of his life. Arkhan was like a magician coming from the world of miracles. He had read the wish in Malik's eyes.

When Arkhan asked 'would you like to see your wife and children', Malik could not believe his ears.

"Nothing in the world is impossible. I've held negotiations. You will go on an official journey from one of the Turkish newspapers, as though you are going to prepare some materials about these three zones.

Malik said, "But, no Turkish journalists are allowed to go - *there*."

He used the word *there*. He could not bring himself to call Baku - his Baku a Zone.

Now his Motherland was for him *there*.

Arkhan said, "It is true that you will be the first journalist, not only from Turkey but also from any other country to see these three zones. Because, depending on his political leaning, political views, the country that he lived, journalists seldom visited any of these zones, but you will be the first and the only journalist to get permission to visit all three.

At last Malik became impatient, "How did you manage to do it, Arkhan?"

"If you tell anybody, what I have done neither you nor anyone else will ever see me."

"Surely, but you can tell me, I will not tell anybody."

"Don't be offended, but I can't say. Maybe, in the future there will be a convenient time and I can reveal my secret then, but now you must obtain some documents, which are very difficult to get, and must also complete some forms. You will be given special documents so can go to the three Zones."

After listening to Arkhan Malik made a serious point and had to say these words, "I don't need the three Zones; I want only to see my family."

Arkhan smiled sadly, "The problem is that each member of your family lives in a different Zone, and nobody is allowed to cross from one zone to the other."

He followed Arkhan's instructions and did what he had to do to obtain the necessary documents. Every one of the three different documents showed that he was the journalist Malik Mahmadoğlu and was on an official journey to Behishti Badi-Kuba, Baku Commune and Baku-City.

Though he was behind the curtain, he realized perfectly that he was there because of Arkhan's aid, but he did not know what Arkhan would ask for in return. He did not have any belief in the disinterested benevolence of people and them remembering kindness done in the past.

Whatever happened, Arkhan had brought him news from his family. Malik was ready for this journey, which could even result in his death. According to the conditions of the blockade, he was permitted to leave Turkey only by one route; he had to fly to Geneva and from there he could fly by American plane. Arkhan had informed him that the three Zones had only one airport and it was called Ercade.

"What is Ercade?"

"RCD is an abbreviation, the first letters of three words- Religion, Commune and Democracy."

Malik smiled, it was the first smile seen on his face in the last few years.

Arkhan gave him some necessary instructions, "As the three Zones have only one airport, you will have to pass through three frontier-posts and three customs-offices. Try to take few things with you, take into consideration the peculiarities of each Zone otherwise your belongings might be confiscated. And one more thing ..." Arkhan put his hand into the pocket and took out a wad of American dollars and gave them to Malik, "You will need them at every step of the way.

Malik did not want to take the money, "I've got money."

Arkhan said, "You cannot even leave the airport without money, not to mention getting to the city. It is up to you, if you don't take the money, it is not worth going."

Malik casually took the money, "I don't know how I'll return your kindness."

Arkhan said, "I won't be able to return your kindness till the end of my life. You saved my child."

Malik remembered that some years ago, during *that* life and in *that* motherland, Arkhan's two sons were born and a month after their birth they both died of heart attacks. When his third son was born with the same heart defect, the most popular journalist of that time, Malik roused the most skilful specialist-doctors to save the life of the child. He was not aware of the child was alive, but anyway, he asked, "How is your son?" He had forgotten his name.

"Very well, thanks to you."

Malik thanked Arkhan once more and, put the money into his pocket, "I'll return my debt as soon as I have an opportunity."

"I'm obliged to you; you are not obliged to me. Do you remember, the time, I worked as an assistant typesetter at the printing-house and you were an ordinary correspondent, still not a famous journalist. Our salaries were delayed again; I didn't have a manat in my pocket even to buy bread. You knew it and took two manats from your pocket, gave me one, one manat, saying that that was all the money you had. The one manat you gave me is worth more than the money I gave you, because now I gave you only a small portion of the money I have, but you gave half of your money to me."

While bidding good-bye, Arkhan said, "Whatever you see there, don't become a pessimist, you'll meet and see a lot of strangeness."

Really, the strangeness began in the airplane. Three and a half hours after the plane rose into the sky above Geneva, one of the cabin staff announced in three languages, English, Russian and Persian that the plane was landing and the passengers had to fasten their seat belts. Malik looked out of the plane window at the land below. He looked at the city, the city that for some years he had seen in his dreams, now he saw it from the heights of the sky. He could see that only one part of the city was brightly lit. A greater part of the city was in darkness or faint lights could be seen here and there.

The flight attendant walked along the rows of seats and gave women passengers' black full-length veils. The women who sat with uncovered heads, mini-skirts and decollete dresses began to shuffle into their black veils. The flight attendants paid attention to the women putting on their veils because no hair must be seen.

Malik was aware of what was happening, he knew that, first they would go through frontier-post of Behishti Badi-Kuba, that is why the women had to obey the veil law of this zone. But when a guide with a beard approached and asked him to untie his cravat, he could not help being surprised.

"Can my tie do any harm to anybody? The guide shook his head and said, "Agha is right, but the law is such."

Malik noticed that the other passengers untied their cravats and gave them to the guide. The guide wrote the ticket number of the passenger on a slip of paper and pinned the slip on the cravat. He assured the passengers that he would return their cravats when they left the zone.

After the plane landed, they came up to the frontier post situated under a board on which was written in the Arabic alphabet, 'Behishti Badi-Kuba'. A green flag with a half-moon was fluttering overhead.

The frontier-guards spent at least half an hour checking the documents of every passenger, they looked attentively and repeatedly at the photographs in the passports and the faces of the passport owners, sometimes they went somewhere and asked advice about something, then returned back checked the documents again. Some passengers were called aside and were taken away somewhere. Malik's heart began to beat strongly; now they will find something, he will get into trouble and the wish that he has been longing for, for so long would not be realized. The voice of the frontier-guard interrupted his thoughts; it was his turn to be checked. The frontier guard demanded, "Agha, show me your Identification Card."

Malik gave the guard his passport and the document that Arkhan had given him. The frontier-guard, turning the documents left and then right for a long time, stamped a seal on them and returned to Malik. Malik, in his heart, thanked God very much; he had passed through the frontier.

The check at the customs office took a long time. It took him two hours to enter the customs area. A customs officer with a beard demanded that he opened his bag. The officer began to ransack his bag ... the things in the bag, three shirts, underwear and the clothes that he wore at home, a bar of soap, a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste, a razor, a carton of cigarettes, a tape-recorder and two cassettes. Eventually the officer took a cravat from the bag and asked why the cravat had not been taken in the plane.

"They took it", Malik said:

The customs officer turned the cravat in the air, "But, then, what is this?"

Malik did not know what to say, "This is... a...a... second cravat ...safe...as a safeguard." He said these words as if he was in awe of the frontier-guards and the customs officers. They made him feel guilty without any guilt.

The customs officer chided, "One Devil collar is not enough for you? Maybe you want to give it as a present to somebody or to sell it?"

"Astafurullah, God Forgive Me. I'm not a trader. Who can I present this old cravat to?" Malik said in his defence:

Without listening the customs officer threw the cravat into a box containing items, which had been confiscated from other passengers.

Malik did not want to lose this cravat as it had some sentimental value connected with it. He remembered Arkhan's recommendation, it was surely a risk, he could spoil everything, but he had become obstinate. He carefully looked around, took fifty dollars from his pocket book, gave the note to the customs officer, and lamented, "This cravat is a memento of my late brother."

The customs officer deftly hid the fifty-dollars in his palm, "O.K., it's quite another matter, if it is a memento of your late brother, there's no problem."

He took the cravat out of the box and gave it to Malik. The officer completed the actions of throwing the cravat into the box, taking it out of the box, to grabbing it quickly and skilfully that it was clear that he was a professional at his work. Malik, got through that frontier and customs post and entered the Second frontier-post. At the second post a red flag with hammer and sickle was fluttering. The name of the zone was written on the post in Azerbaijani and Cyrillic Russian,

## **BAKU KOMMUNASI**

There was a large portrait on the wall. The greater part of the face of the man in the portrait hid behind extremely large black glasses. Written in large capital letters above the portrait was:

**THE VICTORY OF COMMUNISM IS  
INEVITABLE, BECAUSE IT IS ABSOLUTE.**

*MARAT.*

and written below the portrait:

**ONWARD TO THE COMPLETE VICTORY  
OF COMMUNISM IN THE WORLD  
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HEAD  
COMMISSAR.  
COMRADE MARAT.**

Malik remembered Arkhan's words, as he stood in the queue at the frontier-post. Nobody had ever seen the Head Commissar Marat Karagozov's eyes. Some say his eyes are squint that is why he never removes his large black glasses.

Malik waited in the queue for some time, when it was his turn, the frontier-guard glanced quickly over to his documents, "Fill in this form in our alphabet, in the Azerbaijani and in Russian languages."

Malik left the queue, approached the counter and began to fill the form using the Cyrillic alphabet. When he returned to the counter, he had to stand and wait in the queue again. At last he got through the frontier, but at the customs office he was again in trouble. The customs officer found the tape-recorder and cassettes, turning them in his hand, he asked sarcastically, "What are these?"

"Cassettes, music, the songs of Azerbaijan composers. They were produced in Turkey under the name of anonymous Azeri songs." Malik replied.

The customs officer warned, "In Turkey? You must not bring pan-Turkist cassettes in here."

Malik, showing the officer the edge of a fifty dollar note said in his heart, 'Oh, my Fate!', then he spoke, "these are the songs of the Soviet composers who lived last century."

The customs officer took the money with the same swiftness and dexterity as the first customs officer, "Then, you may take them".

Now, the customs officer began to turn the tape-recorder left and then right, "But, what is this then?"

"It is a tape-recorder." Malik replied.

The customs officer pushed the button on the tape-recorder and the sound of the radio was heard. He said, "But this is a radio."

"It is a radio and a tape-recorder." Malik said defensively.

"In our country, to listen to foreign radio stations is prohibited."

Malik covertly offered another fifty-dollar note and the problem was solved. Malik reached the third frontier post where a large blue flag was fluttering.

He thought bitterly, "Three frontiers - three flags - green, red, blue. If they three were together, it would be the flag of the former Azerbaijan."

The frontier guard glanced through his documents and asked him to press his thumb on a small diskette. He put the diskette into a computer and recorded his fingerprints, pushed some buttons and looked at the monitor, "You may go through."

A customs officer checked the things in his luggage one by one, "Any narcotics?"

"No, my dear. I don't have any narcotics."

The customs officer saw a carton of Turkish cigarettes in his bag, "What is this?"

"Cigarettes, Turkish cigarettes."

The customs officer warned, "You mustn't bring any cigarettes here except for American ones. They are confiscated." A little later, he added, "I've never smoked Turkish cigarettes."

Malik said, "I'm a very heavy smoker and I've got used to these cigarettes. Half are yours and the other half mine."

The customs officer said, "OK."

The customs officer opened the carton quickly, took six boxes for himself, and returned four boxes in the carton to Malik.

After getting through customs, Malik saw some large advertisements. There was a poster of a flight attendant with a lovely smile delivering coca-cola to happy smiling passengers inside a plane and in Latin letters below the picture:

### **WHEN YOU SET OFF - DRINK COCA-COLA.**

The second advertisement poster showed a young boy in cowboy clothes. He wore a big hat and had a big pistol in a holster at his side - his broad grin spread from ear to ear across his face, he was offering the passengers descending the stairs from the plane cigarettes from an open Marlboro box. Written letters below the poster:

### **WHEN YOU COME HERE BUY AND SMOKE MARLBORO**

Malik looked at his watch as he left the airport building, it was half past two in the morning. It was half past four yesterday when the plane landed.

It took eleven hours to pass through the frontiers and customs-offices. He thought, "We flew from Geneva to Baku in three and a half hours."

He walked up to the taxi standing at the front of the taxi rank, he extended his hand to open the cab door, but the door was locked from the inside. A taxi from the end of the rank approached and stopped in front of him. The driver opened the door and invited him to take a seat.

Malik sat in one of the back seats of the cab. Before the cab had time to pull away, someone opened the front door of the cab. A young man with a beard addressed him, "Agha, may you not get tired, I am also going to town, may I go with you, if it is possible."

Malik offered, "Yes, why not."

The taxi moved forward along a road, which had been fenced on either side with wire. The road was lit from the light of bright lamps situated behind the wire fence on the right side of the road. Behind the left fence was dark. Malik noticed that there were many carcasses of dogs at the bottom of the wire fences.

"Why are those carcasses there?"

The cab driver replied, "they are foolish creatures; they ran against the electrified fence."

"Why has it been electrified?"

The bearded passenger explained, "The pagans did it, they are afraid in case the people on that side should come to our side."

The driver added, "They are hungry dogs, the carcasses will be gathered and burnt at night."

Malik looked around, but did not recognise anywhere. It was possible to conclude that the ploughed neutral area covered with many colourful advertising billboards on the right-hand side was Baku-city.

The left side was very dark. "Is Badi-Kuba situated on this side?"

The man with the beard said, "No, agha, it isn't. That side is the devil's nest of pagans. They themselves call it the Baku Commune. Our Behishti Badi-Kuba is further on."

Malik suddenly recognized Sourakhani Road "This is Sourakhani Road, isn't it?"  
The driver replied, "Yes, agha, it is Soura-Khanah."

Malik sighed, "I used to live here when I was a child. Our house was near Atashgah."  
The driver asked, "Where?"

The man with a beard began to explain, "There was a place for fire-worshippers."  
Malik asked, "Does Atashgah exist now?"

The man replied, "No, it was destroyed, is there any need for pagan idol-houses in a Muslim country?"

The taxi stopped in front of a road barrier. A police officer came up to the car, the three of men in the car showed their documents. The police officer raised the barrier saying, "Very good. Good evening."

The man with a beard said, "Agha, welcome to Behishti Badi-Kuba."

In front of them, a great caravan was moving along the road, carts after cart, there were many people on foot.

"Who are they, where are they going at this time of the night?"

"To Yanardagh", the driver replied.

Malik looked in the front mirror of the car and saw the bearded man looking reproachfully at the driver.

The bearded man said, "No, agha, our driver brother didn't quite tell the truth, they are going on pilgrimage to the Nardaran Pir. They have set off at night so that they can reach the place before morning namaz."

Malik remembered that Nardaran was much farther away than Yanardagh, "Will they go such a long way on foot?"

"Agha knows that to go on a pilgrimage has blessings and to go on foot has much more blessing," replied the bearded man.

When the taxi passed the caravan, Malik paid attention to the casseroles loaded on the carts.

The boy told the driver:

"Drive to the Irshad hotel."

Malik was a worldly-wise man. From his first step in the zone, he felt that this bearded man had been sent to spy on him. How else could he have known that he would stay in the Irshad Hotel. The man with the beard was likely to be taciturn, because he made himself known too quickly.,

Malik could not help asking, "How did you know that a room had been prepared for me at the Irshad hotel?"

The driver said, "We've got only one hotel."

The bearded man again eyed the driver reproachfully, "No, there are other hotels, but I thought that only the Irshad would suit such a noble man like you, or am I mistaken?"

"No, you are right, a room has been prepared for me at the Irshad. I'm sorry, we didn't get acquainted, my name is Malik, Malik Mahmad-oglu, I'm a journalist." Malik thought, "Let's not startle, let's let it look as though I myself give this information to him, though he is aware of everything." \_

The bearded man was reconciliatory, "I'm very glad to be acquainted with such a famous and glorious person as you. My name is Imamgulu. Imamgulu Bahbahani."

The taxi moved forward along the semi-dark streets of the city, suddenly Malik was startled, he recognized a burnt and destroyed building, which was illuminated in the beam of taxi headlights, it was former Ismailliyyah, the Academy building. Only the walls of the building were standing, the frames, the burnt windows in the walls were like the hollow eye-sockets of a dead skull.

"Why this place is in such condition?"

Imamgulu told him, "During the days of the uprising, the pagans destroyed this place."

Malik said alarmingly, "Stop, Stop."

On the vacant area near the building of Ismailiyyah Academy there was empty land, there was once a building, the building held manuscripts."

Imamgulu responded, "Agha, what a pity, that building and some other buildings on this alley were burnt during the uprising."

"How did it burn, but what about manuscripts?"

"Agha, what a pity! Can the manuscripts remain safe, when a building burns?"

Malik held his head, "Ah! My God! All our history, our past was in those manuscripts."

"Agha, you are an educated person, I understand your feelings. But it is of no use, it is fate. A lot of new books have been published lately. Some days ago, all books of Ahmad Kasravi were published."

Imamgulu suddenly remembered something and changed the subject, "A word spoken in its place ... by the way, do you know which alley this is?"

"I guess, once it was Nikolayevsk, then Communist, later, Independence Street."

Imamgulu smiled with pleasure, "Now it is Ahmad Kasravi Alley. In honour of the great scholar, who determined our real origin."

The taxi was moving forward through the ill-fated streets, whose names were changed many times, and the buildings of which had been burnt and destroyed repeatedly. Malik remembered that there used to be a beautiful garden here, now he remembered this vacant and treeless area only because of the building of Philharmonic situated near it.

"Thank God, the Philharmonic seems to have been saved." But he was suspicious of the building actually being the philharmonic. Pointing to the building he inquired, "What is that building?"

The driver and Imamgulu replied, "It is the Juma Mosque." Imamgulu added, "It is the biggest mosque the Behishti-Bad-Kuba. You will hear the morning azan from its minarets, because the Irshad hotel is near here."

When they reached the front of the hotel, the driver took Malik's bag. Imamgulu got out of the car, "Agayi Malik, allow me to be at your disposal."

When Malik took some dollar notes from and attempted to give them to the driver, Imamgulu said, "Agha, he will not accept that devil money, don't worry, I've already paid him"

The administrator of the hotel, a man with a white beard, rubbed his eyes, took Malik's passport and gave him a form written in the Arabic script. Malik began to write his name on the form when Imamgulu, who was watching at him over his shoulder said, "Agha, it is against the law to write in a devil alphabet."

"Do I have to fill in the form in Arabic script?"

"In the Islamic alphabet."

Malik admitted, "I can read Arabic...a... Islamic alphabet, but, what a pity, that I can not write."

"Don't worry, I'll write", responded Imam-gulu.

While Malik was dictating his name, last name, birth date, birthplace one-by-one to Imam-gulu, he felt that Imamgulu already knew this information and perhaps knew it just as well as he did. At last, the formalities were over and the administrator gave Malik a room key, "Number twelve."

Imamgulu took Malik's bag, accompanied him to the second floor, then to the door of room twelve, entered, looked through it, and then said, "Good night, with the permission of Allah, we'll meet again."

Malik looked at his watch, a quarter past three. A quarter past five Local time! ... Local time He thought bitterly, "I call the time of my native town local time."

Surely, Aypari would not phone so early. He glanced through the room, "Wow! There isn't even a telephone..."

In the morning, he planned to go downstairs and phone from the lobby. After the impressions of this long day, which seemed to him like hallucination he went to bed and slept like a stone.

Imamgulu was right. They met each other the next day. While descending to the first floor of the hotel in the morning, Imamgulu Bahbahani was sitting on the soft divan with his legs crossed. When he saw Malik, he stood up.

"Agha, good morning, I thought, you are a stranger and maybe you need some help - I'm always ready to help you."

Malik said, "Thank you. We had better drink some tea."

"Surely, surely.

They left the hotel and went to a small teahouse. A servant with a beard brought tea and something to eat.

Imamgulu handed Malik the newspaper in his hands. It is the Siratul-mustakim daily newspaper in his hands and handed it to Malik, "Do you want to look through it."

"I'll look through it later."

Malik pointed to the large picture on the first page of the newspaper and asked, "Is this Aghayi Mushteyid?"

"Yes, he is our supreme religious leader, the glorious Aghayi Badikubeyi", Imamgulu replied. His religious articles have been published. Tonight on 'IMAN' TV he will have a programme, really... a man of science. Both in world sciences and in religious sciences he has no equal, no one can match him."

When he heard the measureless intonation of the Persian Arab words, from the tongue of Imamgulu, which he knew once from classical literature and had almost forgotten, he thought, "Our poor language. An Azerbaijani child is in such condition that he is not able to build two sentences in his own pure mother tongue."

Malik understood very well that during his stay in Behisht, Imamgulu would not leave him alone, he would follow his every step. He was afraid that Imamgulu would know of his desire to meet his wife, maybe Imamgulu has known for a long time. Surely he knows. He knows it for certain. He probed Imamgulu, "I must phone somewhere."

"O.K., agha, tell me your number."

Malik gave him four figures of Aypari's phone number, before writing the last figure, it came into his mind to give Imamgulu a quite different last figure. He wanted to test Imamgulu, "I wonder, if Imamgulu knows this number."

Malik gave Imamgulu a number, "Dial this number, I'll speak to Aypari khanim."

Imagulu asked in astonishment.

"To whom?"

"Aypari khanim, my wife."

To counter Imamgulu's great astonishment, he added, "My spouse, my legal wife, my wife according to Muslim shariat..."

"Of course, of course..."

Imamgulu went to the administrator and spoke to him for a long time. The administrator picked up the phone receiver, spoke to somebody for a considerable time, and then put the receiver down. The administrator gave Imamgulu a sign of agreement. Imamgulu picked up the receiver, look at the paper, on which Malik wrote the phone number and began to dial the number then suddenly he knitted his brows. Malik thought, "He must be surprised at the last figure. I wonder if my supposition is correct."

Imamgulu wanted to take the paper and go to Malik but then he decided to dial number using Malik's incorrect last figure the last figure. Malik wondered, "What number did he dial." Did he dial the false number that Malik had written? Maybe he dialled the right figure that they both knew; maybe he decided to play openly.

Imamgulu waiting a little, began to speak, Malik could not hear him. Then he put the receiver aside, and beckoned to Malik with a hand signal, "Please, agha."

When Malik reached him, Imamgulu handed the receiver to him, saying, "It is khanim Mah-rukh."

"Khanim Mahrukh? Who is khanim Mah-rukh?"

"You said, she is your wife", Imamgulu replied.

Maybe, Malik was mistaken, maybe Imamgulu did not really know the last number, maybe he dialled the number Malik wrote on the paper but reached the wrong person. He wanted to take the paper from Imamgulu and tell him that he had written the last figure wrongly. But suddenly he thought a little and took the receiver, "Hallo."

There was an answer, "Yes."

It was her, his Aypari. Her voice like herself had become older. Many years had passed since they parted. Her voice was hoarse, colourless and sad ... but it was her voice. Malik could not confuse this voice with any voice in this world, "Hello Aypari, it is me."

The woman replied, "I'm sorry, agha, but you have dialled the wrong number."



"Why wrong? Aypari, this is me, Malik. Only three days ago I learnt that you were alive and got your address, phone number. Now I'm here, at the Irshad hotel. Where should I come? How can we meet?"

There was silence in the line. Malik seemed to hear hoarse sobbing voice. Maybe he was mistaken, some minutes the woman said, "I'll come to the lobby of the Irshad hotel in an hour," and immediately put the receiver down.

Looking at his watch, Malik went over to Imamgulu, "Thank you very much for connecting us. But why did you call her Mahrukh."

"She herself said so. When I asked who it was, she said khanim Mahrukh."

Imamgulu did not say anything about the last number neither did Malik, because, everything was clear, there was no need for explanation. Malik sat waiting in the foyer of the hotel, chainsmoking cigarettes and looked towards the door. Imamgulu sat aloof; he pretended to read the Straight Path newspaper and sometimes listened to the IMAN TV programme.

"Does the TV only broadcast Religious programmes?"

"No, why, there are news programmes, prayers, programmes on the history of religion... and the five daily prayers are shown from the mosques."

"What about plays, poems, music?"

"During the Ashoura day Shakhsey-Vakhsey is displayed, marsiyas, nohas are sung ....."

"What about dancing, songs, mugham?"

"God-forbid, agha, these are just Devil doings."

Malik wanted to ask if Mugham was also one of the Devil's making. But he did not ask, as he saw a woman wearing a black cloak entering the hotel. The black cloak covered her from head to foot, only her eyes were visible. Malik recognized the woman from her eyes. These eyes had fiery glances once now were lustreless, tired and sad, but anyway, they were hers, Aypari's eyes. Malik jumped from his seat and threw himself towards his wife whom he had not seen for years. The woman stepped back and stood aside, as though she had seen a ghost. Malik faltered but overcame the distance, he wanted to open his arms, but again the woman shrank and took a step back. He stooped, and only offered her his hand. His hand hung in the air. Malik sensed that Imamgulu was following their every movement and listening attentively.

The woman said, "I can't shake hands with a stranger...."

"Stranger! Aypari, this is me, Malik, your husband."

The woman said, "My name is Mahrukh."

"E...e... let it be Mahrukh, you are my legal wife with a marriage contract."

She replied, "No, the problem is this that we were not married according to shariat."

Malik was astounded and shocked, "O.K. But what about our children? We've got two children Aren't you their mother?"

"It was my fault", she said, "I've repeated thousands of times so that almighty Allah may forgive me my sin."

Imamgulu could not help joining the conversation, "Allah is merciful, kind, and can forgive."

Malik stiffened with astonishment, "What kind of sin? Is being mother a sin?"

Aypari-Mahrukh answered, "If we weren't married according to shariat, it is a sin. It is adultery."

Imamgulu, supported her words, "She is not considered to be a wife ...O.K. sit down ...e... please... sit down."

The woman sat *on* the chair in front of Malik and Imamgulu, but kept aloof.

Malik could not find a word; he did not know what to say or how to start a conversation between them. The woman did not speak. There was an embarrassing silence. Finally Malik broke the silence, "Well, haven't you got any connection with Beyrak and Burla? With your own children?"

Mahrukh-Aypari said, "They are not my children. They are renegades serving great devils...."

Malik could only say, "Well, wonderful ..."

Again there was silence. Mahrukh, she was no longer his wife Aypari with whom he had shared the same bed for many years. She was Mahrukh whom he had never known.

"If agha hasn't got anything to say to me, I must go away."

Malik understood that just, now, this minute he would lose his wife again, and he would lose her forever.

"Stop, stop. Don't hurry to go away. Tell me how are you....e, please, tell me. How is your life? How are you getting on?"

"Thank you very well. By the help of Allah, I don't need anything."

"Where do you....e. You work?"

"By the help of Allah, I work at Unas Madrasa. I teach calligraphy."

"But you ...e...You were a painter."

"It was a mistake of youth...To draw pictures of men is a sin...Inshallah merciful, kind Allah will forgive me of that sin too.

Self-consciously he asked about the information she had given him, "You teach calligraphy at the madrasah? He could find no other words to say.

"Yes, agha, I teach my pupils to copy the Koran with Naskh, Nastalig and Cufic handwriting..."

"In what languages are the lessons?"

Before Mahrukh could answer, Imamgulu said:

"Of course in Azerbaijani ... and in Persian, too. At primary schools, we hold lessons in both languages. We have got a university a Danishgah too."

"Well, but why don't you teach at University... e....Danishgah? Malik asked curiously.

Mahrukh said, "Lessons are in Persian there", she immediately bit her tongue and Imamgulu quickly interrupted, "But the students know their mother tongue, too. The more languages a man knows, the more beneficial it is. Isn't that so, agha?"

"Yes, of course."

Among all these troubles, Malik had completely forgotten that today was the Novruz holiday and offered holiday wishes, "Happy holiday."

"What holiday?" replied Mahrukh in astonishment.

"The Novruz holiday."

"Novruz?"

Imamgulu once more interfered in the conversation, "It is the day when Hazrat Ali came to the throne."

Mahrukh intoned indifferently, "Ah ... thank you."

Malik looked through the window and saw the caravan of people on the carts and on foot that he had seen the previous day, "Are they also going to Nardaran Pir?"

"Yes, agha, maybe, even to Buzovna, Aliyaghi", Imamgulu replied.

Once again, Mahrukh attempted to stand up to leave.

Malik decided to speak firmly to Imamgulu, "Aghayi Bahbahani, this woman has been my wife through marriage-contract she is my legal wife, though as you said, she is not considered to be my wife in this place. We were officially married according to the laws of that time. Let us speak in private for five minutes. Maybe we have a word for each-other ... May we?"

Imamgulu condescended, "Of course, agha, no problem." He stood up, stepped aside. He moved away and sat some distance from them, but his eyes never left them.

The caravan seen passing outside the window seemed endless.

Malik asked his wife, "If they go to the Pir, why they load so many utensils onto their carts?"

Mahrukh turned and looked at the window and then glanced at Imamgulu who sat aloof and turned his face aside, "They are not going to the Pir, they're going to Yanardagh."

"To Yanardagh, why Yanardagh?"

The woman, averted her face from Malik, "They haven't got gas at their houses, all the wood and trees have been cut, they find some food and go to Yanardagh, to cook their meals on the fire coming out of the ground." She said that without stopping and turned her face towards Malik. She neither raised her hand nor looked at his face, but she cynically pronounced, "Yes, agha, they are going to Pir, our people are very devout."

Malik understood everything. He was sitting with his back to Imamgulu. From his seat in the distance, Imamgulu was looking at Mahrukh's mouth. He must have mastered the art of lip reading. Mahrukh turned her face to the window as though watching the caravan, "Whatever they tell you here, don't believe it, even, what I tell you." Then she turned her face to Malik, "My pupils work so hard that by the time they finish Madrasa, they copy the Koran seven times from the beginning to the end."

"I'll rescue you from this place." Mahrukh said sadly, "That's impossible." She understood that she had made a mistake; she faced Malik and added, "Yes, it is quite impossible .... We cannot communicate with great devils. Even they happen to be your sons or daughters."

There was nothing more to say or that could be said. Mahrukh or Aypari stood up and said, "Agha, I was very glad to meet you". Then she put her veil over her mouth, and from behind the veil, she said in a low voice, "I consider you to be dead and after this meeting you should also consider me to be dead."

She rose from her chair and drew herself up. Her eyes had filled with tears. As she stood up, Imamgulu came over to them. He must have seen a teardrop trickling down her cheek and in deference lowered his head. Maybe, he would not write this tear into his report. After all, he also was a human being."

Finally Mahrukh said, "Good-bye, agha," and to Imamgulu, "Good-bye to you, too."

She turned back and moved towards the door. It seemed to Malik that her shoulders were trembling. Maybe it was a voiceless sobbing. She left the hotel and moved off into the distance. Malik's eyes followed her for a long time until she turned into a dark silhouette and disappeared. Then he stood up and said, "Aghayi Bahbahani, I must leave here today, ask them to prepare my bill."

Imamgulu said, "Agha, why do you hurry? Stay here for a day or two and delight us. I invite you to see the places of interest of our country."

"I saw what was necessary for me to see". Malik feared the ambiguity in his reply and added, "May Allah make it abundant!"

"Please, agha, I'm waiting for your orders."

Malik returned to his room, put his things into his bag and noticed that his cassettes were missing. Who has taken them? During the time Imamgulu was with him, he was not able to go to his room. The tape-recorder was there, but the cassettes were missing. Who would want them? Only, the room attendant could take them. Why does he need them? Then a strange idea came into his head. Maybe he was mistaken. The hotel attendant may have run the risk to steal the cassettes ... find a secret place to listen to them ... Who knows? Maybe...

He went downstairs, took the bill, gave some dollars to the administrator who returned the change to him in tumans.

"Why do you give this money to me?" Malik objected.

Imamgulu remained helpful, "You may need the money, if not give it to a beggar."

"Are there any beggars here?" Malik asked ironically as though he were taking some kind of vengeance.

Aware of his error Imamgulu condescendingly replied, "Of course, there aren't. You will need the money when you pass into the territory of the reds. There are said to be a lot of beggars there."

"Is your money used there?" Imamgulu was trapped; he did not know what to say. He did not know about the currency in the red zone and could not wriggle out of his predicament.

Malik pitied him, after all, Imamgulu was servant of his zone he was not guilty of putting him in this situation.

"Well, Good-bye agha", Imamgulu said politely, "Agha, I myself will help you to move-off.

Malik was embarrassed. On one hand he treated him politely, on the other, he used such rude words. Then he remembered that, in the language spoken in the zone, 'move off meant 'to leave the country'. Imamgulu had said nothing rudely.

Leaving the hotel, they walked along the demolished streets of the destroyed Ichari shahar. They arrived at the Double Castle-Doors. The Double Castle Doors were out of place and meaningless, because the castle walls around them had been pulled down. It was not clear if these doors were of any use?

As they passed the doors Imamgulu said, "Yes, agha those stones have been used to build new walls between Badi-Kuba and the pagans."

Malik asked an important question, but feared the reply, "Has Kiz Kalasi been pulled down too?"

"It remains in the territory of the pagans. It is said to be a timber-yard."

Badly constructed walls had been built not far from the Double Castle-Door. The narrow door was the border crossing. Imamgulu accompanied Malik to the door. On this side, a green flag with half-moon flew, on the other side a red flag with hammer and sickle flew.

Imamgulu said, "With the help of Allah, let your road be open."

When Malik turned back and looked across to the other side of the border, he saw that Imamgulu's eyes were still following him. It seemed to Malik that there was an endless sadness in those eyes.

## II

On this, the red side of the border, the first building that he saw seemed familiar to him. Of course, he was not mistaken it was the Nizami Museum. But it looked quite different, as though it had changed. Malik looked at the building attentively and understood why it had changed. The oriental style doors, arches and windows of the building were quite straight behind iron grills. Many coloured glazed tiles had disappeared. Malik looked at the facade of the building. The six loggias had also been changed and the tiles and fashioned into the form of four-angle squares. Malik looked at the statues and could not believe his eyes. Instead of the statues poets and writers which one stood there they were replaced the statues of Engels, Lenin and Stalin, but he could not recognize the other three.

"Where is the statue of Nizami? He thought. Malik turned to face the square opposite the museum. Instead of a statue of Nizami there was a much taller statue of another man. The statue was made of white marble; the eyeglasses on the man's face were made of black marble - Marat! Yes Malik, had recognised the statue, "Of course, it is the statue of Marat. On both sides of the statue, two guard-soldiers stood guard."

The front part of the former museum named Marat Meydani, Marat Square. The street name in Russian Cyrillic and in Azerbaijani showed the street to be MARAT GARAGOZALOV STREET. The address given to him by Arkhan was in this street. In the near distance, he read the following words written on the entrance to a building:

### **THE HEAD COMISSARIAT OF THE BAKU COMMUNE**

He would find Beyrak there. After walking several steps, a ten or twelve years old girl with an infant in her arms, blocked his way, without knowing in what language to appeal to this foreigner, she pointed her finger at the mouth of the little child, it was a sign understandable in all languages. The little girl was dressed in shreds and tatters. He put his hand into his pocket and found some money, the tumans he received in the previous zone. He gave them to the little girl. She took them, examined them, examined them again and then spat and threw them on the ground. Malik immediately understood the matter, tumans were of no value here.

He was puzzled why that was so and again he put his hand into his pocket, withdrew a dollar note and

handed them to the girl. Her eyes sparkled. Immediately he was surrounded by a group of beggars ... Imamgulu's words were true. Strangely most of the children were in couples, ten to twelve year old girls dressed in shreds and tatters with four-five year old boys in their arms, perhaps the boys were their brothers. The girls pointed at the mouths of their brothers indicating hunger. Malik put his hand into his pocket, took out two five-dollar notes and a ten-dollar note. The notes were immediately snatched, and the beggars did not get any money began to fight with those who did. He did not have any more change, but now the beggars group had increased considerable and would not let him free. A militia whistle was heard and when a militiaman came towards the group, the children disappeared as if winnowed. A girl with a crippled leg fell behind, as she limped away, the militiaman collared her, and took a ten-dollar note from her dress and put it into his pocket then kicked her on her way.

The commissariat building which Malik would enter displayed a large picture of Marat. Malik entered the building through the main door where militiamen were on guard. Malik approached one of the militiamen and asked, "Does Beyrak Mammadli work here?"

The militiaman, pointing at the window on one side, "there."

A man, in grey tunic, with a round red badge on the breast of his tunic and wearing black eyeglasses sat behind window on which there was the picture of Marat also in grey tunic.

"I want to see Beyrak Mammadli, I'm his father."

"There is no person of that name here"

Malik responded, "that can't be so, Mammadali Beyrak, a transport engineer an electrical-engineer."

The man lifted the receiver of the phone on his desk and spoke to someone. He spoke in low voice, in case Malik could hear. He finished his call and handed Malik a form,

"Fill in the form in Azerbaijani and Russian."

Malik completed the form and returned to the man behind the window.

"Documents", the man behind the window ordered.

Malik gave the officer his documents. The officer took his time and examined Malik's documents thoroughly then handed the form to Malik and said,

"It is incorrect"

"What is incorrect?"

"The date is incorrect"

Malik glanced at the date he had written on the bottom of the form, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

"Isn't it March 22<sup>nd</sup>, today?"

The officer replied, "No. Not the month of March, but the month of Marat."

"The month of Marat?" replied Malik incredulously.

"This month has been called 'Marat' for two years, don't you know that?"

"No, I don't."

Malik re-wrote the form with the date Marat 22<sup>nd</sup> at the bottom and gave it back to the officer.

"Second floor, room five comrade Telman Karakhanov", the officer curtly instructed.

Malik ascended the stairs to the second floor. There were different pictures of Marat on the wall of the stairs, Marat on horse back, Marat at the piano .. Malik came to room five and opened the black leather covered door and entered the room.

A girl in a grey tunic with a red badge on her tunic breast asked:

"Who are you? Who do you want to see?"

"Comrade Karakhanov."

Malik handed his documents and the form to the girl.

The girl checked them attentively, "Just a minute!"

She took his documents and form and entered another room through a leather-covered door.

Malik glanced around the reception-room. There were the pictures of Marat in his grey tunic on the four walls.

He saw the following slogan written on a wall:

*Workers of the world, unite! Long live the glorious Baku Commune the heir  
of Glorious Baku Commune!*

*Complete victory of the Communism in the  
World is absolute, because it is inevitable.*

*Marat.*

On a small chair, there was a thick book, a notebook sized booklet with a red cover, and the Baku Spark newspaper. There was the picture of Marat on the book "Comrade Marat's Glorious Road in Life". He saw the same picture on the small red book. He picked up the small book. It was a book of Marat's aphorisms. He started to read some of them:

The wish of the nation is the wish of the Party.

Our actions are right, because we are right.

Future belongs not to different nations - but to the proletariat.

He shut the booklet and took the BAKU SPARK newspaper.

He closed the book and placed it on the table. And picked up the Baku Spark. He glanced at the date - Marat 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was today's newspaper. The newspaper was published in two languages, in Azerbaijani and Russian. The top the front page showed a slogan on the joining of the world proletariat and Marat's aphorism about the complete victory of Communism. The first page of the newspaper showed a picture of Marat wearing black eyeglasses and a tunic. Below the picture it said,

'The Head Commissar Marat Karagozov is the steadfast and wise communist that mankind has been waiting longingly for many years.'

The girl returned and said curtly, "Go into the room."

Malik entered the room of Karakhanov. Karakhanov was sitting at a very large table. When he saw Malik, he stood up, but it was strange that he seemed taller when he was sitting. When he stood up, he appeared shorter. Karakhanov was below average height. He was dressed in a grey tunic, and wore black eyeglasses. He stretched his hand to Malik; his hand was cold and flabby like raw meat. Although Malik's documents and form were in front of him on the desk, he asked, "Who are you? Where are you from, how and why have you come here?"

Malik answered his questions. Karakhanov replied meaningfully, "Turkey, I understand."

Malik told him the reason why he had come to Baku, "I'm going to write objective articles about the Baku Commune for the Turkish press."

Telman Karakhanov said, "I don't believe in the objectivity of the bourgeois press. But I understand your task is to see your son."

Malik candidly replied, "Yes, I don't conceal it. I hear my son is working here ...Beyrak Mammadali."

Karkhanov offered a slight smile, "You must mean Boris Mamedov. Yes, we have information that he is really your son."

"But why Boris ... his name is Beyrak...e.... Was Beyrak."

"He changed it long time ago ... by the way, what does Beyrak mean?"

"Beyrak is one of the heroes of the Dada Korgud Epic."

Karakhanov thought a little and began to repeat several times, "Dada Korgud, Dada Korgud, ah, I remember that is a prohibited anti-national panTurkist tale."

To argue with him was meaningless, neither the place, nor the time was appropriate.

Malik simply asked, "May I see my son?"

"Of course."

Karakhanov picked up the receiver, "Borya, come here, to my room, your father has come, he is here"

While speaking to Borya on the phone Karakhanov smiled, "no, not from the other world, from Turkey", and he added, "However, I see no difference, one is the same the same as the other".

Malik cast a glance round the room. Lining the wall were diagrams on the development of industry, education, enlightenment, tables, the slogans that he had already seen and the same picture of the man in grey tunic and with black eyeglasses.

On one of the walls, there were four other pictures, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. He did not recognise the man in the fourth picture, a man with goatee beard. It seemed to Malik that his face resembled one of the faces on a statue on the facade of the Nizami museum.

He asked Karakhanov about the man in the fourth picture, "Who is he?"

Karakhanov replied in a ceremonial voice, "Comrade Stepan Shaumyan. The leader of the first glorious Baku Commune. We are the followers of that glorious commune, the second glorious Baku Commune."

Malik exclaimed hotly, "But, this Shaumyan is an Armenian..."

Karakhanov sharply cut him short, "Comrade Shaumyan isn't an Armenian, he is a communist."

Malik understood the possible danger of his next statement but he could not help saying, "Do you know, how many Azerbaijanis this communist-dashnak killed in 1918, just in March... sorry... in Marat month?"

Karakhanov became angrier, "He did not punish Azerbaijanis, but the Musavatists. The merciless enemy of the Azerbaijan, Russian and Armenian proletariat-Musavatists."

His mouth foamed with anger and then he drank a glass of water and calmed a little, "Of course, you are from Turkey. Your mind is poisoned with bourgeois propaganda. Even our own nationalists in the Baku Commune cast great aspersions on comrade Shaumyan, at one time ...What a shame! Now we reconstructed the historic truth. We, the Baku Bolsheviks headed by Head Commissar Marat comrade. Yes, we are proud of that Baku proletariat again raised the flag of Proletariat dictatorship in the Caucasus. Baku was always the cradle...e...e.."

Malik added involuntarily, "The cradle."

"You are right, the cradle of the revolution. Now in Russia, after the communists came to power, the whole world knew that we...began first to march in this right way."

"In Russia, communists came into power by democratic elections, but as soon as they came to power, they turned the Duma out."

"They did right."

"This gathering of chatty prattlers isn't necessary for the proletariat. Soon we'll restore the USSR and the pioneer of this work will be the Baku Communists."

Malik felt heaviness in his heart, he changed the subject by asking, "Well, whose are the other statues in front of that ...e...that museum?"

"Which museum?"

"I'm sorry. I forget that now it is a commissariat. Once it was the Nizami museum."

"Nizami? Nizami Oh, yes he was a poet." . "Is he also prohibited?"

Perceiving that Karakhanov did not understand the word prohibited, Malik repeated the word in Russian, "prohibited".

"No, why... we simply don't publish such books, the proletariat doesn't need feudal poets. By the way, look", he pointed to his thick book on the table, "I advise you to read it; it's a very valuable book".

"Who wrote it?"

"Individuals don't write books. This is the collective work of a group of proletarian writers. They consider it useless to write their names on such books which express the hearty words of the whole proletariat class."

Remembering Malik's question, "Well, you asked about the statues standing in front of the Commissariat. The statues are of greatest communists, comrade Engels, comrade Vladimir Ilich Lenin, comrade Josif Vissarionovich Stalin, comrade Stephan Shaumyan, comrade Kirov and comrade Orjonikidze..."

"German, Russian, Georgian, Armenian... But, was there no Azerbaijani communist?"

Karakhanov held his head, "Oh, a miserable man mocked by bourgeois-nationalist prejudices. Why do you say Russians, Armenians? His nationality is proletariat. Look, this is what comrade Marat says. He stood up, opened the small red booklet and began to read, "The future belongs not to different nations but to the proletariat. Do you understand? Not if you still pay attention to someone's nationality, why didn't you see a great statue of comrade Marat? He is an Azerbaijani to say it with your interpretation."

"Yes, of course."

Malik reflected on when he looked at the statues, then, in front of the museum and now looking at the pictures in the room, he felt that something was missing, but he did not realise what it was or who it was and then he remembered ... Marx, surely, Karl Marx.

"But why is comrade Marx missing? Neither there, nor here" and pointed at the wall.

Karakhanov said after a moment's silence, "Well, it is a difficult question. The problem is that we appreciate comrade Marx as a founder of the scientific communism. But he was Jewish. But our real enemy is the world imperialism and if put him ... Marx's statue, hang his picture, it can be understood incorrectly."

At that moment the door opened, a man in a grey tunic, with a red badge on his breast and with black eyeglasses entered and glanced over at Malik.

Malik returned the glance. Karakhanov announced with a sneering smile, "Didn't you recognize your son?" and added, "Borya, take off your glasses."

The new comer took off his glasses. It was Beyrak, but he was looking coldly at Malik. Malik wanted to embrace his son, but he stopped, maybe the communists had prohibited the embrace of a father-and-son. He simply stretched his hand to Beyrak and they shook hands. A black phone rang on Karakhanov's desk. Karakhanov quickly lifted the receiver, and immediately stood up, "I hear you comrade Marat. Just in a moment I'll be there", he replaced the receiver and spoke to Borya, "Comrade Marat asked me to go to him, Borya, take your father to your room."

As he left the room, Karakhanov said, "Inform your father. He thinks about the historical service of comrade Shaumyan wrongly. He has a nationalist and pan-Turkist deviation, I think."

As Beyrak and Malik left the room and walked along a corridor, Beyrak called one of the men standing in the corridor. The man also wore a grey tunic, red badge on his breast and black eyeglasses. Beyrak took some money from his pocket and said, "Take three hundred roubles and buy a bottle of vodka, some patties, and herring, buy what you can find."

Malik did not know how to open a conversation with his son. However, he noticed that was a picture of Marat on the money, "How many dollars are a hundred roubles?"

"A hundred roubles are a hundred dollars."

"Do you buy vodka for a hundred dollars? Isn't that expensive?"

Beyrak laughed ironically, "According to the official rate one rouble equals one manat."

"Then, it is very cheap, for a dollar you buy a bottle of vodka, patties...."

"Only in our building, in the canteen of our Commissariat, but in the city everything is ten times more expensive."

The walls of the corridor they walking along had pictures and different slogans of Marat. When they reached the elevator, Beyrak said, "It is advantageous to work here".

They entered the elevator. Inside the elevator, they saw pictures of Marat. A grey tunic, black eye-glasses but no red bandage on his breast,

Malik looked at the badge on Beyrak's breast; it had a picture of Marat. Getting out the elevator, they came up to a room with a leather-covered door. Beyrak opened the room door with his key, they entered.

The room had the same pictures and the same slogans as other rooms, but there were many technical appliances and several TV-sets. Marat's pictures everywhere, but one particular picture drew Malik's attention. It was a sleeping child, a girl of 5 to 6 years old. Malik asked, "Who is this?"

He thought, she might be Beyrak's daughter, his granddaughter.



"Your daughter?"

"No, a picture drawn by a painter. Read the writing at the bottom".

Malik, put on his glasses, read the writing at the bottom of the picture. 'She sees comrade Marat in her dreams'.

Beyrak asked, "What have you told comrade Karakhanov about Shaumyan?"

"Nothing, I only said that Shaumyan was a dashnak."

"Couldn't you find something else to talk about? Do you know who you were talking to? Karakhanov's mother is an Armenian."

They kept silent for a while. To break the silence, Malik began to talk about how, why and where from he had come from, but Beyrak...e.... Boris seemed to show absolutely no interest in Malik's adventures.

"In that zone... I met your mother. Have you got any contact with her?"

Beyrak replied in an indifferent tone, "No ... I hear he has become a mullah", and then added, "The reason for our condition was mullahs."

"Whether she is a mullah or not, she is your mother...."

There was an ironic expression on Beyrak's face, "Mother ... father these are the empty dreams of the previous centuries, in this world a man has nobody except himself."

Malik was horrified, "Can one live like this?"

Beyrak said, "You see I'm still living."

"What about Burla, haven't you had any connections with her?"

"No, I haven't. She has become a dancer, in Baku-city; she dances the belly-dance to entertain the capitalists."

Malik was shocked, "The Belly-dance?" Then he thought out loud, "It seems that I've come here only to be shocked."

Beyrak did not answer. There was silence again. Then Malik asked, "How is your life?"

"Not bad. Like most of the men working here, in this building."

"In this building? But what about the outside of the building?"

"Didn't you see? Didn't you see the beggars asking for money?"

"I saw. Many beggars here?"

Beyrak said, "More than the half of the population", and added ironically, "the children of proletariat."

"Don't they work or study?"

Beyrak roared with laughter, "Ha, ha..., Is there any job? To study... We've got only two schools and the children of the men working at the commissariat study in them."

Malik took a cigarette and lit it, "Do you want to smoke?"

"No ..." looking at the box he asked, "A Turkish cigarette?" "Yes."

"Then give me one." Beyrak lit his cigarette, drew the smoke into his lungs, "Do you know how the lessons begin in all classes at schools?" "No, I don't. How can I?" "First of all, they recite poems in honour of comrade Marat, and begin calling down curses." "Curses."

"Yes. May the enemies of comrade Marat, the proletariat and Baku Commune remain without eyes; May they fall ill with tuberculosis; May them have infarction; May they develop cancer, AIDS; May the hand of the man who touches Marat, fade away; May the tongue of the man who speaks badly of him, become mute."

Malik reflected, "I remember in our village, when I was a child, there lived an old woman, and she used to curse everyone just like that." "Did she know about AIDS?"

"No, she didn't, but she also used to say; May someone remain without eyes; May someone become dumb; May someone vomit blood; May someone be parched with thirst; May Allah give him the itch and not give him

nails."

Beyrak laughed, "Look, that is something fresh. We must write it down and give it to comrade Marat so that he may add it to the curses."

Malik drew the cigarette smoke into his lungs, "Why do you wear black glasses? Do you have poor sight? I noticed that Karakhanov wears the same black glasses, other people, too... everybody in grey tunics ... Why so?"

"Other dress is not advisable."

"The black eye-glasses are also obligatory."

"No, this is only a sign of solidarity with comrade Marat, it is voluntary, but all the men working in this building follow and wear black glasses".

"He - comrade Marat - is said to be crosseyed, that's why he wears black eye-glasses. But what's happened to you? You have beautiful eyes."

Malik said these pleasant words to his son to break the ice between them. Nevertheless, Beyrak ignored his father, "Comrade Marat is not crosseyed or anything else," he added with an unexpected rage, "however, his eyes are blood-shot, he has killed so many people that he cannot look steadily into anyone's eyes."

Malik was shocked. He looked around the room at the appliances around them "Aren't you afraid? They may listen to us."

"Why should I be afraid? What can they do to me? I'm the only specialist here. They need me, they all are uneducated here and the chiefs ...one of them is a former cook, another former street-sweeper, and another a former porter. The best educated is Karakhanov, and he was a shoemaker for thirty years."

What about Marat?

"He was one of the well-known barbers of the city."

"What's his nationality?"

"God knows. He is said to be an Azerbaijani, but he speaks Azerbaijani once in a blue moon, and he speaks Azerbaijani so badly that not to speak would be better."

Malik noticed that Beyrak himself spoke Azerbaijani fluently. He did not use any Russian words in any sentence.

"They say Jewish blood runs in his veins. That's why he is so cruel. He's an anti-Semite, he plays tricks on the Jews."

"Do you see this book", he pointed at a thick book on the table, "it is the fiftieth biography of Marat, to tell the truth, and in every book, new facts are added to his biography."

If according to time you analyse the facts written in the book you will find that he has lived over a hundred years. Sometimes they write that he was a military adviser to Mao and Kim Ir Sen, sometimes they write that he taught Fidel Castro the theory of communism, or he helped the Negroes of Africa to revolt against the colonialists. But he was a barber in Baku ...."

"Isn't there anybody who is aware of all these facts?"

"There were. They were banished, that even their tracks can't be found."

"He found all his clients one by one and had them killed. If one or two of them are by chance alive, they retell memories about the secret revolutionary activity of comrade Marat. Yes, he was once a master barber, now he behaves as a master of the nation. "

He added ironically, "Head Commissar! Oh, really, he has always worked *on* heads. First of all he cut the hair on the heads, now he cuts heads."

"Don't talk like that, Beyrak, be careful, they may listen to you. Then you may be punished."

Don't be afraid. Do you know what my job here is? To render foreign radios, TV's and internet harmless, no one must hear, or see anything. ...But I have constructed such apparatuses that prevents anyone from hearing us talk, that's why I can speak about what I want. Of course - in case you want to betray me."

"Aren't yuu ashamed of saying such a thing, I'm just .your father..."

Beyrak asked with a bitter smile, "Do you know how many sons have informed the PP against their fathers, and how many fathers have informed against their sons?"

"What's 'pi pi'?"

"PP, the Proletarian Patrol. The secret agents of the commune."

The room door opened and a man in a grey tunic and black eye-glasses entered. He had brought a bottle of vodka and two patties. There was a picture of Marat on the label of the vodka bottle.

Beyrak asked, "Are you hungry?" Those were the first decent words that he had spoken to his father since they met. "No, I'm not."

Finally Malik decided to ask Beyrak an awkward question, "Why do you treat me so coldly, Beyrak? Look we haven't met in so many years. I have so longed to see my family again, I have so longed.... If only you knew how difficult it was for me to come here."

"You came and saw, are you happy now?" "Don't speak to me like that. Am I at fault?" Beyrak did not answer. He took a goblet and two glasses and opened the vodka bottle, filled Malik's goblet to the brim and then his own. Without saying a word, tossed the vodka in the glass into his mouth and swallowed. He did not eat anything; he simply smelt his wrist. Malik remembered that he once saw some Russians drink vodka like that.

Some time later, Beyrak started to speak, "You ask if you are in fault. Where have you been all these years? Were you aware of the thing that you call "family"? You went Turkey and lived there comfortably, and you've returned to see your family...You are speaking all the time about father, then mother. You think fatherhood consists of only that?"

"You are not right, Beyrak. You know that all the roads have been closed, and all the connections have been broken off. How could I have connection with you even I wasn't even aware if you were alive?"

"What about leaving us and going to Turkey?" "You are wrong again. I didn't leave you. I went on a ten-day official journey."

"How many years did your journey last?" "How could I know that these events would happen? How could I know that when I left these things would happen?"

"No - excuse me, but didn't all these events begin when you were here? You were the most famous journalist in the country. Didn't you see the course of the events? Didn't you read what the newspapers wrote? Didn't you hear what TV and radios broadcast? Didn't you know that all these writings that created animosity and grudges, and all the people who thirsted for blood, were creating such a potential for hatred in the society that it would cause a great explosion and everything would be destroyed completely? All these things did happen ... .don't you know that a fire can start in a wet place."

"The explosion happened ten to fifteen days after I had left."

"But, when you were here, you couldn't prevent it...."

"How could I prevent it?"

"Why, you were one of the most influential intellectuals in the country. You had to give people advice, to tell them that, 'brothers', the end of it would be a tragedy, blood, death, don't be enemies with one another, don't shed the blood of your brothers."

"You must have forgotten Beyrak. I told them, very much, but they didn't listen to me. We spoke, but they didn't listen, we wrote, but they didn't read. Their eyes were blood-shot, they didn't see anything. They turned a deaf ear to us. Their ears were deaf, so they didn't hear anything. They didn't want to hear. They didn't want to hear anything except their own voices."

Beyrak filled his glass with vodka and threw it back, bit the pattie, "Eh... Do you know what happened after you left?"

"Yes, I know. Conflicts in Baku, regions, civil war ... Blowing up the Ceyhan pipeline .... In Turkey, they wrote that it was the work of ASALA or the PKK. ASALA or PKK, what's the difference? In any case, these days after it, the explosion in the Karabagh Armenian atomic Station the area is in such condition that

people cannot live there at least three hundred years."

Beyrak laughed bitterly, "Well anyway the Karabagh problem was settled and for all."

Malik said, "Turkey was blamed for the Karabagh problem. The Armenian Diaspora howled in the world that there was genocide in 1905, and this was a second genocide. Turkey was isolated from all the international organizations, an economic and transport blockade declared on Turkey. Though, no one could prove that Turkey had not a hand in the matter."

Beyrak conceded, "No one will ever be able to prove it, but is it of any importance? The world is ruled by means of lies, by means of lies and force. Haven't you heard that...."

Malik noticed that, though Beyrak had drunk so much, neither his logic nor his speech were disordered, as if he was sober. Only his eyes had dimmed.

"Then, Mingachevir ...."

He said this word with difficulty. Because it was one of the hardest tragedies for Azerbaijanis to bear, or because uttering this word caused him the greatest pain?

"Who blew-up the Mingachevir Dam? The forces that were fighting inside or rockets going off-course as a result of computer errors or foreign enemies? The secrets weren't revealed and would never be revealed ...."

Malik said, "The explosion at the Mingachevir Dam and the catastrophic explosion of the atomic station, are the greatest ecological and humanitarian tragedies not only of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but perhaps of all time."

All the lowland regions of Azerbaijan have remained under water. A part of the population had escaped to the mountains.

Malik said, "We received information that the people who survived, had moved to the mountains. How do they live?"

"How ... There is complete anarchy. In every valley, to be more exact, on every mountain, there is one bey. One bey, one agha, one kandkhuda, one gang leader, one lizard, and I don't know what else. A primitive-communal system, a terrible period. Every sponge oppresses the people treats them like slaves."

"Since that time Baku has been divided into three parts."

"Yes. The U.N.O. made a decision. Three countries were mandated to prevent anarchy here. But, here we have oil, do big countries want to lose hold of it? These three zones have been, as it were, established independent powers. What kind of independence is this? You can imagine it yourself. When he wants to go to the lavatory, comrade Marat phones abroad to get permission ..."

Malik felt the endless pain inside Beyrak, but what could he do? What could he undertake, for the unbearable grief of his son, himself, his nation?

Malik said, "My son. If only you could escape from here."

Beyrak, without realizing, repeated the same words, "It is impossible. Even a bird cannot escape from here. Didn't you see the walls of the Commune? Last year someone wanted to climb over this wall, he was shot and fell down. Nobody even knew his name. It is not a city, it is a prison-camp ... surrounded by walls. There is only one way out – grave-yard, the other world."

He smiled, "Such are the things, father..."

This was the first time he spoke to Malik like that. Involuntarily, and mechanically, he took Malik's untouched goblet, threw back the contents into his mouth and swallowed them, "Still it is not late, leave this place and go away. You are happy, because you've got this chance. Don't look for another happiness. We shall live somehow and wait for our death-hour to help us."

"Beyrak, speaking like that is worse than death for me."

"Oh, it is easy to talk vainly, isn't it?" "I don't speak vainly. We must do something. It is necessary to do something. Aren't there any people who want to change all this? Is everybody here as pessimistic as you have they fallen into despair?"

"No, why, there were some people who still had hope."

"There were? But where are they now?"

"At the bottom of the Caspian. They, who were lucky, are in Narghin island."

"Narghin island?"

"Yes, the island was also included in the territory of the Baku Commune, now, it is a vast prison-camp .... If I didn't have this occupation, if they didn't need me, my place at the best, would be there, too. Why not? My father is in Turkey, my mother and sister are in the territory of the neighbours.... But there isn't a great difference, there, the prison camp... is surrounded by the sea, but here by the walls."

Malik covered his face with his hands.

Beyrak said, "Don't get upset. In comparison with the great tragedies, the fate of our family is nothing. I am satisfied with everything. I can earn my living. I covertly watch foreign stations on the TV, which I disorder for people not to watch. I have managed to save some books: Mammadgulzadeh, Sabir. Sometimes I read them. I read Dostoyevsky much more than the other books. 'The Devils' as if he had foretold everything. Of course, I haven't got so much money; I'm not as wealthy as Marat, or even Karakhanov, but in any case...."

"Are they rich? But they are always speaking of equality, they are proletariat leaders..."

Beyrak laughed for a long time and said, "Proletariat, communist", now the drink was making him tipsy, "Is there anybody who believes these words? Karakhanov has villas in France; Marat has villas in the five continents of the world. They say that American multi-millionaires, Arab sheiks are nothing in comparison with him."

Suddenly Malik remembered:

"Can Marat play the piano?"

"Piano?" Bayrak messaged his eyes in astonishment; the effect of the vodka was felt.

"Why do you ask?"

"I saw his picture by the stairs, he was at the piano."

"Ha...ha...." Beyrak roared with laughter.

"It is only a picture; he even cannot play tipcat. Did you see the other picture, on horseback?"

"Yes, I did."

"He has never mounted a horse, even a donkey. I think you saw the statue of Marat, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you see how high it was? The figure is perfect. That goes without saying. In reality Marat is undersized. His height reaches the shoulders of Karakhanov .

Beyrak tossed off one more glass of vodka and said, "Oh, this Marat is unusual, it is possible to speak about him endlessly. When a woman bore a 4.5-kilo child, it was announced on TV, that in honour of Marat, such a big child was born. In three days time it will be Marat's birthday. A month ago he especially arrested ten to fifteen men for no reason. He will grant an amnesty to five-six of them in honour of his birthday. This man cannot satisfy himself."

The telephone rang. Beyrak picked up the receiver, "Yes, O.K. I'm coming now."

Then he said to Malik, "I'm sorry, Karakhanov asked me to go to his office. Let's go, he must sign your permit, or you cannot leave this place without it."

They went to Karakhanov's room. Karakhanov stood up and immediately he became short. It was very strange there was Novruz green grass on a small plate on the desk.

He said to Beyrak, "Here, look at it. Comrade Marat had called me to his room, it turns out that to-day is a holiday. Novruz or something, so, PP informed us that somebody was selling these green things, samani or whatever they call it." He tore a piece of the samani from the plate and put into his mouth, chewed it a little, then spat it out, "Ugh! How disgusting, how can anyone eat that?"

He sipped some water from a glass and rinsed out his mouth. Malik looked at his son in astonishment, but, Beyrak was calm as Karakhanov spoke, "Comrade Marat said that a foreign radio announced the hour when the year would be over, and someone heard it 'What Boris is busy with, said comrade Marat take immediate, measures.' What a shame! And when ... Three days before the great holiday of the world proletariat ... the birthday of comrade Marat. Analyse these facts."

Then looking at Malik he said, "Are you leaving? Give me your permit to sign."

He signed it and spoke to Beyrak, "Well, did you inform him about comrade Shaumyan?"

Beyrak replied, "Surely. He promised that he would translate the works comrade Shaumyan into the Turkish language and publish it there."

Karakhanov smiled with the greatest pleasure, "It is good, though Turkey is an enemy, we must rouse the proletariat there in order that they might be ready for the victory of the communism in the world."

Beyrak addressing Malik said, "Daddy. You don't forget, our greatest enemies are imperialism and pan-Turkism."

Malik asked. "But, what about Zionism?"

"Of course, Zionism also"

"What about Pan-Islamism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Parliamentarianism..."

Karakhanov confirmed with his head, "Of course, of course."

Malik was being obstinate; he remembered a book that he once had read about the history of the Soviet Union, "What about, surrealism, impressionism, modernism...."

There was a tense expression on Karakhanov's face, maybe he heard these words for the first time and did not know their meanings and did not know if all these ideas were really the enemies of the proletariat.

Malik continued, "Freudianism, feminism, philatelism, fetishism..."

At last Karakhanov breathed freely, he understood the word fetishism, "Surely, fascism is also our irreconcilable enemy."

Addressing Beyrak he said, "I see. You have taught your father thoroughly ...."

"Well, Good ...Good-bye."

Beyrak accompanied Malik to the door, "Go along Karagozov Street, passing Marat Square, turn to Head Commissar Street. The frontier passage of the third Zone is there."

Malik said, "My son, don't drink so much."

Beyrak said tiredly, "O.K."

Malik did not know what else to say. Beyrak looked at his watch, that action was meant to be a hint that he had no time. They had to part.

Malik said, "Take off your glasses for a minute. I want to see your eyes, maybe I'll never see them again".

Beyrak said, "Oh, my God! How sentimental."

But he took off his glasses for a moment. His eyes were empty, there was no expression in his eyes. He stretched his hand:

"Adieu"

Suddenly he asked, "How do the people live in Turkey?"

"As men," Malik replied.

### III

Passing through the narrow door of the wall, Malik immediately asked about telephones. He was answered, "There are automatic phones, buy a token."

He bought some tokens, entered the automatic phone booth and dialled the number of Burla. After some minute, he heard a voice on the phone, "Hello!"

It was Burla's voice, but it sounded differently. A moment later Malik understood:

That it was an answering machine and the message was in English.

Malik understood a little English and listened to the message, "I'm not at home. Leave your message after the signal."

After the signal, he spoke into the phone, "Hello, Burla Khatun." He used to call her that when she was a child.

"It's me, Malik, your father....I'm here and want to see you. I'll call later..."

As he was about to replace the handset, he heard a voice in the receiver, "Father" It was Burla's voice, it wasn't a recorded mechanical voice, it was alive and was trembling.

"My daughter, Burla..."

"Father, you are alive. Where did you come from?"

"It is a long talk. I'll tell you when we meet. Can I see you?"

"Surely, where are you?"

"Near the frontier passage. I'm coming from the Commune."

"There are two passages from there. Which one are you standing near? Which street?"

Through the phone booth Malik read, the name of the street written in Latin letters, "Here is written: 42nd. Parallel Avenue. I'm in the phone booth."

"Don't move from that place. I'll send my car. It will be there in ten minutes. A black Mercedes. The name of the driver is Phil." "O.K."

After about ten minutes, a black Mercedes stopped in front of the booth. A driver, dressed in a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a black bow tie, got swiftly out of the car, took off his white gloves he stretched his hand to Malik, then opened the rear door of the car and politely said, "Please."

The inside of the car was cool and sweet smelling. News in English came from the radio. They were moving along a wide avenue on which there were very expensive shops with many advertisements on both sides of the avenue.

The car stopped at a red light traffic light. A seven or eight year old child came running up to the car and began to clean the windscreen of the car. Other children were cleaning the windscreens of other cars. The driver opened the window, gave some manat to the child. The child ran away towards another car, which had stopped at the traffic lights. The traffic lights changed and the Mercedes moved to the upper part of the city and entered a prosperous yard surrounded by a tall shaped fence. Malik seemed to know these places, but they had changed beyond recognition. The driver stopped the car in front of three-storied house situated in the yard, got out of the car quickly and opened the rear door of the car for Malik.

Phil said, "Please."

He directed Malik to the door of the house. As soon as he entered the room, a boy with an athletic figure appeared in front of him, began to search him.

Phil said to him, quickly, in English, "He's Miss Burla's father." The athlete left.

Phil said, "Sorry he's Miss Burla bodyguard."

Phil spoke half English, half Azerbaijani.

Malik asked, "Are you an Azerbaijani?"

"Of course, surely, my name is ...e... Phil."

They entered the elevator, it was also sweet smelling. Fizuli-Phil pushed the button for the second floor and the elevator ascended. They appeared in front of a door made of oak. Phil pressed the bell-button and the door opened. Burla, his little Burla Khatun, who was now really pretty woman, fell into his arms.

"Father, daddy, if only you knew how happy I'm to see you."

"You can't be as happy as I am."

"Take off your coat. Give it to me; I will hang it up myself."

Then she said to the driver something in English.

Phil, stretched his hand to the skip of his cap and left the room.

Malik asked, "Why does he speak English?"

"He has finished English school."

"Doesn't he know Azerbaijani at all?"

"Why yes, he knows."

"Then, tell him to speak to me in Azerbaijani."

"All right."

Malik took his coat off and cast a glance at a big colourful poster of Burla in the corridor. He was startled, the poster showed a large half-naked picture of Burla.

Malik asked involuntarily, "Is this you?"

"No", Burla replied, "my acquaintance" and laughed, "We'll talk about this later, now come in."

As he entered the room, he saw the grand view of sea through the window, which was of the same length and height with the wall, but paying closer attention to the window, he realised that it was not a window, but a photo of the yellow-sanded coast of the blue sea behind glass. The photo was so clear and so distinct that it seemed to be a real view, seen through the window. On the right-hand wall behind transparent glass, there was a scene of a snow-topped chain of mountains. On the left-hand wall, a dense forest, trees standing shoulder to shoulder, the forest road covered with green branches like a green umbrella. Malik turned his face to the door through which he entered, there was the picture a foaming of a waterfall. When Burla closed the door, the waterfall began as if to flow down the door.

"Isn't there a window in this room?"

"Why is the window necessary? To see this nasty city? In this room, wherever I look, it is simply a pleasure for me."

As he came up to the bar in the corner of the room, Burla asked, "What would you like to drink, whisky, sherry-brandy, gin-tonic, tequila, vodka, cognac..."

"Oh, stop, don't make me angry... I'd like to have tea."

Burla picked up the inner phone, "Lera, tea please".

Then she looked at Malik with a pretty smile, "Oh, I forgot that you are a pure Muslim man. You drink only tea like a .. what was his name? .. the man ...yes, like Mashadi Ibad. There must be such a musical. I watched when I was a child."

"Yes there was."

Burla looked at her father, "stop and let me have a good look at you. You have grown a bit older."

"Not a bit - much older, especially these last two days."

"What happened to you during these two days?"

Malik told Burla about the last two days and then briefly about the last years of his life.

Burla sighed, "Poor mummy. Is it possible to live like that?"

"Haven't you tried to contact your mother?"

"But it is impossible; all the roads leading there are closed, it is even impossible to get a connection by means of phones, telegrams or mail."

"What about Beyrak?"

"I found his e-mail through the internet, sent him a message, wrote about myself. Not an answer did I get. To tell the truth, I'm so busy that I can't find time to write any more. And in addition to all this, he seems to want to write to me. You saw for yourself the regime that exists there...Maybe he is afraid of something ... How do you like the light?"

She meant the light of the room.

"Isn't it a bit dark here?"

"I like such light, semi-darkness."

Malik started to talk about the room, "In my opinion in any case if there were a window ...."

"Oh, why do you want a window? To look at the view? You may look at these views as much as you wish. If you don't like these views, watch other ones."

She took the remote control and pushed button and immediately, the views on the four walls changed, now



sandy desert, an ice-field odd cliffs, long and long roads.

"Window? Maybe you say because of the light. Here is sunlight for you." Saying that she pushed the button and from the hanging roof on the ceiling, bright sunlight began to flow into the room.

Malik was surprised and Burla enjoyed his surprise, "What else, air? Which air do you like, sea-air, mountain-air, forest-air, steppe-air?"

She pushed the buttons on the remote control one by one, first, the room was filled with mountain-air, then with a sea breeze, then with frosty purity, then with the humid air felt after rain.

Malik asked. "What other miracles does this room have?"

Burla replied, "I can only rest here, this room calms my nerves", then she answered his question, "There are still a lot of miracles."

Again she pushed one of the buttons, the voices of birds, the roaring of the sea, the whispering of leaves, the warbling of nightingales were heard."

"It is really a miracle. I've never seen or heard of such a thing in my life."

"That's not all ..."

She took another remote control and pushed the buttons. First, the room was filled with the smell of roses, then she pushed another button and the smell of violet filled the room, then one by one, the smells of pussy willow and ... the smell of newly cut grass filled the room.

"How did you have all these made?" he asked this question, because he did not want to ask how it cost.

Burla replied, "It is my world, the world that I enter, when I leave the world outside."

"But it is an artificial world."

"The artificial world is a thousand times better than the real world. You can feel what you want by means of the five senses. If you wish, it will be night during the daytime or vice-versa, daytime during the night. Look." Burla pushed one more button and the room fell into darkness.

Burla said, "Lift your head and look at the ceiling." The ceiling was full of stars. Galaxies, the Milky Way, constellations. Burla's voice sounded as though it were coming from the depth of the Universe, "Look, now the moon is rising and stars will be seen."

The moon appeared on the ceiling and the stars on the walls.

Malik said "Well, enough. Take me to the real world."

Again the room was filled with sunlight when someone knocked at the door.

Burla called "Yes."

A woman-servant with white apron entered and greeted Malik courteously. She put the tea and sweets that she had brought on the tray, in front of him. She turned and left the room quietly.

"How did it happen that the three of you appeared in different zones?"

Burla sighed, "Oh! Let those days perish. That day that we parted, I was at home. Yes, did you notice that this house is our old one?"

"Yes, it is. Don't look so astonished, its our old house. In the place of that one-storied hut, I had this three-storied house built."

"All these three floors are yours?"

"Of course."

Malik wanted to ask how she could afford such luxury, but was afraid of the answer he might receive. So he asked another question instead, "So, you were at home that day?" and then sipped his tea. "I had the flu and was in bed at home. Both my mother and Beyrak were working that day, each of them in their offices. Their offices, as you know were in different parts of the city."

The skirmishes began, after several hours, barricades were erected in different parts of the city, it was impossible to cross from this street to another and then the tragedy, destruction, fires at first, we were able to speak

to one-another on the phone, two days later, the telephone connection cut."

"Then, the division of the city into three zones...."

"Yes, first of all, barbed wire, then the poorly constructed walls were built."

"The graves of your grandfather, grandmother, my father and mother should still be in this zone."

"Really? Where are they?"

"Oh, have you forgotten. You have gone to the graveyard several times, in the upper part of the city...."

"Well, I don't remember. Now it's a Luna Park."

"What? Luna-park?"

"Yes Luna-park. The graves have already been destroyed and ruined and a Luna-park built there. Even in the other graveyards have been used for sport areas for rugby, baseball and golf."

"But where are the corpses buried?"

"They were not buried; they were burnt in the crematoria. Well, we've spoken enough about the dead."

She stood up and embraced her father and ran her fingers through his hair, "But I also considered you to be dead but, you are alive and have come here. My life is brightened, really brightened." She pointed at the ceiling, "Not by this sun."

She saw that he had finished his tea, "Would you like some more tea?"

"I'd drink one more glass..."

Burla stretched her hand to the inner-phone, "Just a moment. I'll ask Lera." **But** she didn't take the receiver and said, "I'll bring it, I want to serve you myself."

She left the room. Malik saw the colourful Monitor journal on the table. He took it and turned the pages. Some colourful and half-naked pictures of Burla. Without a doubt, it was Burla, not an acquaintance.

At that moment Burla came in and saw her father looking through the journal. He was weeping.

Burla understood everything immediately, "Oil, damn these journalists. They write nothing but lies. They write that I have eight cats, four dogs. But, I have only three cats and a dog."

"Which cat, which dog? Oh, my God! What pictures are these? Naked, nude! Isn't it a shame for you?"

"I knew that you wouldn't like them, you are an old-time Muslim man. But Muslim men watch the belly dance most of all. Yes, I'm a dancer. Didn't you know?"

"It's your business to be a dancer, but how can you explain these naked pictures to me?"

"You think a dancer must dance in fur-coat. You are very strange people, don't you go to the beach, don't you see girls in bikinis there? So, you think it is possible to walk naked, but to have photos taken in such a form is not possible? It is a beautiful woman body delights people, why should she hide it? Have you ever been at the museum? Haven't you seen Naked Venuses, Makha, Olympia?"

"I didn't know that my daughter would be a Venus. I wish I were dead in order not to see this day."

"Give up, for God's sake. Do you consider it a tragedy after such disasters? Do you think if a woman dances naked, she is a prostitute? But, you must know, - she showed the room, what ever I have earned, I have earned on the stage, not on beds, by my own labour, by my own profession. I'm the most famous star in this place."

"Couldn't you have chosen another profession?"

"Another profession? What profession? To work as a teacher and to die of starvation. I have neither a husband to take care of me, nor a lover. I have earned everything by my labour. O.K. Let it be the labour of my navel. I perform the belly-dance and even I perform it better than the others."

"Your name has also changed and become Bura.."

"My manager said that this name is more attractive." Burla-Bura rose from her place, came up to Malik and embraced him again, "Father, daddy, don't offend me. I'll give you some good news. You'll like it. I'm going to change my profession."

"To change? What are you going to become now? A striptease-star?"

"No, I'm going to become a mayor."

"What?"

"Yes, a mayor. The mayor of Baku-City. In Turkey, it is called the head of the municipality, if I'm not mistaken."

"You? A mayor? A head of the municipality? Can you be a mayor?"

Burla pretended offence and curled her lips, "Why not? I've got much more knowledge and intellect than the others. Or maybe, these garrulous political loafers are better than me? In three months, the elections will start. Don't we live in a democratic society? Ten men have put forward candidatures. I'm more popular than they are. In our country pop-artists are the most popular and authoritative men. It's impossible to find tickets to my concerts. Radio speaks about me from morning until night. Journals and newspapers write about me. People love me. Be sure one hundred percent, they will give their votes to me."

"O.K. let's imagine that everything is so, but why do you want to become a mayor?"

"I'm twenty-five. I can dance for at least another two or three years. But what will I do then? How will I live? I've got used to this way of life. Will I be able provide a life like this? I'm not going to marry. And don't want to live on somebody's account. I've thought much and at last I've decide that to become a mayor is right thing."

Laughing she showed her head, "Don't hold me with one hand, your daughter is a reasonable woman."

The bell of the door rang. After a little time a tall man entered the room and greeted Burla, "Good day, darling."

Burla and the man hugged closely and kissed warmly.

The tight black atlas trousers on the man resembled pants. He was dressed in a lacy white atlas shirt. He had tied his long hair, which nearly reached his waist, with a red bow. In one ear, he had an earring.

"Jim, let me introduce you to my father ... This is my father."

"Have you got a father?" Jim asked in a flirtatious voice and then coquettishly came over to where Malik sat, bent down and kissed his hand.

When Malik looked at him closely, he saw that there was powder in his face and stibium on his eyes. The boy raised himself up and said mincingly, "Jah-jah Jun."

Malik did not understand his words.

**Burla** said, "Jah-jah Jun is the most popular pop star here, after me of course."

"Oh, darling, after you, of course", Jah-Jah rejoined.

When Jah-jah Jun moved aside, Malik saw the red lipstick mark on his hand.

Malik inquired, "Do you also perform the belly-dance?"

The man waved his hand like a handkerchief, held his mouth with his hand and laughed for a while.

Burla said, "Jun is the God of bric-brac. He writes the words, composes the music and sings it himself. We have a joint concert at night. Come and watch it."

Jah-Jah Jun said, "Darling, only five minutes."

He went aside and whispered to Burla then, again they hugged each other. Malik turned his face. Jah-Jah Jun said to Burla: "Bye-bye, baby."

And he moved towards the door, he waved to Malik, "Bye-bye, daddy."

Malik was afraid that he would come and kiss his hands, or, God forbid kiss his face with the lipstick he wore. But fortunately, he only sent kisses from the distance and left the room swaying his body.

"Your lover?", Malik asked.

It was Burla's behaviour, which made him speak openly.

"What? Jun? Jah-jah Jun?" She began to laugh.

"I don't know if he is Jah-Jah Jun, or bah-bah or what else? You have hugged each-other so tight that..."

Burla was still laughing, "Can Jun be a lover? Ha-ha ... He is a real gay..."

"What is he?"

"Gay...Haven't you heard? How to say.... Just.... Blue...How can I explain? He isn't interested in woman....e...He likes men."

"I understand."

"He is my artist friend."

"You have strange friends!"

"He is an excellent man... a... a real friend. He has composed a bric-brac for my election campaign."

"What is bric-brac?"

"Oh, my God! Don't you know? At present, it is the most popular rhythm in the world... In our country. Jah-Jah Jun began to create this rhythm. He is the "Bric-brac Prince". He drives the youth mad."

"But why doesn't he want to become a mayor?"

. . Burla shrugged her shoulders, "I don't know. Maybe he has such a desire in his heart, but any anyway, he has promised to support me during the elections."

Suddenly, something came into Burla's mind, "Father. You also stay here and participate in my campaign, you imagine its effect, the dancer and. her respected father?"

"Oh! As if it is not enough".

Burla curled her lips:

"Will you ever favour me for that post?"

Malik kept silence.

"You stay here, and become my advisor. I do know that I'll be elected."

Malik stayed silent.

Burla said, "Excuse me, father, but I must go to the rehearsal. Lera will feed you. In an hour, go downstairs, Phil will take you to the concert. You will see that there is nothing horrible. After the concert there is a cocktail party, after it we can chatter until the morning.

She left the room. Malik remained motionless. He did not know what to do and how to behave. Burla returned to the room. She had dressed in a very expensive fur-coat. She came up to Malik and put her head on his shoulder, as she did in her childhood.

Malik felt soft hairs of the fur-coat and smelt faint perfume. Burla said in a very low voice, in whisper:

"Daddy, stay here. If only you knew how lonely I am."

Then she quickly left the room. After an hour, Malik went out into the yard. Phil came running and opened the car door.

Malik asked, "Where are we going?"

Phil said in astonishment, "To the concert."

"Where is the concert?"

"In the Shah Palace cabaret."

"What is it? Where is it situated?"

"A royal Palace?"

"Is it a cabaret now?"

"Yes... sorr... I'm sorry. Miss Bura asked me to speak to you in our own language. I am... I'm... a patriot. I like my nation." Phil said this sentence half in English, half in Azerbaijani.

Malik saw that they were moving forward along the vast avenue.

"What is this street called?"

"42nd parallel avenue."

"Why 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel avenue?"

"Baku-city as well as New-York-city is situated on the same parallel...."

"Oh, yes. Clear."

The Mercedes stopped before the Murad doors, the lower entrance of the former Shirvan Shahlar Palace. Only the walls of the palace were safe, everything else had changed. Everywhere were twinkling announcements,

many-coloured posters ... On the wall, moving words in red, yellow and green neon letters flowed in a strip:

**SHAH SARAY CABARET: EROTIC SHOW:  
DECAMERON-KAMA SUTRA A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS:  
EAST-WEST SEX SYNTHESIS  
RETRO: BELLY-DANCE - CAN-CAN  
STRIPTEASE: DISK-JOCKEY SIMURG-  
SID**

Phil helped Malik into the palace. The walls of the biggest room of the palace were covered from top to bottom in advertisements, advertisements for drinks, cigarettes, soaps, washing powders, hygienic packing and toilet paper. There was a stage and on two sides of the stage, tables placed opposite to one another. The audience were sitting two by two, four by four at separate tables. Old men sat at the front tables. Some accompanied by young girls. People sitting, standing, lying around on or under the tables at the rear of the stage were young men. Boys with long hair, girls with short hair. It was impossible to tell which of them was a boy or a girl?

Some girls were sitting on the boy's knees with their arms entwined licking each other. No one knew which one was the boy or which was the girl? Maybe a boy was sitting on the knee of a girl? Maybe both of them were boys? Or both were girls? They all were chewing gum. Malik was no longer surprised by anything.

Several TV channels cameras were installed in the hall, he noticed the names of the channels First TV, Face TV, World TV and Grand TV.

Girls in bikinis were going hither and thither among the tables handing out drinks and refreshments. The old men, sitting alone at the tables stroked the knees of the waitresses and thrust dollars into their bras. The waitresses thanked them coquettishly. Phil sat Malik at a table and left. Some time later, an odd creature came up to the table and without any greeting took a seat. It was difficult to determine whether the creature was old, young, man or woman. The creature's untidy hair was dyed green, a half of face was blue, and the other half pink. The creature took a cigarette out of a pocket and began to smoke. Malik smelt the aroma hashish.

Through dim eyes, the creature looked Malik up and down from head to foot then offered him his cigarette packet. Malik shook his head in refusal. The creature shrugged his shoulders in surprise. The lights switched off and the hall darkened. The centre stage illuminated and the sounds of loud music came from the powerful acoustic systems on the four sides of the stage. A man appeared under the spotlight, he began to jump and to turn to and fro, his torso was naked and there were erotic tattoos on his back and chest.

The creature sitting by Malik suddenly shouted and pointed at the man on the stage, "He's a drug addict".

It was the first word that he had said and Malik thought, "The pot calls the kettle black".

The creature again began to smoke. Malik asked, "Is that hashish?"

The creature shook his head and said, "Marijuana."

After jumping for some time, the man on the stage stopped and took the microphone,

"I am Disk Jockey Simurg Sid ... Good evening Ladies and gentlemen."

The people in the hall began to laugh, to clap and to howl like jackals. A boy sitting near Malik stood up, jumped on the table, began to break the plates on the table and then put his two fingers into his mouth and whistled.

A waitress came up to the table, gathered the broken plates and put new ones on the table. She bent down near Malik so that he could put money in her dress but he did not. The creature near him took the new plates and angrily threw them down on the floor, the plates were broken into pieces, and the creature pushed the waitress from the table.

The man on the stage said something in English and Azerbaijani. Though Malik paid much attention, he did not understand what he was saying or in which language he spoke. In any case, it was impossible to hear

anything over the din. The people in the hall sometimes clapped, then whistled, howled like jackals and broke the plates on the tables.

The waitresses immediately brought new plates to replace those, which were broken. Malik noticed that it was the older men who broke most plates, and as soon as the waitresses brought new plates, they put money into their bras, pants ...

From the stage the Disc Jockey was heard, "Silence, please, silence, one second."

The curtain on the stage was illuminated and Malik recognized the picture that was shown, it was Jah-Jah Jun. There was a still silence in the hall.

"Don Juan, Lovela, Casanova of our city", the audience began to laugh, applaud, whistle, howling, "Pope Star", more laughter,

"oh sorry, pop-star", applause the Disc jockey paused, then in a louder voice shouted "the prince of Bric-brac", again he paused and in the loudest voice shouted "JAH-JAH....JUUN!"

Jah-Jah Jun entered the arena as though out of hole in the ground to much applause, whistling and howling. He was dressed in a long pleated skirt, and a lacy shirt. He was holding a guitar in his hand. He turned and coquettishly, sent everybody kisses flirtatiously. Then he said, "My dears. It appeared that today is the holiday of aborigines. ...e...e... Novruz holiday. Novrus, Newryus. Even it like new Russians. I've composed a bric-brac for this holiday - Ncw-ryus holiday." Plucking a chord from his guitar, he began to sing with a strange rhythm:

Novrus, nourus, new-ryus.  
Ryus, ryus ryus,  
Rus, rus rus. Ruz, ruz, ruz.  
Duz, duz, duz.  
Buz, buz, buz.  
Gafiya-Mafia, mafia-gafiya.  
Biz, biz, biz.  
Ghiz, ghiz, ghiz.  
Viz viz, viz.  
Jiz, jiz, jiz.  
Biz, biz, biz.  
  
Jiz-biz, jiz-biz  
  
Jiz-biz, jiz-biz.

The audience began to repeat: jiz-biz, jiz-biz, jiz-biz...Naturally with much applause, whistle and howling.

The mouth of the creature sitting by Malik was open. He said, "He is a genius. Did you see how he connected Novruz with jiz-biz? A genius."

Jah-jah Jun continued his singing - if it was possible to call the noise he made singing:

Jaz,jaz,jaz  
  
Gaz, daz, naz  
  
Saz, baz, yaz  
  
Vaz, taz, paz

Smoking his cigarette, the eyes of the creature dimmed and he began to mutter under his breath, "he is a

genius, a genius."

Malik asked him, "In what language is he singing?" As if he considered him to be the specialist of all these spheres.

"In what language? He is singing bric-brac..."

"But what do these words mean?"

"Which words?"

"Just these words- daz, baz, taz, paz."

"There in our language, don't you know them? Jah-jah Jun takes the words out of the cage."

The creature jumped up with a sudden quick movement, climbed up the table and cried loudly, "Long live the freedom of words! Freedom to words!"

The men, sitting at the other tables, also jumped up and began to cry, to howl, "Long live freedom, freedom to words!"

Someone cried, "Viva sex freedom."

Jah-Jah Jun sent him kisses just from the scene. People all over the hall began to cry, "Viva sex freedom."

The green-headed creature took his place, began to smoke his cigarette, and again he jumped and cried, "Gay, gay, sing."

In such turmoil, Jun heard him maybe they arranged this beforehand. He turned his face towards the creature and menaced him with his index finger, "Oh, honey."

From everywhere people began to shout, "Gay, gay, sing."

With an instant movement, Jah-Jah Jun tore off his lace shirt and threw it away. On his half-naked body, he wore nothing but a black lace bra. Jah-Jah Jun struck a chord from his guitar, and then suddenly banged it on the floor with all his strength. The guitar smashed to pieces. He caught his legs in the guitar strings; he violently pulled the smashed guitar and broke the strings. The people in the hall became hysterical and cried, "Gay, gay."

Jah-Jah began to throw the pieces of the guitar into the audience in the hall. There was confusion; people were in complete disorder. People grabbed pieces of the guitar from one-another's hands, they were pushing and shoving one another, tearing one another's hair. The creature commented, "Last time, I could only grab two pieces of the guitar. Do you know how much the handkerchief, socks, every piece of the guitar is worth at an auction?"

Jah-jah was given another guitar and he began to sing,

Who says, I'm not okay Gay, Gay. I'm Gay.

The people began to rattle off, "Gay, Gay, I'm gay."

He repeated it five or six times. Then Jun turned his backside left and then right and continued singing,

I'm yours and sometimes alien, Yes, it is so. It is Okay. The people also began to repeat: I'm yours and sometimes alien, Yes, it is so. It is Okay.

He repeated these words at least ten times, then bowed to the audience who were clapping hands and whistling and then sent them kisses, rubbed his forehead with his handkerchief and threw it to the audience. People began to scramble after it. After a long scuffle an old woman sitting at the front table, got hold of the handkerchief, she kissed and embraced it.

Jah-Jah Jun said, "My dears, sweethearts, and friends. I'll reveal a secret to you. Our beauty, dancer – "Miss Bura wants to be elected mayor", applause, whistling and howling, "I've composed a bric-brac for this occasion". More applause "I need more applause", applause, whistling and howling,

He plucked one more chord from his guitar and began singing,

We have come here,

To vote for Bura.  
She never flies with charter.  
And doesn't like barter.  
If thrown into the fire  
She won't agree with tender.  
When she plays poker,  
She always has the joker.  
Is there any rocker,  
Or, maybe, a broker?  
We have come here.  
To vote for Bura.

He jumped, "Ooops! Together" The people in the hall began to sing,

We have come here.  
To vote for Bura.  
Jah-Jah continued singing:  
Bura- mayor, Bura-mayor,  
Vote for Bura, vote for her,  
Have you seen a thriller,  
Is there any killer?  
We don't ever need  
Marasmic plebeians  
Charismatic playboys.  
We have come here  
To vote for Bura  
Vote for Bura, vote for her  
Mayor-Bura, Bura mayor.  
The people began to repeat the lyrics:  
Mayor Bura, Bura mayor,  
Vote for Bura, vote for her.  
We have come here, here  
To vote for Bura.

Malik stood up. He had had enough, he could not bear any more of this. The green-headed creature said, "Why are you leaving father, Bura herself will perform. She is wonderful."

Malik wound his way through the tables towards the exit. People began to tease him, "Father, where are you going? There will be striptease, just to your liking."

They laughed, whistled, howled. Someone nudged him, someone showed him, "Get aside. Let us see the stage."

Someone barred his way; he was either drunk, or had smoked hashish, "Where are you going? You cannot go out."

Somebody said, "Let him go. Where is he going? To the crematorium, it is high time." Again they laughed, whistled and howled.

Malik left the hall. He passed through the yard of Shirvanshakhlar Palace... the former Shirvanshakhlar Palace. He went out through the door, which he used to enter the place.

Once outside the club he did not recognize the square in which he stood. The square was brightly illuminated and written on a very large advertisement was 'Palace Pigalle'. On the one-story, houses there were



sexy photos, pictures and sex advertisements.

Casino Las-Vegas

Casino Monte-Carlo

sex-shop.

erotic show

porno film

Malik hurried along the street and turned into a side street. This street was worse than the other. This was a red-light district and naked girls were sitting in erotic poses behind shop windows. While he was passing by the shop-windows, the girls winked at him, asked him to come inside. Without raising his eyes, Malik sped his way onwards.

Now he entered a blue-light district. A man with a moustache, who looked like cat and mouse king, stood in front of him grinning and said, "It seems that you didn't like our girls. If it's your desire we've got handsome boys."

Malik pushed him out of his way and cleared out of the street as fast as decently as he could. He passed several streets and seemed to get lost. There was nobody to ask the way. He smelt the odour of food. On one side of the street, there was a restaurant, Malik walked to the backside of the restaurant. In the yard, he saw some people by a wall. They were standing side by side, but their faces were towards the wall. At first, he did not understand what these people were doing. The moon appeared from behind the clouds, and he saw men and women dressed in rags rummaging in the yellow litterbins of the restaurant kitchen. If they found something, they hurriedly threw it into their mouths or the bags that they carried.

An old man, with sunken face and a beard who wore shabby galoshes and was muffled up in his patched coat was also rummaging in the litterbins but he did so covertly. His spectacles were broken. The left rim of his spectacles was replaced with string, and he wore the string round his ear. When he saw Malik, he shyly moved away the litterbin. The people rummaging in the litterbins did not pay heed to anything, they were not looking anywhere, and they were busy with their work. They had plunged their hands into the litterbins. Malik noticed that they were just bags of bones.

Malik towards the man with eyeglasses, "How can I leave this place?"

"Where do you want to go?"

Malik shrugged his shoulders; he did not even know where to go in this alienated city...

The man with eyeglasses approached him seeing his hesitation, "Maybe, you want to go to the sea-shore?"

"To the sea-shore?"

The man with eyeglasses bent forward him and whispered, "Only I know that way."

"Which way?"

"After passing two corners, on the wall there is a hole, because some stones have fallen, it's possible to go to the sea-shore through the hole."

"In what zone is the sea-shore situated?"

"Aren't you from here?"

"No, I haven't been here for ages."

"Oh, clear. Well. You asked in what zone the sea is located; it is not in any zone. The bottom of the sea and the surface have been divided and distributed. Can the dirty places covered with mazut be useful to anyone?"

The man with eyeglasses spoke fluently. He continued speaking, "The level of the Caspian rose and flooded the boulevard ... do you remember the boulevard?"

"Yes, I do."

"There was Neftchilar Avenue."

"Yes, there used to be."

"Now, it is a beach, covered with sand, the coast is also covered with mazut. I can show you to that place."

The man with eyeglasses seemed to want to say something. At last he did, "But on one condition."

"On what condition?"

He turned embarrassed a little, took off his broken eyeglasses, rubbed them and said timidly, "Five dollars... you will give me five dollars... Only five dollars."

"Okay."

Malik did not know why he agreed to do so. Why was the seashore, the sea itself necessary for him? Anyway, he had already given his word. Maybe, he had felt the need in this intellectual man, and wanted to help him.

Malik followed the man and passed through the streets of the city turning many corners. These were not the narrow side streets of Ichari Shahar, but streets on which little huts were hastily built from pasteboard, wooden boxes, rusty metal and pipes. They looked like the slums of Ankara, but were a hundred times more destitute, miserable and poor. The streets were dark, weak candle light came from one or two windows. Not a voice was heard, food could not be smelt.

At length, they reached the slag stone frontier walls. On the city side of the wall, there was no guard. The man with eyeglasses looked here and there and turned back repeatedly. At last, he pointed to a ruined part of the wall, "We can pass through this place."

The man slid through a breach in the wall then Malik followed. They arrived on the sandy shore where they heard the noise of the sea. There was a disgusting smell. Malik held his nose.

The man with spectacles said, "It is stinking. Every sewer-pipe of the city runs into the Caspian through this place."

Malik tried to move but he was up to his ankles in sand. Why did he come here and where would he go? He could not think about anything...

The man with spectacles followed him. He took off his galoshes, which were full of sand, shook them, and replaced them, then coughed a little, "Excuse me, I kept my promise. I helped you to come here. You had said..."

The old man found it difficult to ask for his money ...

Malik said, "Yes, of course", and took a ten-dollar note from his pocket and handed it to the man.

The old man looked at the money, "No, we came to an agreement on five dollars. I don't need more."

Malik said, "I've no change. Take it. Don't be ashamed. You seem to be an intellectual man. What is your...e... was your occupation?"

The old man bent his head and said in a very low voice, "Once I was a writer." Then he turned and without saying good-bye, moved quickly on his way. At the hole in the wall, he took off his galoshes, shook and replaced them and passed back through wall into the city.

## IV

Malik walked along the seashore, he tried to move away from the stinking place, but he did not know where he was going.

Everything was over. He had neither whereabouts, nor people: he had neither the country, nor the family. The Past existed no more. It had been destroyed, burnt, routed. The Present was the same. The Future? The Future did not exist, especially for him. There is no future for him, Malik Mammadli, Malik Mahammadoglu. To return to Turkey, after this, how he could live there with these memories, impressions, things that he had seen and heard. To live was meaningless after all this ...To attempt suicide, to throw himself into the sea here? He

remembered that the sewerage system that flowed into this place. To drown in slops? Malik felt bad, he felt sick. As he walked, his feet sank in the sand, he stumbled and fell down, but he did not want to stand up. He looked at the sea and saw the silhouette of the Narghin prison Island in the distance. To cut his veins, or to shoot himself, maybe to hang himself, or to poison himself, which is easier, more comfortable?

Anyway, it must be done in Turkey so that his corpse should be buried there. If he dies here in Baku, his corpse will be burnt in the crematorium and his ashes will be winnowed into the air. On the other hand, was not that a logical end to his life, to become ash and winnowed into the air? Nothing was left for him; nothing will be left after him.

"Didn't I tell you not to become pessimistic?"

Malik was startled, who was speaking to him on this uninhabited coast? He turned his head and was surprised to see that Arkhan was sitting on the sand near him; When did he come here? How did he come? Malik had not felt anything. His heart began to beat quickly; he calmed down a little and asked, "Arkhan? How did you come here?"

Arkhan showed the sky smiling, "From there."

"It's clear that you've come by plane, but how did you come here?"

Arkhan again smiled and shoved the sky, "From the sky?"

"Are you a bird?"

Arkhan began to smile more mysteriously and said, "Maybe."

They remained silent for a while then Arkhan asked, "Did you see all your people?"

Malik sighed, "Yes, I did" and then he added, "I don't know if you did me a favour or bore me malice bringing me here?"

"Only you can determine that" "I don't know either. Was it better to consider my family dead or to see them like that?"

"Death is the end of everything. A man believes in the change of his life as long as he exists. It depends on the man himself. After he is dead, nothing depends on him."

"There is such a saying, 'There is way out for everything except death'. But it seems that death is the way out of this desperation".

Arkhan said nothing. Maybe Arkhan was the representative of a very secret organization, he had all kind of powers, he could go and come where he wanted, and he had come here following Malik, but, anyway, what did he want from him? "Well, how did you know that, I was on this sandy coast?"

Arkhan replied, "Maybe, without knowing, you've burnt my hair. I've also flown here. Do you remember Malik Mammad tale. Maybe I'm your Zumerud bird."

Malik laughed, "Give up, for God's sake, what tale? Life is not a tale. It is a very bitter thing."

"What a pity that it's so, but tale is more real than life."

"Well, if the tale is more real than life, and if you are Zumerud bird, help me to appear in the world. I'll give you meat when you say 'ga', I'll give you water when you say 'gu'." Malik was surprised by his capacity to tell jokes at such a time and in such condition.

Arkhan said, "No, we can appear in the world only by our own strength."

"By whose strength?"

"By the strength that every one of us has."

"What must we do for it?"

"First of all it is necessary to differentiate between a white and a black ram. Then you must jump out and sit on the back of the white ram and hold so tight that he cannot throw you onto the back of the black ram."

"Oh, Arkhan, the time for you and me to believe in tales has passed".

Arkhan did not answer and kept silent for a long time, and then he said, "Oh, look there".

Day was breaking; Malik looked in the direction in which Arkhan had pointed. "What is there?"

Malik looked more attentively and actually saw something, "They must be dogs. Yes, there are two dogs,

they are fighting."

Arkhan said, "They are not dogs, they are two rams, they are fighting a white ram and a black ram." "What are the rams doing here?" "They've come for you, to complete the tale of Malik Mammad. Three apples haven't fallen from the sky yet."

Malik said, "Those three apples fell a long time" and he added sadly, "Each apple to one zone". Arkhan said, "No, those were rotten apples, I speak about the apples which flower on the first day and lose their blossoms on the second and bare fruits on the third, the apples that the Padishah longed to see."

Malik said, "And giants used to eat those apples, again the Malikmammad tale,"

"It's possible to beat giant, don't forget that the spirit of giants is in a glass."

"What are you trying to tell me with these symbols, Arkhan? Speak openly so that I could understand you."

"Malik Mammad could jump out and sit on the back of the white ram and appear in the world. You still have that chance."

These words enchanted Malik. He stood up with difficulty, but he nearly fell over. He walked one-two steps, now he could see the rams clearly. He turned towards Arkhan and stopped dead again. Arkhan had vanished. Did Arkhan disappear into the ground or did he fly and rise into the sky? Maybe he really was a bird, the Zumurud bird. Malik walked on the sand towards the rams. Everything was clear now; there was only one ram, a white Ram. However, the nearer Malik approached the ram, the farther away the ram moved. Malik began to run; he hardly put his feet on the sand.

He stumbled several times and fell down, and then he would stand up and run again. It seemed that the distance between Malik and the ram gradually reduced, less and less ... Look, he will reach the white ram just now, he has almost reached... Almost reached... Almost...

*August-September 2003  
Zughulba*

## The Red Limousine

*In my sevenhilled town*

*I lost my flower bud*

*Death could not be understood*

*Nor being afraid of death a shame.*

*- Nazim Hikmet*

All of a sudden, he stopped and looked around. These narrow alleys looked familiar to him, and yet it felt as if it were the first time he had been there One- or two-story houses, the strange odors coming from the grimy yards, and the dark corridors, like the distant, dreams, mirages, and faded memories, were revealing to him an obscure universe. Was this coming from his childhood memories?

No, this was not his childhood neighborhood. Maybe at some point in time he had come to this neighborhood to visit someone, a friend or a relative who once lived here. He couldn't remember, he had never passed these alleys to get to work either. Then why did this neighborhood seem so intimate to him? It felt as if he had examined this area inch by inch. What was this apprehension, this internal turmoil he was feeling? It was as if he were afraid of something. Of what? It all fell so strange to him, he had a feeling that he was not in an unfamiliar neighborhood of his hometown but rather in a familiar neighborhood of a foreign town.

He looked at his watch. It was close to curfew time. He knew his hometown very well. He had to find his way out of the labyrinth of these narrow alleys to reach the wide avenues and get home by midnight. Otherwise, the street patrol would detain him until morning.

Or maybe it was the moonlight causing all this. The moonlight had lent a silver tinge to these old ruined buildings in the narrow streets. "Where is the source of this deathly pale color?" he wondered. He was not one of those sleepwalkers who would walk with open eyes at night under moonlight. He was not asleep. He was awake. He was aware of the time and his movements. He remembered at times in his dreams taking giant weightless steps or remaining motionless with cramped legs. But he did not have cramped legs now. He was walking as usual, and he was not feeling weightless. This was not a dream. Then what was he doing in this part of town at this hour? Why had he come here? How had he come here? Since when was he here? He couldn't find an answer to these questions no matter how hard he tried. He did not drink and therefore could not say he was feeling all this because he was drunk. Maybe that is why he was so disturbed, almost frightened. He had a feeling that in the immediate future something terrible was going to happen. But what? He knew this from intuition, he was perplexed. He turned left into a narrow alley. A few steps along, he faced a wall. He was at a dead end again. On the left-hand side, there was a door. He passed through this door but did not enter a courtyard. Instead he entered another narrow alley. At this point, fear overtook him. He was terrified by a sound he was hearing.

The sound that he could hear from far away was now close to him. It was the roar of a car engine warming up. In a short while, the engine would be warm and the car would move. At this hour of the night. In these impassable alleys, why did this unseen car frighten him? He did not know either, but at whatever cost he wanted to escape and get away from this ominous car. He quickened his steps. The faster he walked, the nearer seemed the sound of the car. It felt like the car was approaching him. He started to panic, and ran away. While running, he wondered, how could this car pass through these narrow alleys?

The roar was coming from very close by. He convinced himself that he had to look back. He turned and looked. In the narrow alley, a red limousine was approaching. It was twenty to thirty meters away from him. In a flash, as a natural reaction, he entered the closest door and hid in a dark corridor. It seemed like the car slowed down, or maybe it even stopped. The red limousine had not stopped, though. It was moving very slowly. It was approaching the door behind which he was hiding.

And when it came to a stop in front of him. He looked inside the car. There was no driver. The driver's seat was empty.

\* \* \*

The alarm was set for 7 o'clock, as usual, but he got up before it went off. He was still shivering because of the strange dream in a few seconds he came to himself. He noticed he was in his own home in his own bed. He realized he had been dreaming, he smiled and shook his head.

A new day was starting. He had to get up, wash, exercise, shave, have tea and go to work. He thought about the things that he had to do at work that day. This reminded him of his dull and monotonous job, and he became depressed. He wanted to curl up under the blanket and think into sleep again. He could not do that though, and following his official daily routine, he jumped out of bed.

Half an hour later, he looked the door of the house in which he lived alone on the fourth floor and started down the step. In five minutes he would board the number 7 bus. It would take him to the subway station. He would pass three stations in the subway, get off at the fourth and walk one hundred meters to reach his office. He had done this every weekday (except for one month of leave), at the same time to the minute and via the same means of transportation, for eighteen years. He lit a cigarette. As soon as he got out the door, he was taken by surprise. A red limousine was parked in the street next to his door. He could swear it was the same car he had seen in his dream. There was no one in the car, just like in his dream. But now things were different. There was no moonlight. There was warm sunshine, and he wasn't afraid of this red limousine. It was just a regular car parked

in front of his door, So be it, 'There was nothing strange about that. True, he had never seen this car, which was so distinctive because of its blood-red color. He thought maybe he had seen it here before and had just not paid it any attention, Or possible he had noticed the car unconsciously, and that's why he had seen it in his dream.

He saw the bus approaching slowly. He ran to catch it, In the crush of pushing and shoving people he managed to board the bus. He turned his head to look out the back window of the bus. He wasn't sure what he was looking for. From the side window he saw the red limousine.

At the second station a lot of people got off and the bus was no longer crowded. He sat down in one of the empty seats. He looked out the window at the streets and alleys of the city, which was teeming with people and cars. His thoughts were drifting. He was watching the passing cars carefully as if he were looking for something. Then he started to laugh at what came to mind, "Maybe I'm looking for the red limousine."

He saw the red limousine when he got off the bus. In fact, he saw it after taking only a few steps. It was parked in front of the subway entrance, It was empty again, he inserted. He inserted token at the turn stile and took the escalator down. He thought maybe many such red cars have been imported lately, and that's why they are all over town. That's why he keeps seeing these cars in different places, even in his dream. This thought made him laugh. However, another possibility came to mind and sent a chill through his body. "Maybe this is the same car that is following me! He started laughing again at this thought, "Hey, this ear is following me! But this is so strange, it has even found a way into my dreams. He then tried to reason with himself that these must definitely be different cars he kept running into.

These strange thoughts occupied him so much that for the first time in his life he missed his subway stop. He did not notice this until the doors of the train had closed. He had no choice but to get off at the next stop, which he did. He waited a while, then took the train heading in the opposite direction and got off at his own stop. He took the escalator up to the ground level and passed through the exit doors. As soon as he stepped outside, he saw the red limousine. This time he was not surprised. He had been sure he would see the car again. He looked at the plate number: 19- 91.

On his way to the office, he was thinking, "Will the red car follow me to my office? Or am I going to see the car when I reach my office? No, that is not possible. This alley is the only way to the office. If the car were heading there, it would have to pass next to me, and then I would see its driver. This is not a dream, where the car could move without a driver.

He noted the passing cars. There was no red limousine among them. There were lots of cars parked in front of the office, but no red limousine was among them.

He took the elevator to the eighth floor and walked to his office. The windows of his room opened onto the courtyard, for the first time ever, he regretted this. If he were able to see the street from his window, he could watch the cars. "It looks like I am losing my mind. Why am I thinking about this red limousine all the time?"

All day long, he was busy with work, editing tomorrow's paper and reading the materials for the day after. He was so preoccupied that he even forgot to go to the cafeteria and have a light lunch as usual. Around four o'clock he finished the editing and had a chance to take a breath of fresh air. He realized he was very hungry and so went to the sixth-floor cafeteria. The windows of the cafeteria opened onto the street. When he was at the cashier's paying for his soup, potato, and tea, he peeked outside. The red limousine was among the cars parked there. Was it the same car?

He was very curious to know whether this was the same vehicle. He took the elevator down, went out to the street, and looked at the license plate: 19-91. It was the same red limousine.

He was astounded; he stood there for a while and looked at the red car. The driver of this car had to show up at some point, and this strange puzzle would be solved. But no one approached the car.

It was the end of the workday, and one by one people were coming to take the cars and go home. Little by little, the parking lot in front of the office building was growing empty of cars. Only a few were left now, and among them was the red limousine. He realized that he had been waiting a long time out here for nothing and nobody. What was he looking for? Whom was he waiting for? He didn't know himself. He knew there was no point in waiting. He could wait here until morning. No driver would show up for this car. He did not know why, but

he was sure of this. He was also quite sure that once he left, he would see the red limousine in front of his home. Why he was so sure was not clear to him. But that's the way it was.

He set out on his way home. Now, instead of the cars, he was paying attention to the passing people. He did not see any familiar faces, it was as if he were in a completely strange town. This, of course, was not a feeling peculiar today only: he had had this feeling for the past two or three years. He and many other people in this town could no longer recognize the place. It was as if they were strangers, as if the town were filled with a completely new set of inhabitants. Not the looks or the kind of people, but the way the people behaved, the way they carried themselves, had changed. It looked as if the buildings, alleys, and squares had altered, had become strange. Before, on the way to his home or to his office, he would at least see a few familiar faces. Now, even if he walked the streets for hours, he would not see a single familiar face, not one friend.

These thoughts were running through his mind, as he reached the subway station. He saw the red limousine with the plate number 19-91 in front of the entrance. How and when had this car gotten here? There was only one route from the office to this station, and he had not seen the red limousine pass him by. Maybe he had been preoccupied and had not noticed it. In any case, the car was there, in fact. Again with no driver. Nobody in it.

He was absorbed by thoughts that were beyond his understanding. He felt a mixture of curiosity, apprehension, and an increasingly intense fear. Someone was playing a joke on him and only on him. Yes, someone was playing a game with him.

He was ready to play along, if only he knew the terms and the rules of the game.

He was thinking all this while riding the train. If they were indeed playing a game with him -but for what reason he still didn't know- they knew about his stops, his home, his office. They had followed him and had found out about these stops. This was not a difficult thing to do. So it had been them, but who? Of course, he didn't know -them, whoever they were, spies. But, he thought, I can ruin their game. "If I get off at the fourth stop, my stop, I will see they have parked the red limousine there. I will not get off at the fourth stop, I will get off at the second stop. Why not the first or third? Why get off at the second stop? He only realized once he got out of the subway station that he had chosen this stop subconsciously. A couple of years ago, every day or every other day, he used to come to the house in front of which he was standing now- it was Katiba's house.

\* \* \*

Katiba used to work at their publishing house. She was a secretary. One day, or rather one night, it was his and Katiba's turn to work overtime. Around 12 o'clock, they submitted the final edited copy for the next day's paper and left the office together. He accompanied Katiba to her house. For a distance of two subway stops and the walk, to Katiba's house they talked about a variety of subjects: their work, their colleagues, the weather. It had been approximately one year since they began working together, but until now they had never talked of intimate subjects. Aside from the usual topics they had discussed along the way, they both had a feeling that they would spend this night together, (Later on, Katiba admitted as much.)

Katiba was young and attractive. She lived alone. He was alone too. He had never married. Five years ago he was of course much younger than today.

The hint, the invitation, the first words, whoever started it -did Katiba invite him in for tea, or did he ask for matches from Katiba (knowing that she did not have matches on her and had them only at her house)? Or were they both responsible for the first hints? Anyhow, they both welcomed the idea. Once they went up to her apartment, they both said it was already too late, the subway no longer ran at that hour.

He was seeing Katiba's house for the first time, he spent the night there. Three years later their relationship came to an end. They had grown tired of each other. Maybe that was the reason why Katiba had changed jobs. She didn't have a telephone at her home either.

Before Katiba took her new job, they had almost broken up. It had been a few weeks since they had seen each other. But after Katiba changed her work place, he visited her.

Katiba had company - her now friends from the new job. She was very cold toward him. He stayed for a short while and left. He came again after a week. Katiba was not home, he went once more, but again she was not home. He did not return any more.

This separation was not at all painful for him. He had lived alone all his life. He was used to loneliness, and it did not bother him. If he ever got bored - and he did have days like this he would call one of his friends. Then he would either go over to the friend's house or have the friend come over to his. They would talk for a while, then say good-bye, and perhaps not see each other for quite some time.

Getting off the subway at the second stop, he did not see any red limousine. Who could know he would get off at this stop. It was as if his legs carried him to Katiba's house. He took the stairs up - he had not forgotten these stairs. At the second floor there was a broken step, and he had to walk carefully. As if the two years had receded into a void, he rang the bell,

He heard footsteps behind the door..

- Who is it?

He said his name.

The door opened. Katiba looked at him with surprise.

"Is that you? What a surprise. What brings you here?"

He said he was in the neighborhood; He just wanted to pay her a visit.

They were still standing at the door, finally Katiba invited him inside.

"Come on in," she said. "But forgive the mess, I didn't know I would be having a guest"

The room was in strange shape. It was empty, no furniture. Only the wall mirror remained. The pictures were gone and the outlines of the frames were visible on the wall where the color was different. In the corner of the room were cupboard boxes filled with books. There were more piles of books, journals, and newspapers slacked under the window on the floor.

The wall mirror brought to his mind special scenes, and Katiba noticed him looking at the mirror that way, she knew that in his mind their love-making scenes were coming alive. They liked to make love in front of the mirror; he took his eyes from the mirror and looked around the room. The color of the linoleum on the floor was different in one corner where it was not faded away, it was the outline of the bed-their bed, where they had had memorable times for a short while. He even remembered the squeaking noise of the bed caused by the movement of their bodies.

"Have you come to say good-bye?" Katiba asked him,

"Good-bye?" He didn't get it. "Are you moving?"

Katiba nodded.

"Are you moving in another home?"

"I'm moving to another country."

He looked at Katiba silently for a while.

"Where are you going?"

"Far away" Katiba smiled. "To another continent, across the ocean."

He remembered that Katiba's mother was Jewish and that she had relatives in America, an aunt or uncle.

"When are you leaving?"

"Day after tomorrow. I have sold everything. They took the bed today I have to sleep on the floor tonight."

"How about these books?"

"They are coming to take them tomorrow." She remembered something. "Wait, I still have my teapot and cups in the kitchen, I'll make you tea right away."

"No, you don't have to," He said. But Katiba had already gone to the kitchen.

He went to the window; he could see the subway station. He went to the wall mirror and looked at himself. His hair was gray, but it looked as if he had dandruff, not that his hair had turned gray.

He took the books and one by one turned the pages, looked at them and put them back. They were mostly encyclopedias, dictionaries, and works on various subjects, there were some rare books among them too. In



most of the books there were notes on the margins of the pages, and some sentences and words had been underlined. There were question marks and other markings as well.

Katiba brought two stools from the kitchen. On one of them she set the teacups and sugar and gave the other to him.

"Sit down."

"I didn't know you had such a rich book collection," he said.

"They were left to me by my parents, some of them are mine, but most are theirs.

"How come I never noticed them? Where were you hiding them?"

Katiba looked at him with scorn. "How could you have noticed them? You would jump on top of me as soon as you got here, and then after you were satisfied, you would look at your watch constantly. To free you of that situation, I would say to you, "You must be in a rush, you must have something important to do." Taking advantage of that, you would say, "Yes, I have something very important to do," and you would immediately disappear.

He remembered that everything was exactly as Katiba described it. They had talked about this problem before. In fact, this was the reason they had broken up. He changed the subject to avoid bringing up these complaints yet again.

"These notes, are they your father's? I am talking about the notes in the margins of the books."

"My father's and my mother's. They are not mine, anyhow."

"Your father knew English then?" "He knew English, German, and Farsi...." "Who are you leaving these books for?" "I'm not leaving them for anyone. I have sold them."

"You sold them. To whom?" "Different people. People have different interests."

"How could you do that? They were left to you by your parents\* with their handwriting in them."

"What can I do? They are dead, my parents and the books."

"Are those books dead for you?"

"Of course."

"What do you mean by that?"

"It's obvious. When people buy the books, read them, understand them, spend their time with them, die, they take the books with them. They die too -I mean the books. With the new owners, they are not the same books. They are different, even if they look like the same books."

He took a sip of his tea and looked at Katiba with surprise. It was as if he had met her for the first time.

Katiba continued, "I like reading books and thinking about them .., and not just books on one subject I like to read books in general. Look, most of these books have been in one place for about fifty, sixty years. They have been living all together in one place. I sometimes thought their characters went visiting one another at night. They talked to one another. They argued with one another. Like me and you."

"We didn't argue."

"Yes, of course. Anyhow, these books were all a family. Now they are separating. The family is breaking up; tomorrow they will be each in a different part of town in different houses in the hands of different people. They will never be together again." She paused for a moment, then added "Just like me and you."

He was seeing Katiba for the first time. He was discovering who she was for the first time. "Is that that you are? How come you never talked like this with me before?"

"You never let me. You just jumped on top of me as soon as you entered this door."

Okay, don't start again",

"I mean it. At the office it was the formal talk about work do this, do that. And at home ... the quiet words, the heavy breathing... and then yawns,"

This wasn't what he had in mind before coming here, but now, was it Katiba or was it the old memories that

were making him think he had never made love with Katiba on the bare floor with the newspapers and books scattered around them? He got up and wanted to put his hands around Katiba's shoulder Katiba mined away.

"Stop it," she said. "The old days are gone. I don't think about you any more. I don't even dream of you. I haven't wanted to call you, but there was a yearning left in the corner of my heart, a yearning that, before leaving, not ever seeing you again, it would be nice to say good-bye to you, I thought about that a few times, now you've come here yourself. Had you really heard about my leaving?"

"No, believe me. My coming here was just an accident. There was something else as well..."

"What?"

He wanted to tell her about the red limousine, but he changed his mind. What could he say about it? That he had seen the same car several times today. So what?

Moreover, Katiba was no longer in this room, in this town. She was speaking with him, but from a different world. She was present in the room physically, but her mind, her soul, was somewhere else. He was thinking how familiar he was with Katiba physically, with her body, and how unfamiliar he was with her soul.

A wild desire had awakened in him. He wanted to break the wall mirror into pieces, but he remembered that it is a bad omen to break a mirror. He didn't want any misfortune for Katiba or for himself. Surely, she had sold this mirror as well, the mirror of their love, its buyer would come, and maybe this mirror would be somebody else's mirror of love.

Staying any longer in this empty room where all the voices had faded out would be torture. He had to say all his farewells and leave "I have a good journey. I wish you happiness and good fortune." He also said, "Maybe somewhere, sometime, we will see each other again," though they both knew they would never do so.

He had opened the door, he said all these quickly, kissed Katiba's forehead, and started down the stairs. He almost fell down on the broken step at the second floor, where he twisted his leg, he looked up. Katiba was still standing at the door waving at him. She was not crying at all. She was smiling.

When the pain of the twisted ankle subsided a little, he continued down the stairs slowly and heard the sound of the door closing above. The squeak reminded him of the noise their bed had made. He realized they were separating forever. He also realized that Katiba was his last friend in this town. The only one he could tell about the red limousine.

He wanted to go back and tell her everything. He wanted to say, "Don't go, don't move away. Let's get married, let's live together. Don't sell the books to anyone., or at least let's stay together for tonight- Just tonight. Let's spread the books under us, put the newspapers over us, hold each other tight and sleep. But he knew this was not possible. Everything had melted away nothing could be changed. One could not escape fate.

He reached the ground floor. Once he opened the door, he saw the red limousine right in front of his nose and was not surprised. It was as if this was the way things should have been. It was completely natural for the red limousine to come and find him there.

He wasn't even scared any longer. He calmly and deliberately headed toward the subway station. It was drizzling. There was something familiar about the rain in this town that had become so foreign to him. He didn't know the people, the houses, the alleys. It had changed. He would look around and not find one familiar face. He raised his head and looked at the clouds. The clouds were familiar. A familiar rain was pouring from the familiar clouds. It looked like the rain was pouring not from the clouds but from the past, a past that had been lost forever.

He didn't even notice when he got on the train and when he got off. He didn't even wait for the bus. Instead, he walked home.

The rain was still pouring down. After a few steps he would reach his house, and he would see the red limousine parked out front. He was sure. He walked a few steps. He saw the door to his house. The street in front of the house was empty. There was no car-not a black one, a green one, or a red one. He thought that in a few

minutes he would go to sleep and see the red limousine in his dream.

\* \* \*

He woke up in a panic and looked at the clock. It was early in the morning. The alarm would go off in two and-a-half hours. But he knew that today he had to get up at this time.

He got up and went to his window, He wasn't mistaken. There was nobody in the street, no movement. There was only one car there. It was parked in front of his door. It was the red limousine.

He knew what he had to do. He took a shower, shaved. He put on a clean white shirt and pressed suit, a new tie, and he wiped his shoes.

Before leaving, he looked at his room. He wanted to turn off the alarm. Then he thought it wouldn't wake anyone in the empty room.

He did not light a cigarette, the last cigarette and so on... he didn't like romantic stuff like that. Slowly, he went down the steps and out into the street.

There was not a single soul in the street. The pavement was still wet from the night's rain.

He went toward the red limousine. If there was nobody inside or around it, he knew its door would be unlocked.

The door was unlocked; He opened it and got in. He sat behind the steering wheel. He knew the key would be in the ignition. It was there. He looked at the strange street, the strange houses, and the familiar sky. The clouds had gone from die sky. He turned the key.

\* \* \*

"This morning around 5, a car exploded in Yokush Street. It seems that a bomb had been planted in it, for it exploded as soon as the driver turned on the ignition. It is not clear who planted the bomb, who owned the car, or who the unrecognizable victim blown to bits behind the steering wheel was. The investigation is continuing."

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