

My Life
by
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They say they won't admit you here, Dad whispers.
"Ahmad, for God's sake! I'm dying," Mum shouts.
"WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?"
"Just do something! —God."

God is one of those words I've heard a lot since, I remember.
"Sakineh, stop walking," Dad says.

"Don't even mention my name you bastard—A-Good-For-Nothing husband—Nurse, please do something, my child will die if you don't hospitalize me—if you know God!" Mum begs.

"I'm so sorry but there's nothing that can be done—there's no Gynaecologist in the hospital right now as Dr. Amini left two hours ago, and Dr. Karami won't arrive until tomorrow morning. She's in Turkey right now."

"There should be something you can do. What do you mean there's no Gynaecologist in the hospital right now?" Dad has anger and depression in his voice.

"The private hospital is less than three kilometres away," a quiet voice says.

"What don't you understand? I DO NOT HAVE MONEY."

Money is the second word I remember having heard, a lot.

There must be some relation between God and Money.

It's getting hot in here.

"The last few days I've been getting on and off pain in my lower right side but now I feel severe pain on the lower bit of my tummy. She's going in circles," Mum says.

I'm not sure what being born exactly means but I know 'it's truly necessary for me to be born right away.' This is what Mum just said.

"God damn you all to hell," I hear Mum yelling, "NAZANIN!"

Oh, Mum is saying my name. Dad believes I need a more religious name though.

Everything is spinning around very fast.

"Don't stress out the baby," that's my aunt's voice, always nervous.

"Is it your only concern?" Dad laughs, "GET OUT OF MY SIGHT."

"The placenta shields the baby from the majority of stress hormones, so she'll be OK," the kind voice known as 'Nurse' says and laughs.

"What's so funny about this?" aunt asks angrily.

I hear an unfamiliar voice say, “what’s all this about?”

“Hello doctor,” the nurse says.

“We desperately need your help Dr —”

“I’m a general practitioner, not a gynaecologist.”

“I need to get some air,” Mum repeatedly says.

I want to stretch out my limbs. I try to kick Mum to let her know my desire to come out. It’s getting difficult to move.

“I’m illiterate, but I know, more than you, that there’s something wrong with her. Look at her pale lips and face,” Dad is desperate again.

It’s so cold in here right now. It feels like something’s moving and pushing over Mum’s abdomen.

Round and round.

“I’m so sorry—” is all I hear.

No one is talking.

“Wipe her belly.”

“She should be transferred to another hospital where they provide specialist neonatal services. Your child will need special care once she’s born.”

What is this ‘hospital’ everyone is talking about since I woke up.

“I was told that everything was fine with my baby,” Mum cries.

I get so sad that I want to cry but I can’t.

“I’m sorry, but she’s very small and you have diabetes.”

“Her midwife never mentioned anything about her having diabetes. What are you talking about?”

Mum always says that Dad’s family is full of loud talkers.

Oh, I’m almost forgetting to tell you about two very loud talkers who are always around Mum; Zahra and Mohsen. They run around screaming at all hours. Mum once told me that they are my siblings. Dad always gets angry at them.

“Put them in the ambulance,” the doctor says.

“Where are you taking my wife and daughter? Somebody tell me what’s happening?”

I wish I could hear Mum’s voice again. She’s no longer saying anything. I feel so lonely in here.

I don’t like this helpless process of how babies are born; Mums and Dads take the bus from their village to the nearest hospital in Karaj, I think it is a city near where we live. That’s what Dad told Zahra and Mohsen yesterday. Then they talk to the people who are called ‘Nurse’ and ‘Doctor’ and ask them to hospitalize them. Then they are told to try a private hospital. Very probably they transfer them to another hospital after Dads say that they do not have money and Mums no longer talk. But what does hospital mean? I try so hard to hear Dad, but I can’t feel his presence.

“She’s no longer breathing,” a sad voice says. Everywhere is getting darker and darker. I’m afraid. I want to cry again. I look around. Nothing. Mum, why don’t you talk to me?

The thing called ‘ambulance’ is moving. Where are they taking us?

“They’re both dying, isn’t it funny?” the same voice says.

“A child’s born in the U.S to Mark Zuckerberg to make him so hopeful that he promises to donate forty-five billion dollars to charitable purposes. Then some poor illiterate parents ...” another harsh voice says.

“Who’s Zuckerberg?”

“Is there anyone in the world that you know? Do you ever use Facebook?”

“Oh, yeah—ha ha—is he really meaning to do that? He’ll never know about this child, better for her not to see this world.”

“This is the least understood death to me.”

‘Death’? What are they talking about? I’ll make sure to ask Mum once I’m born.

I can’t move anywhere. I try to stop my eyes from closing. I need to get some air but Mum seems to love sleeping now.

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