

especially haunting at sunset, as the wind would howl through the long empty halls, slamming doors and unlocked shutters.

It was at that young age that I found myself responsible for my mother and my five siblings, and so I lived a strange childhood. What made it even more complicated were the disputes between my mother and her brother, who was supposed to be our guardian, so I became the one responsible for meeting the needs of my mother's household. Note that this was 1966, when we didn't have the supermarkets we have now and we didn't have a phone since it took months, if not years, to get one installed.

It was my duty at the time to buy the household supplies from Al-Mubarakia. For the most part I could do all of this after school, but buying fish was always a problem. To make sure the fish was fresh, I had to go to the market before school to buy it, then I would go back home and walk each of my siblings to their schools because my mother didn't like the idea of sending my sisters alone with the driver. Every morning I would first bring my younger brother to Al-Farabi school which was near our house, then I would bring my little sister to Bahetha Badia Elementary School, then my youngest sister went to Ibn-Khaldoun Kindergarten on Tunis Street, and my older sister went to Algeria High school in Shamia, and finally I would return to Al-Farabi, which was also my own school. It goes without saying that I was usually late for the morning assembly where the principal would be standing at the door with his ruler waiting to punish each and every student who arrived late. This continued for years, but they say necessity is the mother of invention. I had to build endurance and I never ran out of tricks to avoid the principal.