

MALICIOUS
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Thank you My God for not giving up on me...

Thank you my dear mum, my dad and my whole family and my
supportive friends!

Special thanks for Glden Bulut and Serda Kranda Kapucuođlu...

Kevser Aycan Aşkim Sarođlu was born in İstanbul... She has graduated from American Language and Literature department of İstanbul University... She has received journalism training in the *Hürriyet Foundation*... She has began her journalism career in the same group... She has worked in *National Geographic Traveler* and *Aktüel* magazines under the **Hürriyet** Group and the Sabah Group... She has worked as an editor and columnist in *Akşam* magazine's weekend journal supplements and *Brunch magazine*... She has finalized her journalism days in *HaberTürk*... After, she has done freelance journalism and ghost-writing. She has written for magazines such as *Picus*, *Egoistokur*, and *Derki*... Her first book, *Tutkunun Kum Saati*, was published in 2010. Her fantastic novel, *Darendau'nun Şarkısı*, is still being published by the self-publishing website, *publitory*. As of the December of 2014, she has been working as an advisor for Dođan Novus publishing house... She owns a blog called "Sonsuzlukta Bir Mola Yeri", which covers spiritual subjects... She is also a certified yoga teacher, and she continues educating herself further on yoga, astrology, dreams, spirituality, Islamic mysticism, and energy... She defines herself as perpetual student of life...

Evil wears no costume, but if it did,
it would wear the costume of the good.

But how could you live and have no story to tell?

Fyodor Dostoyevski, *White Nights*

Summer of 1961, Marrakesh

It's an afternoon in Marrakech, which is called "The Red City" in Arabic, and cherished as "God's Country/ Land" by the native people of Berbers. In one of the neighborhoods at the back of the city, at a rather large square, there was a crowd gathering together once again. This was the marketplace. One of the ordinary marketplaces filled to brim with acrobats, musicians, dancers, story tellers, thread salesmen, silver smiths, and street vendors selling Turkish delights, bagels, sherbet, candy and trinkets.

Again at an ordinary time, there was something that was pulling the crowd right towards the center of the square. It was such a fascinating thing that every single person to come join the crowd had their eyes locked on the same particular spot, as if it was drawing them into its own gravitational field.

Everyone was holding their breaths, watching with complete attention as a boy seated at the dead center of the square looked at some strange shapes laid out in front of him and talked. This square was actually the story-tellers' domain, and the afternoon hours were when they would usually be there, however, there had been no space for the storytellers for a while now. For the past year, that square almost entirely belonged to the kid.

The boy had a scar on this neck, pitch-black eyes that almost struck like lightning wherever they were pointed, and the kind of large, aquiline nose, which was carried like a signet by those who held the most power in this world. The crowd appeared to be captivated by this seven year old boy; whereas he had a look of disdain that was exclusive to those who were born to be the

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center of attention. It was as if his complete stillness and his lack of response to the gasps around him had granted him a leadership title. With the playful rays of the summer sun, the grains of sand he held in his palm glistened and dispersed around like a waterfall made of gold dust. The boy was actually performing geomancy. While his lips moved silently with an air of mystery, the boy was reading the fates of lives, people and nations from the sand. He was talking of what was to come, and what wasn't.

There was also a considerable number of tourists who were also caught in the boy's spell. The constant clicking of their cameras' shutters indicated that they found the sight this boy to be worthy of photographing.

All eyes in the crowd were fixed on one spot, which made for a precious opportunity for pickpockets and beggars. They did their job as the boy told the future.

After the boy, the second most eye-catching person in that crowd was a woman of Slavic beauty. She was around her 30's, had light blonde hair and eyes like two large, ice blue marbles which observed the boy with great attention. She wore a white shirt and a beige skirt, and she had folded her arms over her perky bosom. Her head was tilted to one side in order to hear the young man who was translating the boy's words for her. The 16 or 17 year old man was enthralled by the beauty of the blonde woman, however, in the meantime he was trying to translate the words of the young geomancer boy, even if it was in short sentences.

The beads of sweat on his upper lip made it more obvious that he was struggling. Before long, the woman was approached by a man in his forties, with the same Slavic features of light blonde hair and fair skin as her. He had also taken to watching the little boy with full attention.

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After a while, he turned to the woman and spoke in Russian:

“That’s the boy I’ve been telling you about. What do you think, Irina?”

Never taking her eyes off the boy, Irina responded with tone of certainty:

“You were right, Ivan. He is truly remarkable.”

Pleased with his discovery, Ivan said:

“I think he may be useful to us.”

“And his parents? What about them?” asked Irina.

“His mother died, and his father ran off. He is currently living here with his grandfather; who let us take the boy wherever in return for a rather small amount of money.”

“We will call him Dimitri. What’s his real name?”

“Cabbar el Badisi.”

Irina raised her eyebrows in slight astonishment, stepped in closer to Ivan, and almost whispering, she said:

“Cabbar el Badisi, huh? That is a powerful name. Good job. He may be quite helpful to us. He has an innate talent for seeing the future and even re-directing it. He might be amongst the brightest alumni of the parapsychology institute.”

Ivan smiled and nodded in agreement.”

“One day, he will mesmerize the whole world with his talent.”

Autumn Of 2012, İstanbul, Kılıç Çiçeği Apartment in Nişantaşı

“Name?”

“Berrak Fazıl.”

“Age?”

“Thirty-three.”

«Occupation?»

“Freelance.”

“What kind of freelance?”

“I own a gift shop.”

“Educational background?”

“College graduate; I studied business and management.”

“Your reference?”

“Muhteşem Demirci.”

“His occupation?”

“Doctor.”

“Password?”

“Dwarf.”

“Type of application: with or without return?”

“Without.”

“With or without blood?”

“...”

Muhteşem had mentioned that they might ask strange questions such as these. What was I supposed to say? I wish I had asked him about it beforehand. Although he did avoid going into detail for some reason. I was so eager, so miserable and so desperate that I didn't think to ask him about it any further. After all, I just needed

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my problem to be solved. No blood! Blood just runs out, it doesn't solve anything. Can blood wash away the pain?

Why is the secretary staring at me so intently? She has huge eyes. They look like navy-blue balls, with large pupils that are ready to absorb whomever she has her gaze fixed on. She could have had an amazing face had it not been for her tiny lips. Gothic eyes for freakish lips. An entirely cinematographic face.

By all means, I did sense that everything would be a little odd, but now all of this seems to be stranger than I thought. How did ever I decide to jump into this so suddenly? Even so, until this moment, nothing had struck me as unusual; it was as if I were doing what needed to be done all this time. I had convinced myself that everything was perfectly normal. But now, an uneasy feeling is creeping around inside my stomach and it's not letting me go. Everything around me almost radiates eeriness. Darkness beyond words. So be it. I am now at the point of no return. Actually, I can still walk out, but no. I'm not going to back out.

“Without blood.”

There; it has gone into record. My application has been saved to that computer. A copy of it has been printed out. It has been processed into a computer and the print out has been placed in a folder with a thick, red cover. Done. I am going to see this through. I have taken the first step beyond the point of no return.

I will not be alone with my suffering anymore, and no more drugs nor alcohol. No cutting, no bleeding. No internal bleeding. It will not end this way, Kerem. You cannot just walk away and leave me high and dry. They say no one can get away scot-free forever, and I hope that's true. I'm here to help destiny on its way. I'm in now. I can't back out.

“If you want the tragedy-scale, the price will increase, but it is

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amongst our options. Your choice.”

“Tragedy.”

Yes, make it a small tragedy. I love tragedies. That’s what I want, a tragedy. Entirely old, archaic and ancient. Back when we did theatre in university, we had staged many tragedy-centered plays. Tragedy tells the stories of the strong; of those who put forth a claim on life. Where there’s power, there’s tragedy. Tragedy is the inevitable destination for mortals who defy the Gods, and desire to own their powers. Aren’t we all mortals? Then I intend to play this game to the end. I want a Medeian tragedy. Medeia is one of the greatest sorcerers of the ancient world. She is the master of poison and medicine making. She is the daughter of Moon Goddess Hecate, niece of Circe, the Goddess of sorcery. She is the leading character of the longest love epic of the ancient world. She captures the symbol of the rulership of the world; the Golden Fleece, tears down the patriarchy, and is known as the “killer of men” for that reason. Yes, something like Medea.

Pure. Deep. Irreversible, like a knife wound. Like a shard of glass to the eye.

“Miss Berrak; Mr. Cabbar will fill you in on the details at your meeting. That will be fifteen thousand dollars, upfront; with a thirty percent discount included due to being referred by Muhteşem Demirci. Please choose a password.”

“You would not have done it.”

I think that was the name of a book. That makes for a good password; quite fitting with the occasion. Maybe you would have done it too, Kerem- you have done the other things, after all. But what you and the likes of you do is not penalized, because it is in accordance with social status. Your behavior is seen as a normal one that does not harm our society. It may even be regarded as usual,

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masculine behavior within the community. What you have done to me does not appear as evil. My inability to turn sharp corners on the road of life is not your fault. On the other hand, what I'm doing now would be regarded as a horrifying act if anyone found out about it. Fortunately, no one will know, and neither will you.

“One last thing, Miss Berrak: In case of a last-minute change of mind about the operation, you need to read the italic text at the bottom of this page and make sure you check that box as well, please.”

“Alright, will do.”

Why is it written in italic? To draw attention, or to discourage people from reading as italic texts are tiring for the eyes? The latter of the two applies to me. Italic texts are challenging for me. It's better if I don't have to deal with this one on top of all the other challenges of life. Besides, the text is so small that it appears as if they were deliberately trying to make it unreadable. It's as if it was written for ants... Unreadable. I just cannot damage my vision any further with this text right now. It says something along the lines of “should a client back out of the agreement” oh, whatever. Change of mind? For what? My mind is not going to change. If I was going to change my mind, I wouldn't have come here to begin with. I'm in it now. No turning back for me.

“I signed it, there you go.”

Weird lips is done with paperwork. She actually looks like a passionate person. Her lips are puckered together as if they are cinched from both sides to keep all that passion from spilling out. Her feet are rather small too, and she's wearing ankle-strap heels which make them look more elegant. Outdated, but still attractive. Perhaps she is Cabbar's lover. She is wearing fishnet stockings, after all. Why do men find fishnets so irresistible? Kerem could

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not resist them, either. When we met, I was wearing my sexy, deep red fishnet stockings. I wonder if they remind men of some sort of web? They all desire to be entrapped in that web in the very same way that they desire to be crushed under stiletto heels. And later, they fight tooth and nail to get away from that web in which they were entangled by their own will.

But some webs can not be untangled, Kerem.

Some webs are forever, once you're entangled in it, you stay there for good. I have you entangled for life.

Her skin-tight skirt is nice too. Just above knee-length. That is the most seductive skirt length according to men. It's designed to make them want to move upwards. It evokes the same kind of urge that you would get when you see a door left slightly ajar. You can easily walk away from a closed door; even if you are curious about what hides behind it, you would probably decide that it's not worth the hassle. A wide-open door would create next to no urge to explore. But a door that's left ajar is just like a skirt with a slit at the thigh; you just can not walk away from it without satisfying your curiosity.

She would be a total slut if it wasn't for that fine-knit, grayish spinster cardigan of hers. And that "little miss, the star of old black-and-white movies" Belgin Doruk watch on her wrist. My parents adored her, so we would always seek out the classic Turkish Cinema channels to watch the "Little Miss." When I think about it, it's quite clear why my mother liked Belgin Doruk so much: It's because my mother is a "Little Miss" too, and they are rather similar in the sense they are both spoiled.

She is trying to seem innocent by wearing that wool cardigan and that watch; as if to say, "I'm just an ordinary secretary." Then why wear those fishnet stockings and those ankle-strap shoes?

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Why do I have such an aversion towards this woman? She reminds me of my mother. My mother is just like her in the sense that her voice is so soft her face carries such a gentle smile that you just cannot believe how her words pierce through you like shards of ice, spoken in that kind voice of hers. Because you think that it's unlike her. Her voice actually carries a poison that gives you deep wounds. Bu you don't realize this at the beginning. You stay in a sweet state of delusion as you slowly bleed out. The poison takes its time to work itself into you.

There are so many cabinets and drawers here. Full shelves, countless drawers and cabinets. Freakish lips fits in well within this room; with all these cabinets and whatnot, they all come together to complete this odd picture. All the drawers are neatly labeled. They remind me of high-tech televisions that are mounted on walls. And they are all dated by day, month, and year.

Wow, the 80's are crowded! They are categorized as 'personal', 'political', 'detective', 'sociological', and 'religious.' Does my file get stored under 'personal'? That second section right there. An entire, huge cabinet is reserved solely for 'love and revenge'. All recorded into small discs. When I'm done, my love will turn into a small disc just like everything else in here. I have to be the first one to make a move and shrink it before it kills me.

Here I am. I still can't believe it. Had I been told several years ago that I would be doing something like this, there is no way I would have believed it. I couldn't have imagined that I would ever come to a place like this more precisely, I couldn't have imagined that a place like here and a concept like this could ever exist in our world. But here it is, as real as can be. Turning thirty-three years old makes you realize that very few things in this world are impossible, if that. They say that thirty-three is when the soul

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reaches full maturity. Fine then, I have decided to send it into the darkness before it matures completely. It might as well exist in hell from now on, since heaven is already lost.

When you're in your twenties, you believe that the world is exactly—and exclusively—as it seems. That everything is what it seems. You believe that everyone is exactly who they say they are, that everyone's mindset is how they claim it to be. The naivety of youth. When I was young, I used to be like that too; naive, innocent, untouched. Although I had been scratched up, wounded, and beaten down; I had still kept my innocence and faith in life. It was exactly as Scott Fitzgerald had said: "Everybody's youth is a dream." And I believed that I would be living a dream.

There was a time when I was cheerful—despite my mother, who could never get enough of criticizing me, staring me down, and disliking me; and my father, whose face I barely even remember. Despite my mother who never forgot that she only married my father because she was pregnant with me, and never forgave that embryo; I could still smile at life.

But now, I'm here. It still baffles me how I ended up here, but I did. Even though I still struggle with believing that such things exist in our world, and my senses are having trouble with accepting that I'm here, I am. Do people always change for the worse? Do urges become different as they age? I want my urges back. But they will not return. However, I will not be a loser. I won't let that happen.

After everything that happened, I could either come here or lose. Lose, and fall. Deal with those "friendly" faces that turn into sneers the moment I turn my back. Lean on them for picking me up from bars, the ground, pools of my vomit—and even thank them for it. I would even say "You're so great, I love you," out of habit.