

**TWIN
THOUGHTS**

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TWIN THOUGHTS

Part I

Parallel Talk

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Twin Thoughts

Twin Thoughts is a collection of short stories based on fictional characters and a combination of social stories inspired by my life. Each story was influenced by what I have observed throughout my life. I've witnessed some and heard of others. I also experienced some of them firsthand. The purpose of each story is to depict a distinct view of life, giving you a broader vision of daily issues.

People judge superficially without looking for the back story, but each event has different points of view. Life is a limitless path and we cannot take the easy path, not always. Life isn't a straight function, many changes can be made or were meant to happen... but they never did, many misunderstandings spread due to the lack of knowledge and communication.

Twin Thoughts is a chance for me to show the readers my positions and attitudes toward particular issues in my community. The best way to express my thoughts is by creating stories inspired by real events and mixing them with fiction to ensure they provide clear ideas. Enjoy reading them!

Why Twin Thoughts?

It's a combination of two thoughts; each thought has a corresponding thought that doesn't align. Every thought is caused by a previous thought which causes a second thought, just like the electrons in quantum mechanics. The idea is that we can't understand everything from one spot. We need to overlook our hidden thoughts from outside our comfort zones.

Expectations vs. Reality

Life... a word with just four letters, but it hides many secrets and is full of surprises. You couldn't predict what will happen neither in the last ten seconds nor the following ones. Sometimes your wish comes true, but the reality can be 180 degrees the opposite of your expectation too, as humans always expect what they want or need. Sometimes greed controls our desires and we make dreams out of our expectations and turn them into our goals and main objectives. In general, those goals are far away hard to fulfill which makes us feel achieving a realistic thing isn't worth our time nor our effort. It is miserable to consider them achievements.

Soccer is a sport where every fan expects victory for his favorite team and every player expects he'll make the best impact on the field. Even the coach expects the maximum will be given by each player to win him the match, but the reality isn't what they expected because the game is played between two teams that both expect the win but it's not going to happen for sure.

College is where every student expects to get good marks and work hard to make it true.

Parents expect success while the teacher waits to see the fruit of his efforts. But it doesn't happen for everyone and each time. Soccer and college are two fields based on expectations and realism at the same time. The good sides of expectations are the ones that inspire you to give your best; you can lose a game or fail in your exams but what matters is that you improved yourself.

A strict man had a cute, young daughter named Soumeiya who used to be called Sou. Since her childhood, he made all the plans for her. Sou was normal even though she was controlled in every aspect. She learned how to fix her mood. She was active and mostly creative. The tiny girl was capable of making a miracle out of nothing, but her dad disliked her hobbies considering them distractions. Ali never did let things roll randomly and always appointed that he made the right plans to satisfy the conditions for a successful career... the same career he expected.

Sou grew up on parental manipulation, but once she entered college her grades declined as her time was consumed by her favorite hobby, which is dress design. She failed in her studies and became careless while her friends succeeded and got their diplomas. Ali went furious on his

daughter and couldn't hold himself when he pushed her to the floor; she hit the staircase with her neck getting broken and dropped her last breath in the same place while her father was drowning inside seas of blood and regrets... The next day, after Sou's funeral and after burying his daughter, Ali received a letter destined to Sou. It was the letter of her acceptance to work in a worldwide fashion company after they viewed some of her dress designs. Her favorite hobby was drawing dresses and her dream was clearly becoming a fashion designer, but Ali's expectations made the dream fade away taking the purest girl to a deep, infinite sleep. The detectives solved the case in just three days. They found out that the death wasn't an accident, but a deliberate murder committed by the father. The sun always rises up in the east and sets in the west, but a person's life ain't sun and surely you aren't God.

"The good sides of expectations." This sentence is telling you something, right? Anything with a good side needs to have a bad one. Indeed, expectations have it as well when you expect too much that you make it a vital part of your life, but the most dangerous ones are the ones relying on people...

Don't ever expect favors or kindness from anyone because they are humans, and you surely get what I mean here. Most of humans are selfish creatures; they only care about satisfying their own greed, and once they get what they want from you they'll abandon you.

Kids expect big things from their parents more than they can afford by steps. Parents expect big achievements by their child more than his shoulders can handle in the middle of the society we're living in. The boss expects fundamental efforts from employees in one hand and on the other hand they expect him to increase their salaries. Logically, there are always poor parents and rich parents, successful kids and failures, greedy bosses and kind bosses, loyal employees and traitors.

The life system is meaningful when you avoid understanding, but it becomes meaningless when you try to understand the reality of it.

A Rotten Girl

Maria is no longer the same person I knew; popularity made her socially blind and perpetually furious. I've known her all my life, she's an angel... Even the new version... Even after turning into a beautiful monster... She's both the beauty and the beast. Her popularity crossed the line of high school and she ended up dating elders. The innocent girl is gone now; she became a careless freak. At this point, nothing matters to her but her popularity. She's blind to her falling reputation.

She saw the girls getting jealous but couldn't see her mom suffering in pain. She felt great joy when the fifteenth man begged her to ride his Ferrari but had no sorrows when they drove away from her falling dad; he had a heart attack when he saw his cutie pie taking the ride... She felt a big honor after she played with the heart of a group of men but never saw her young brother's honor coveting on the ground every time he saw her. He was too weak to react... He became a joke between his friends, who mocked him for having such a sister. She noticed

the failure of others to reach her popularity but never checked out her little sister while she was copying her and turning into a younger version of herself.

Ego and arrogance made her forget how adorable she was; I've been a coward unable to keep her in the straightway. Despite being best friends for many years, she left me behind after I refused to throw my honor and sell my body to animals. She claimed I'm not worth being her friend and I've hypocritically made myself distant; I left her when she needed me most. In fact, I enjoyed seeing her dignity dwindling day after day; hearing people criticize Maria's behavior made me feel better after our separation. Every word they said was a relief for my soul.

I've never missed posting her actions on my Facebook page showing how pitiful she is, I've always looked at her as a strong person with no weaknesses; I always thought she was unbreakable... I did not see the small, bright side on her... I was hurting the beauty while focusing on the beast... I literally cracked her dignity to pieces and I've contributed the most in staining

her reputation. I was the one who informed her father about the date with the Ferrari owner.

My words were hurting her without my knowledge. I may be one of those jealous girls without feelings. I was miserably losing the one-sided war. Until, on a raining morning I got the news about Maria's death after she cut her veins in the tub; only then I realized how cruel I had been and the pain we can cause to people around us with just words. Even the strongest ones can get hurt without showing it. Maria was a bad girl, but I was worst... I've been a rotten girl.

The Art of Confidence

Romayssa... Romayssa was ugly and fat. Her comrades used to call her by many nicknames; the most common was the 'ugly fat girl'. Romayssa used to hang out with her childhood friends, Selma and Linda. Selma was a feminist since she was born, and Linda was freaking intelligent. In fact, she always had the mean ideas; she was the brain. The triple grew together in harmony, but not for good.

During middle school, Romayssa increasingly gained weight after each summer's depression. High school had a different atmosphere; students got lost in their teenage moods, and looks became important, especially for girls. Selma and Linda became beautiful and the dream of most of the boys while Romayssa was the 'ugly fat girl'. Selma played with the hearts of many; she rejected every request like it was an act of personal revenge. Linda was a true love's hunter, always trying to catch the eye of the most popular boy in high school: Oscar, the captain of the soccer team.

Romayssa was the ugly face in the trio. Selma and Linda were everything for her; she used to be bullied by the boys who called her by all the bad names they could find, but she always did find her comfort and her cute smile when surrounded by her sisters. Oscar had been selected to produce the science project with Romayssa. Oscar's friends started laughing at him for his partnership with the 'ugly fat girl', but Linda was happy to not see him partnering with a beautiful girl. After they spent time together to accomplish their project, they started discussing life's issues. Oscar was impressed by Romayssa's maturity in comparison to the girls he had relationships with. The two kids became close friends and enjoyed a walk every evening. Linda was upset toward Romayssa even after she explained her relationship with Oscar was a friendly one. The stress between Romayssa and Linda grew bigger and Selma had enough of the situation. She decided to confront them once and for all.

The confrontation did not go well as the beauties removed their masks; Romayssa underwent an emotional ailment where she reviewed all the memories in a couple of seconds, discov-

ering many facts about why they never gave up on her. They accompanied her every time she went to buy new clothes only because she bought them clothes... They lunched with her because she was paying the charges ... Everything they did or didn't do was for their own benefits. The young girl suffered but Oscar had put in some effort to keep her standing against her depression. Without him, her life would turn to misery.

Oscar coached Romyssa in the summer so she could lose weight, and she did it in a very short time. What a mutation it was! By losing the round form of her face, Romyssa became popular and all the boys fell under her charm; but she gained enough confidence to ignore them. Linda got more jealous while seeing love features on Oscar's face whenever Romyssa was around. After becoming Oscar's girlfriend, Romyssa started getting more attention especially from boys.

From being the 'ugly fat girl', she turned to high school's diva. The brand-new girl gained more confidence since she mutated. She earned a place with Oscar's crew. Romyssa has been selected to join the pompom girls' team and represent soccer's team in the championship.

Romayssa grew up in fear; she had a lack of confidence. Unfortunately, her ego had beaten her modesty. She obtained more confidence than she needed... She had turned to the dark side; even Oscar experienced her arrogance despite being the one who gave her back the smile; being the center of attention for all the boys, made her lose interest on Oscar and all every remaining feelings she had for him were long gone by the end of summer. Her arrogance spread out around all her entourage including her family and teachers. She ended up hated by everyone and endured another depression of solitude.

Two months, only two months were enough for her to regain the weight she had lost the past summer. The fat surrounded Romayssa's heart which couldn't resist any longer, keeping the young woman alive for only five years.

Everyone needs self-confidence to have a peaceful life. Only when you're confident does your mind function creatively, but you shall fuse your confidence with modesty, otherwise it becomes arrogance. Proper conduct of confidence is an art.

“Lack of confidence may ruin your life...
Too much confidence will destroy your social
life... A dark room cannot shine without any
light. And so, confidence cannot reign without
modesty.”

Hero

Hero... a simple word. We all know its meaning but few use it right nowadays. We are all heroes for someone, but not everyone can see the real heroes in their lives. The mayor considered himself a hero when he moved a neighborhood to a new city and gave them houses, but in reality he was just doing what he had to do; it was a part of his job. A doctor isn't a hero when he saves a life when he's getting paid for it. Even a fireman isn't a hero. Never consider a policeman a hero... Some people consider a player who scored the winner in a soccer game as a national hero but he's not even close. We just have to be logical and think about it. How can you consider someone taking payment for his job a hero? They may be heroes but artificial. When you ask your best friend for help and he does, he's not a hero because he was asked to do his duty as your friend. I'm not against anyone here, I'm just saying what's in my mind. I didn't say they are villains.

A hero is a martyr who died in the war getting nothing in return and his only reward was giv-

ing us the freedom we're living. A hero is a father who works hard all day searching to satisfy his children's needs without expecting benefits, just hoping they succeed and have bright futures. A hero is a mother who lost her health watching them grow up and making sure they're having the right education and are going in the right direction. She does it because she loves them.

Have you ever heard about Jerusalem and the people living there? Whether you have or not, those people are the true heroes. They endured the worst, lost their closest ones, lost their freedom, their time and rights. And still they remain strong and honor their father's legacy. You are not the hero when you post on Facebook; you're just supporting the real heroes... and you better do it with honest prayers. When you send your money and share your activities with the world only to fix your image as a star or to attract more followers, you're not their hero but a helper who sent a small slice from his fortunes.

Your best friend's father bought him a car, but your father doesn't even have one for himself. Your best friend's father bought him a gamer laptop the same day he asked for it but your father couldn't afford the elder model. Your best

friend always wore expensive new brands of clothing but you wear the same shirt the whole year. He considers his father the best dad in the world and you... you blame your luck for getting such a father. You blame your miserable life... Sometimes you even blame your friend as it was supposed to be you in his place. Once you wished you had a father like Sam's dad, but in fact, the way he raised you made you the man you've become... You start working when you were young to get yourself all the needs while Sam was busy playing games... You took care of family issues while Sam was busy with the many girlfriends he had at once.

Now you're a successful man and a great husband without mentioning the caring father you are. Tell me! Who's Sam now? What did he become? Exactly nothing. He became a drug addict, and after the death of his father, he lost the company in gambling and never got married because everyone knew about his addiction to drugs and the way he lost the fortune of his family. "You can't trust a foolish man with your daughter." Money and materials things never make a father the hero of his child. The morality made your father the real hero of your life as he

showed you the value of family and how to face life's issues on your own.

You can raise men and women when you're poor if you have the right attitude. You can do it if you assure them a comfortable life mixed with the right attitude. Money alone and the absence of a good education will ruin their lives and make them weak and dumb... heartless. Your father died proud of the man you've become. He never stopped thanking God for the chance He gave us. You must be saying. "But I've always hated him." He knew that, but did you really hate him? Of course not! You should never forget where you came from... Look up to your hero and be a better one to your children. Keep making us proud, son. We'll be watching you as we always did... I'm the luckiest mother.

The unknown twin

You came into my life and everything went for the best. I know miracles don't exist, but still I consider you one. I had a casual life with ups and downs like a rollercoaster. Our religion says there's no such thing as eternal happiness and peace in life, not outside paradise anyway. I remember falling emotionally and breaking after a long chain of downs and the absence of ups; anxiety ruled my feelings and depression ruled my life. I lost my mind and all reasoning. The pain remained for many years while I looked for that missing part of myself. I always thought it was about love, as everyone expects, but the reality is different than our expectations; we all have that person who changes our life for better and makes us stronger. You made me myself again.

The first time you meet that person, you will feel you've known each other forever. That person could be anyone : one of your parents, a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, a best friend or a lover... Often it's the lover, but there are exceptions. Many of you will recognize that person in your life, few will not.

You are my exception I don't deny that I was expecting a lover, but I honestly think it's perfection.

You were the reason why I got better last year. You were the only one who could turn my sadness into happiness. You were the one who advised me few and benefited me much, and your bits of advice stabilized me.

In a fairy tale, you'd be an angel sent to rescue me from myself, protecting me from old demons. It was a gift that we finally met. To be honest, it took you a long time to show up. I was a little mad at you "why now?" I kept asking myself. But once we talked about it, you considered that maybe it was the right time. You convinced me with those words. The way we met was funny and we were lucky. I'm always thankful for that opportunity.

This person will be different from the world but not from you. This person is your lost twin... the unknown twin.

All my life I was convinced that crying out of happiness was another lie from Hollywood, until you got mad and asked me to stop talking to you. I felt cold about it, and you said I could

never be a normal person. I got mad despite reality so I took a deep breath and reviewed the details and realized that every mean word you said was a blessing to fix my soul and protect me from my own mistakes.

After a few days, I reflected on all my thoughts. you cruelly laughed at me and said it was what you wanted to hear. I felt an unreal happiness inside my body, the universe stopped and I became emotional. My heart froze, I didn't feel a beat until I felt a tear flow down my cheek followed by a victorious scream. The lie was eventually a truth.

I cried out of happiness for not losing my unknown twin. I cried because I avoided the chaos... the chaos of losing my unknown daughter who was born without my knowledge. You're my twin daughter.

The Seventh Look

Missing a test can be one of the worst things to happen to a student, but for me it was a miracle. Well, kind of. I was lucky when nobody told me about having a test that Saturday; otherwise, I wouldn't be telling you a wonder here. I was so upset with myself for being such an ignoror. I was already struggling with my year and I managed to miss a crucial test which could kill my chances to succeed. The next Saturday arrived and I had to attend the course for the first time this year. I didn't know about the existence of a miracle in my class. I arrived early that day hoping the teacher would give me a second chance. The class was empty when I took a look. I almost left thinking there was no course after they had a test, then a voice came from behind:

“Good morning. We study here right? Class T,” a girl named Raya asked me.

“Yeah, I guess so. The schedule says T,” I replied.

Raya was talkative. I couldn't manage to speak, and perhaps I admired her talking. This girl was, still is, and will always be my true love. I just needed seven looks to fall deeply in love... I mean really in love.

The first look, I saw an innocent girl and a native woman. The way she talks makes her look a little shy but the way she thinks and her ideas say another stories. A grown woman was hiding behind the cute girl I saw first. She was a great paradox.

The second look, I saw a nice, helpful, and kind student ready to help her comrades when they need her. She never waits for something in return. Raya made herself available to help me While, in my department, I've only known greedy people. Talking to her made me believe in success after I felt hopeless about my semester.

The third look, I saw a sympathetic and tender person. The teacher asked us to solve a problem on the board. She lifted her hand and solved it, then the teacher told her that she got a bonus point for it. In general, students appreciate it, but she was neither ordinary nor greedy.

"I should've let you go to the board instead of me. You'd take the extra point. You're the one who needs it most," Raya told me when she came back to her seat.

"It's fine by me. One or zero is the same," I said.

"You never know, maybe that point will be the reason to pass."

“Thank you. It's nice that you thought about me.” I smiled.

“You should speak with her after the course ends. Maybe she'll accept your request to redo the test.”

The fourth look, I saw a dreamer, an ambitious and determined woman that every man dreams to build his future with. She never gave up and believed in her abilities to manage her studies. Despite the hard conditions we were in, she had many plans for the future and when she speaks about dreams, it looks like she makes the oath to make them true. This kind of person is what we need in our lives. With only a few words, they increase your strength to battle against issues, and she really did.

The fifth look, I saw an educated girl and a respectful woman full of good. She knows how, when, and with whom to talk. She has tons of principles that she respects, and with no doubts it makes her parents proud as their education has brought its fruit. When she had a problem and had to go back home, her brothers ran to get her. One of them left his job, so she won't wait longer than she should, and only this tells us the good sister

she is. A perfect daughter that every father dreams about and the friend we all want by our side.

The sixth look, I saw an angel's smile... When she tells me "good morning" and we complain about study or life issues, she tells me how she wakes up every morning with a coffee trick and I'm just listening to her and admiring the moments and the pure words she is saying. I still remember the smile on her face when she wished me good luck before the exam. I felt a cold on my chest. Actually it scattered throughout the rest of my body. Perhaps it's happen each time we've spoken.

The seventh look changed all my previous sights. To be honest, I have no clue what happened. In the blink of an eye, I was completely flashed. All my feelings turned into love. Indeed I did like a girl before, but I was never any closer to love... Now I'm totally falling apart after knowing she'll never be with me. Despite the pain, my love and my feelings got bigger. I don't blame Raya on this. The first and only person we can blame here is me... I am a mess.

Enlighten me

“I’m lost... I lost the control. My studies are driving me to a black hole where I only see the darkness.”

Since I joined this cursed university, I’m living in pressure. I lost all my hobbies and joy; I’m always surrounded by projects and can barely breathe between two. Awake every night till I present my project, I’ve become an insomniac; looking like a zombie and tired all the time, this year is the worst. I can’t manage to read books, not even RG’s book. I’m lost in a tunnel surrounded by darkness. I want to stop everything but society says I need a diploma or I’ll be nobody. In my limited free time, I get stuck in my dark thoughts. I lost all interest in fun. I dream the same dream every time I get some sleep... the same dream repeating itself over and over.

Running inside a dark tunnel, running from demons I can’t see, they are probably the teachers. My left leg was broken and my arms were covered with wounds. I look up and see a beautiful light but I can’t reach it... I’ve always lost my strength before its beauty. It seems like a cursed light but hopefully it may end up a cure. I

wake up sad and my face glowing with tears; I feel the weakness inside me, unable to motivate myself... Unable to start a conversation with myself... I get up and start working on my projects, living the same routine.

Now, I'm asking myself, "Is this the life that I want to live?" No answer is convincing me. "Am I living the dream? But I'm not seeing the light." Anxiety got me and sent me to an infinite circle of depression. "I've lost the control. I better quit before I lose my soul." I just made the decision to give up my studies and leave this place once and for all; hopefully, I'll get rid of my anxiety. I want to sleep in peace... dream peacefully and see the light when I close my eyes at night.

Before I leave, I will lie down below the big tree in the garden. Tired as usual because of the lack of sleeping, I'm sleeping in the shadow of my favorite tree. Woke up again in the tunnel. I open my eyes and all I can see is darkness, the same darkness... Same wounds... Same broken leg... I need to reach that light. It's bigger and I'm getting closer. It's a miracle I can finally feel the light burning my eyes. Suddenly, I blackout and the place turns white. I'm waking up horri-

fied with tears in my eyes. I'm seeing a group of people looking at me wondering about my reaction; one of them stands up and he's coming. I should've left before he reached me.

"Hello, my name is Kamel. You can join us and I'll introduce you."

So I did. I'm trusting the guy. Now I'm introducing myself to strangers and talking about my experiences since I joined the cursed university. They shared some knowledge which wasn't about studies. We're discussing random subjects. Since now, Kamel, Islem, Ikram, Abir, Manel and the rest are the source of my peace inside the university. I'm becoming a regular reader. My studies went from better to the best; the rhyme of my life has been settled better than ever. Amazing people are joining us. Our number increased with the arrival of Walaa, Hocine, Ahlem, Badra, Kawtar, and finally Rahim.

I was living inside a black hole. Now I see the light and have reached it. Those people brought the light to my life. We've decided to make the group official... we named it Enlighten Me.

No Options

Before you give up and let this issue take over your life, you may need to open your eyes to see the hidden light and then close them before using your ears to hear the muted vibrations in the air. Reopen your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose to calm your nervous system. You are unable to make decisions when your system isn't stable... Your mind will pick up the first thought that passes by. In a certain point, your head will follow your heart and the feelings take control of your actions. Instead of relying on your wisdom, you'll act stupidly; we all know a moment of weakness and the inability to react over an issue. But, not all will surpass it and manage the situations as they should, and not everyone will screw it and take it from bad to worse.

You are still alive. You're standing. You still own enough strength. You must stop pretending and lying to yourself; there's no weakness but you created it. There is no giving up but you believed it. Failure never has been a destiny but a choice... It's your choice.

Once a young kid, a homeless child named Adam had no family... He spent most of his life

looking for his young sister. All the circumstances were against him. He barely had food to eat, and he had no healthy water to drink... But he had a strong belief in Allah and great self-managing. Adam had all the reason to give up but he never did. He kept standing until he found the person that would bring him back to life once again.

Adam became the CEO of one of the biggest companies in the country after he followed his path to the end.

There's always a light shining for us at the end of the tunnel. If your walk was blocked by an impasse, it can only mean you lost God's path and should go back to the right one where God will guide you. No other path is easier, my friend. If you lost the control of coming back for the mighty, pray to Allah and only then you'll feel peaceful and take control of your thoughts. And never repeat your useless quote. "No options."

Open the Door

My name's Cilia. I'm 22. I had a normal, casual life. Most of it was spent on studies and cartoons. A standard life that I grew tired of when I got older. Graduating to university made my life even more boring. All-time stressed, considering quitting and get married to the first man who knocked my door. I was wasting my life in vain, at least that's what I felt, I needed to change my life's rhythm and start adventuring.

Ryma, my little sister, was more socially active; actually, I was the kind of girl who never talked to anyone and replied as short as possible. Ryma was interested in events and workshops made by different organizations. One day, she came home after she attended an event; she looked joyful and super excited that she made us all curious about the details. Ryma told us about the event and the organization. I did like it, but I also doubted myself. "I'm not good enough to join such a thing." I told myself. Then I denied Ryma's request for attending the second day.

The next morning, Ryma made noises before leaving to her event. "Why didn't she insist for me to go with her?" I asked myself. I was

jealous. “Why can’t I? I just can’t.” I accidentally replied with a hearable voice. Ryma sarcastically smiled at me. I covered my head with my pink blanket. I didn’t want to take my head out until she left the house. She threw me some clothes and told me to wear them, so I did. I’ve acted stressed all the way. I felt a big pressure on my shoulders.

We arrived and my heart’s beat increased. I almost went back home with dad but he refused to open the car door. 9:30 am, the check-in started a few minutes after our arrival. I gathered my strengths to pass it. Nesrine joined us and sat beside us. I haven’t seen her since I was in high school before I got trapped in Chemical Studies.

The chairman represented the event, and it was really interesting. I kept myself focused during all the speeches. I’ve learned a lot of facts about the outside world... out of studies. After the end of the debates with speakers, we had an introduction to the products that the organization provides. I was delighted. Attending the conference brought me to a new world; I was spinning myself around inside my comfort zone, but never again.

Since then, I started attending the events whenever I had the time. After weeks from my first attendance, I saw a link to apply for those who wanted to join the same organization. I jumped; I got so happy and excited. I applied by answering each answer with an extra focus mode; it was a life or death case for me back then. I needed it in order to fix something broken inside me. I was accepted to pass an interview then became a member of the organization and joining them made a big impact on my life. I learned the art of communication. I developed myself in public speaking and got many professional skills. Unlike Nesrine and me, Ryma did not join the team because she always hated taking responsibilities.

Nesrine and I joined the organization together; as we were also comrades, we attended and organized many events and workshops. Before we both thought about doing other things apart from studying. At the end of the year, we ended with better results. The experiences we had improved us personally and professionally. It cost us nothing but the courage to take an opportunity. Whoever you are, wherever you live, no matter how you feel and think, if an opportunity comes, just open the door.

Poisonous Friend

My best friend, the best friend I ever had in my thirty-nine years. I've had only one friend named Mustapha. We've practiced soccer together since we were kids and became rivals as much in studies as in soccer. We were the prides of our parents in the neighborhood and people always compared their children to us. But not every good story has a happy ending...

After graduating to high school, my life's rhythm became annoying, always the same objectives. I realized them over and over but nothing changed in me. Still surrounded by weak teammates even when I scored each game. We conceded more goals and I couldn't join a real soccer club willing to success in my studies.

A new teammate, named Bilel, joined the team and got himself close to Mustapha and me, despite Mustapha not appreciating the new kid as he seemed suspicious at some points. For me, he was what I was looking for. Spending time with him was like an adventure and I experienced many new things, as well as I started to abandon my old habits and non-blood brother and put my careers in doubts. Both soccer and studies went

to an amnesia. Mustapha started avoiding him, which means I was spending more time with the new kid than my old friend who kept the same path. I made a complete spin with my life.

Since Mustapha wasn't around anymore, Bilel introduced me to his group of best friends, the same guys Mustapha and me were avoiding for years, but this time I did not avoid anyone. I even found my new best friend there. Our friendship was completely different; he never looked after me but I always looked after him, he was not paying attention to me, but I was paying every penny to have my best friend by my side. We were consuming each other without even complaining. After two years of a perfect friendship, he introduced me to his family and I became addicted to a family I'd never known. I couldn't live a day without spending it with one of them. I was literally breathing them.

My addiction got bigger and bigger over the years. I used to spend more time with strangers than my real family; I was the son that my father felt proud of, but I'm the one who put his head down at the end. My mother was the center of jealousy between other moms, but now she's ashamed to attend any meeting. I'm no longer the

big brother who plays soccer with his little brothers in the yard; I'm the young brother who hits his employed sister to get enough money and spend it with my beloved family... My careers!!! I don't remember the last time I played with a ball; I barely remember the rules of the game. I did graduate to university, but not the one my parents expected... not even close. And yet I failed to get a diploma, unlike my old boring friend Mustapha who's a successful engineer in one of the most famous companies in the world. I became unsociable and had no friends and felt nervous most of the time, but I always found peace in the mountains with my blood brother and his cousins. We were isolated from the rest of the world... I was living in my own virtual world full of joy and dreams... I was living the best moments... What a fool I was!!!

I moronically thought nothing would happen to me when I was surrounded by my best friend and his family, but three months ago I felt something wrong with my body. I was paralyzed...

I asked them for help, but they haven't made any step; I've been fooled all this time. I tried to reach them but my organs failed me again and again... The more I tried to get closer, the more I felt I'd

moved farther away... In fact, they never did betray me, but were immobile always and I moved them wherever I went.

Bilel was a bad friend, but he also introduced me to a friend who's even worst. He consumed me and my body. His name is tobacco, and by consuming it, I went to consume drugs and alcohol and everything related to them. The happiness I've gotten from them is only an illusion that puts me off of my path... It took my life away... Now I need a wheelchair to leave my bedroom. That tobacco was a poisonous friend.

Orphan's Karma

A twenty-six year old man lived on the streets since he lost his sister. He never had a place to live or a constant neighborhood. He was always looking for his young sister who had been taken by force from him when he was just six. They'd been separated when an old couple adopted the three-year-old girl while the brother stayed in the orphanage crying the departure of his beloved sister before he skipped the same day looking for the last smell of his family. They were a happy family living in a big house and a stable life. Then the tragic road began when their parents were killed in mystery and the children were sent to the orphanage by the uncle so he could take over the big house after losing his own house to gambling. The kids spent six month together before the couple came to adopt Sarah. Adam spent ten years sleeping under the sky's dark waiting the mercy of strangers to offer the rest of their food.

In fact, Adam became homeless at an early age. After eight years of sadness and loneliness, the fourteen-year-old boy met a young, charming girl named Sonia who used to bring him food

from her house and take long conversations with him until they became friends. After a few months, the girl moved on with her agent dad to another country, leaving no contact since Adam had no modern gadgets on him. The demons of search took over Adam's head again and the old, casual life rose back as he lost the only comfort he ever had since Sarah's adoption.

Months were passing fast, and the condition was the same. He had no clue of Sarah's location. While looking for his sister, Adam found their parent's house, and the memories made him feel peaceful and more confident to find Sarah if he asked his uncle. Unfortunately, the awful uncle, in a straightforward way, kicked him out with no mercy, fearing that he'd ask to stay there. The young man continued his path, believing that he'd find the light in the dark world filled with black clouds and red evil eyes. One day, he met some young kids protesting for their rights of studying and getting identity papers. The kids were cool with him as they invited him to join their protests, but he wasn't interested as he already knew the result... "Even my uncle kicked me out. Why would strangers give us what their children have?" Adam told the others.

The kids were generous with Adam; they gave him some food and clean clothes, welcoming him to stay with them as long as he wished. He told them his story and about Sarah and they explained their situation against the authorities... Different stories and situations, but it was close enough to feel the solidarity between the two sides. After forty-three days with his new friends, Adam noticed a familial old man getting out of the building and decided to follow him to his house. He asked Rayane to bring him his bicycle and he accepted to do so, just before Adam started following the black car. Rayane asked him how their lives were and Adam didn't reply, he just smiled ironically...

"In life, you suffer then you try your best to stop suffering, but in fact trying not to suffer will make you suffer more, and when you realize that it will make it even worse and if you're still trying to stop it, you're suffering is the worst," he said after a deep breath.

"How shall we deal with it?" Rayane asked. "Accepting your destiny," Adam replied. "Should we suffer forever?" he asked again.

“If you don’t suffer and feel pain, you’re a soul with a dead spirit.

Adam went in a hurry to follow the old man.

Hopefully the traffic was blocked. The boy reached the old man’s house easily and stayed there all night. Adam had no idea about who the man was but felt the need to follow him. The next morning, the same black car went out of the garage, but the old man was standing in the yard with an old lady, Adam recognized the view; he had seen this couple before. They seemed to be the same couple from ten years ago... They were looking toward the car the same way they did when seeing Sarah the day she was taken away.

He couldn’t hold himself long before ringing the man’s bell. Unlike his uncle, the two elders welcomed him and heard what he had to say after he introduced himself as Sarah’s big brother. Then Abraham apologized and pointed his ignorance about his existence (the orphanage told him she hadn’t any member of her family but she believed that her brother was still alive). The couple invited the young man to stay with them. They were happy about his presence because Sarah left the house and went to participate

in a music casting.

The talented girl succeeded and qualified for “best pianist kid” completion. She played a melody she created a long time ago. After qualifying, she invited her adoptive parents to see her performances and Lisa asked Adam to go with them as a surprise for their daughter and prepared him well with class clothes. The day did come, and Sarah entered the stage... She saw her parents and between them a boy... She got a strange feeling about him. She felt dizzy. The unknown boy suddenly acted like a monkey... Adam used to call her “monkey”. A strong warm hit Sarah’s chest...

“It’s him... Adam. Finally, he’s here,” she murmured. Sarah played a sensational melody and everyone got frozen. She attracted all the ears to the same magic moments they had. The entire crowd praised her and Adam started screaming, “She’s my sister. She’s my little sister.”

Sarah ran toward her brother and hugged him in the middle of everyone’s applause, and the old couple cried. Adam and Sarah were reunited after ten years of the tragic separation, and life was peaceful again. Abraham sent Adam to a

school specialized for those who started later in their education program and made sure that he'd success and become armed enough to take his place in ruling his private company. So he did...

Adam succeeded deservedly and became the co-CPO after almost ten years of hard work; Abraham gave up for cancer and passed away. Sadness took over the feelings of the two siblings. A few weeks after Abraham's death, their uncle came to the house after seeing Adam on TV leading a charity event. The uncle told them about losing the family's house in gambling and begged Adam to let him live with them, but after everything they endured because of him and his suspicious position in his parents' death, Adam declined his request, realizing he will only bring problems and cause troubles.

"All of this isn't yours. I'm your uncle and I deserve my piece of the cake... You killed the man to get everything to yourselves, you two bastards. You're profiteers," the drunken uncle yelled in the yard. "We're not kids anymore! You can say whatever you want," Adam said calmly.

"Indeed, you're a grown man now, right! You profited from your sister. She owns all of

this. You're a homeless getting benefits just because you were her brother once..." Adam stood speechless.

"My brother isn't a profiteer; you're the one who took advantage of our early ages to take everything of us... And now you're here to share our house for the damn reason that you're our uncle. He came to you and you fired him. He's your orphaned nephew you should've protected us and taken care of us after our parents passed away.

Our religion... God told every believer to show mercy towards orphans, but you've shown greed and cruelty. You sent us to the unknown road. I was lucky for getting adopted, but Adam lived in hell and now, after he took the opportunity that God gave him and spent years of efforts, you just come here and ask for your part. God gave you the chance to fix your mistake when Adam came to you asking for help, but you made it worse. Maybe if you helped, we'd have helped you... I have three words, no more. Enjoy orphan's karma."

Orphans are the shining light in the darkness; they are the trust of God... It costs nothing when we treat them as we must and show them

mercy when they need. When you act right to an orphan and show mercy, God will show you the right path. But if you contempt orphans and act badly, you've chosen the bad path. That's orphan's karma.

Equality Needs Revolution

Equality needs revolution. Omar, Rayane, Jasmine, and Sonia were leading a group of kids with no origins of knowledge, Omar and the rest of the group never met their biological parents, nor did they get the chance to be adopted. The leaders used to live together since they were young and they've grown like brothers and sisters; the same homeless lady breastfed the four of them when they were babies.

Growing up as nobodies ... with no rights, identities, or even official names, the kids grew up hating the government with its careless position about their issue. They've sworn to make a change in the future and change the situation for the next generations. Kids abandoned by their parents is common nowadays and can happen to any child; abandonment isn't the fault of the babies; their parents are the ones who should get the punishment. In this life or the afterlife, but surely they will...

In their adventures on finding ways to feed themselves, Omar and Rayane found many kids in the same situation and the group was getting bigger day after day. At the same time, they pre-

pared ideas to fix their lives, but it never was that easy. A high-ranked agent in the Special Forces used his position and won the right to adopt Sonia after his wife saw the girl walking in the street and stalked her for a while. The kids felt more injustice around their heads and got frightened about the possibility of losing their freedom, thinking that Sonia got kidnapped by authorities, but it wasn't enough to kill the determination they had as they continued increasing their numbers before starting the operation... a revolution to make everyone equals. Asking for the right to have an identity so they feel like a human being... Begging to get the chance to study like every other kid in the country. No hearing ears...

“We’re the children of Algeria.” “We’re not Algeria’s enemy.” “Equality is our right, not a dream.”

“Human being, not a monkey... Stop treating me like a dog.”

Omar had anemia and needed a specific treatment, but the way the kids were living made his condition worse. After two years of battling the disease, he passed away under tragic cir-

cumstances because of the absence of medical care and poor nourishment. Rayane and Jasmine stocked together with the group, making sure to make Omar and Sonia proud of them when they made the dream a reality.

After years of silent essays, they decided to be more serious and make noises to make people hear their voices. All the kids screamed with one voice : “We need equality. Equality needs a revolution.”

“We grew up... in number and age. It’s time to put the balance to our side... Many of our brothers and sisters were lost or have died. Most of us can’t read or write. I promised Omar we will make it before passing away with a smile, and keeping that smile on his face is our duty. Our union will rise strongly by us,” Rayane added. The real steps have begun in front of the government castle of Republic, but still, no one gave any attention to them while they were living a normal life... No one will give it... Selfishness is the definition of the word ‘human’. The week saw an end with still no progress in the process, and the kids started feeling down. Giving up became an option.

But just before the break down, a new kid

joined the march despite not being affected by the same problem. He brought a dose of hope with him even though he was only a kid like them with another story on his shoulders. The kid's name was Adam... He lost his little sister many years ago when she was adopted, and he kept looking for her. He didn't stay long before he continued his searches, but he left a great atmosphere behind. Rayane made a good friendship with Adam since he joined the crew. Adam left when he followed an old man in a black car and never came back. The mentality Adam brought with him never faded from the crew as they fought for many years without letting go of their beliefs. Finally, the kids found a way to talk with the Algerian nation using a TV channel named *Twin Thoughts* where Sam's new friend worked. After hearing the voices of innocent kids from different generations standing together for many years without letting go, it became a national affair... All the channels started covering the news but, unfortunately for them, it was more business. The light finally rose and we could see the end of the tunnel.

Adam, who became a successful young man after reuniting with his sister and her adop-

tive family, heard about the case and remembered. The flashbacks hit his head back and he used Abraham's entourage to help solve the problem. Adam went further and managed to guarantee that all any kid will ever need (education, health care, homes, etc.) will be offered. The news talked about the glorious hero who changed the lives of thousands of children across the country, then Adam went to meet up with Rayane and the rest to announce the good news. At the same time, Sonia who got adopted by an agent after watching the news, also used her dad's power in the military services to convince them to take some of the kids to the military training grounds. That was the day the crew felt equal. Indeed, equality had risen in that blessed day. Rayane and Jasmine were in tears, crying for not having Sonia and Omar by their side.

Adam arrived with Sarah to meet the crew, but he suddenly froze in his place after seeing Sonia hugging Rayane and Jasmine. She was the same girl he met when he was young.

Seeing Adam again decreased Sonia's sadness after hearing about Omar's death, and after a few months, the two lovers got married with presence of everyone from the crew. I'm glad to

see my beloved children smiling back. Omar's smile is the cutest... Yes, while you want equality... equality needs a revolution.

The Circle Between Birth and Death

The circle of birth and death. You're remembering how innocent you were as a child. I bet you're laughing behind your frightened face as I can feel the hidden smile mixed with sorrow. As a young kid, death was given to those who you don't know, but the ones you know will never endure death. You used to hear the kinds of 'he died', 'his father died', or mother, grandpa or grandma, sister or brother, uncle or aunt, and son or daughter, but you've never sensed the meaning of it... At that time, death never concerned you or your entourage... The illusion consumed your thoughts.

One day, you got the news... Your grandma passed away. Death reached your entourage and guess what? You couldn't help with anything. You were too useless to stop it. You didn't even stand for a try!!! Perhaps it was already late to act, even though you'd not make any chance... We cannot change God's willing. You promised yourself to not cry again, but you couldn't even feel the tears flowing while you were drowning on memories... You convinced yourself it happened just because she became old enough to leave behind four generations

and she decided to rest a long fight with the disease. How brave she was when she was telling you old stories despite the pain of remembering the losses. All she cared about was to give you the best bits of advice to guide you into what you are now. If they are saying you're a good person, it's thanks to her. She's the one who put this light on your heart.

Months since her death, you've barely realized it. Your entourage became deathable... They were falling one by one and you even thought a curse touched your life. Life turned into a nightmare... Afraid to wake up from your sleep and face another loss... Scared of the shadow of death, you were always possessed by the idea of losing someone when waking up but never thought about the possibility of not waking up the next morning... Without you, there is no life, no world... You used to believe, you've never stopped believing it even though you always knew you were completely wrong. I'll tell you why : you needed it and you still need to believe it because you're a coward and you can't face this inevitable reality.

You slept last night like every night before. The same house... room... bed, even the same time, but you woke up differently. You woke up

completely different. Your heart never did hurt you, but this morning you're feeling it... It isn't a heart attack or any other cardio issue. This pain is like an illusion taking your breath away even though you are still able to breathe. The headache took control of your emotions and you can't think about anything but your fear of death. Your feelings are cold, fading with emotions. You think it's your last day... And death is behind, coming from a near position; it could break you, but it didn't. You're not even afraid. You didn't give up. On the contrary, you used the wisdom and lived it like nothing was going to happen. Perhaps it won't. You drank a cup of coffee for the first time since you tasted it as a child... You didn't like it then but now you appreciate every drop of it. You left the house slowly looking back every once in a while to remember some unforgettable scenes of your normal life. You went to the college and now you're meeting your comrades to discuss last night's soccer game. The college day is willing to end soon, and the person you came here to see isn't coming. Oh wait, why are you leaving so quickly? Maybe she'll come or maybe... Okay, go home, but not that fast. At least say goodbye to your friends. I know, I know, they are just

comrades. It'll cost you nothing more than a few seconds... At least visit the mosque and pray; it could be your last time... Nothing, just go and put your heart in. There's no better action, and to complete it read the Quran. It always makes you peace-minded; the pain didn't leave you for a second, but stuff went well for you. After the prayer, you read some pages from the Quran for the first time since you were a kid and it gave you more courage to fulfill your last day and to live it outside of your fears. From the Quran, you understood that there is no escape from death... Death is your right... Right! You were born so you can die today. Today is not the beginning of the end, as they said. Today is the beginning of your real start.

Now, you're coming back home with more satisfaction and courage. You've met your neighborhood friends with whom you've talked about soccer results and each of you was cheering for the club he's a fan of. We didn't see time passing; it took you three hours and it was already ten and you were supposed to be at home and send the message to the person you were dying to see today at college, but even though you ran to the house to connect with the wi-fi, still that person didn't show up on social me-

dia... I've never seen such a disappointment on your face. In fact, I never could notice it as you were good at hiding your feelings, but a soft smile is appearing on your face... An ironic one, still it relieved me. You're sleepy and can't resist it, even your eyes are making things harder. Finally! You quit and we can meet again. You're doing well, my hero... You wanted to see me, right! You've waited all day for this moment. Just let go and it'll happen... You forgot completely about yesterday, right? Let me refresh your memory. Yesterday, when you were at college, you received the news about someone's death and you came home, slept till the morning, and now you just slept for good. And here we are holding each other once again... "But I'm dead now and you're just an illusion..." Don't worry about details. Let's have a little dance, my prince. "I feel I'm giving up everything for nothing. Once I die, I won't have you around." I've just told you not to worry. I'm here with you and it's forever, my prince. Wait! Don't go back! Don't dare to leave me alone... Please... You were lost when I died. We can't live without each other... Please, I feel lonely in this darkness. Don't! You're nothing without me. The start point of your life has already become your

finish point of the circle... (Silence until he woke up). "It wasn't her... She'd never cheer me up to give up on anything. Obviously, she wouldn't do it and lead me to death... She hadn't her smile nor her charm. What circle was she talking about? It must be the circle of birth and death."

No Escape

Killing a person is so easy, Hein! The hard part is what you should do after your prior drops the last breath between your hands. But for you, it's easy to satisfy your hunger since you're a powerful man inside the government. Sometimes I feel you lived for killing. It seems like you're taking the rest of their age to increase your life's limit. Didn't you feel bad? Not even once! What kind of freak life turned you into! Isn't it enough, for God's sake!

Your favorite priors were teen girls. You enjoyed the killing after a wild rape; you never did forget to capture a new souvenir in your killing collection. You enjoyed every single scream they put out of their chests. You were living your legacy, making yourself one of the hardest cases in US police offices by cancelling every trace of your presence before leaving the corpses inside the stolen cars. You killed every person who bothered you. You didn't even spare a little boy after he threw a ball at you accidentally on the street. You smiled and gave him the ball back. But you came back at night... He was so young and cute... he had an innocent look on his tiny face. Still, the job was done, and you took his ball as a souvenir for your collection.

After the job was done, you drove back home satisfied, but the angel face didn't leave your memory. Your vision was haunted by the boy's smile. You did try but failed. The boy appeared on the road surprisingly; while you avoided him, your van overturned... You've lost everything you had. Revenging me isn't an excuse. You could have stopped after you killed my murderer. Back then, it was a justified act, but escaping jail made you feel perfect. Unstoppable, I feel guilty because my death turned you into a monster; you tried to hide your pains of losing me, but the images haunted your soul every time you closed your eyes. I was not the only victim that day; you died with me, ironically, while you were squeezing my neck. Your soul fell in the shadow of darkness, but your body did not leave the earth. You left it there committing crimes. Now you join me on the other side, my dear. You killed me with warm arms, but your soul was so cold. I froze to death in a desert. Still, I'm cursed by your love. I'm glad to see you again and to finally get the chance to revenge my murder.

You will get punished very well... You were perfect, but still there is no escape.

Parallel Talk

S : Have I done anything wrong to get such pains? G : You think you're the most hurt, but it's wrong. S : You can't understand the pain I'm living with.

G : Oh, I do. Just try to live with mine.

S : I was healthy and peaceful.

G : And you think I was born burned.

S : My children are feeling fear of living.

G : My children were born scared... Death's fear is their best friend.

S : My artists were always at the top... We ruled the Arab area.

G : Mine are inside prisons, guilty for being talented...

S : They left me and let the youngsters dying in dark days. They denied my sacrifices for them.

G : Some of my children never lived in my arms... They've never smelled my air... Most of them mentioned me only to acquire the viewer's mercy.

S : At least you didn't see your kids leaving you.

G : You think so! They did when you were busy with parties.

S : Does the world call them refugees?

G : No... they call them war's victims.

S : I've turned to a jungle controlled by a lion.

G : The enemy took control over the folks.

S : I'm watching my children killing their brothers and raping their sisters.

G : I saw the cousins killing my kids, and my sister was just admiring the massacre.

S : Your sons aren't killing each other... I'm living in chaos.

G : Humanity watched for decades all kinds of violence above my lands, but no reactions.

S : Yes, they reacted, but only for their own interests. My people are suffering more than before.

G : At least you're relieved after sending many of your children to your big family. Mine are trapped, surrounded by the enemy.

S : What family are you talking about?
You're talking like you didn't live it.

G : Unfortunately, I see what you're pointing here. They claim to be our sisters but only to look kind. They react only on social media. They just talk about us in news to attract viewers, and once they turn off cameras they'll say, "We finally finished this exhausted reportage." My neighbor who pretends to be my closest sister helps the unnamed enemy.

S : It looks like we share the same sisters.
(*Said in a sarcastic way*)

G : I do have one sister... the same one who says by one voice, "I'm with you unjust or oppressed." Her children are my children and they consider me their second motherland.

S : People there are loyal to humanity when it comes to injustice.

G : They can do much alone...

S : The rest are busy spending money to make strangers happy when seeing their team winning the games.

G : Unleashing a world record of fireworks must be more important than saving children's lives.

S : They claim to be my allies but they've been enemies when acting.

G : I grew up wise, wise enough to define the gap between acting and acting.

S : It hurts to see your children rejected by their own kind and welcomed by strangers.

G : The entire world rejected my people; they are the enemy of the world's society.

S : They are safe but live in hell; racism follows my kids like their shadows.

G : At least they've got an escape from danger. They live like humans beings.

S : The government welcomed them as refugees but society sees them as terrorists.

G : Mine are considered terrorists in their grounds.

S : I wish I was burned and became dust before witnessing my newborn baby thrown by the small waves.

G : His pictures were posted everywhere on social media.

S : Still didn't save his brothers nor brought him back to his mother's arms.

G : All the Medias covered Ali's fasting inside the prison, but no one moved to help him start his career again.

S : They only use us to gain money or sympathy and distract their people from government failures.

G : When they claimed to make me the enemy's property, they kept their mouths closed.

S : I heard some were behind the idea and may have helped.

G : They helped enough by not standing against it. Hopefully countries from different religions and cultures stood up by the side of my folk.

S : They are obsessed with Dounya.

G : If only I could speak... I would have shouted my not belonging to this fake society... My people and I have always fought alone.

S : Aren't you talking at this moment?

G : It's just a parallel talk.

Gaza and Syria; are two beautiful Arabs and Islamic countries. One destroyed by an unnamed country that controls it and its people and the second one destroyed by its own president who stayed in the chair for decades. He never wanted to lose his dictatorial position, even if it meant killing his own people and sending one of the top Arabian countries to real chaos.

Two Hundred Fifty-Seven

“My family... My home... My neighborhoods... My country... My beloved Algeria, I rose with the will to protect my entourage and the fear of not being capable of honoring my responsibilities and the stars I’ve been given last month for doing my job when I saved the camp from a terrorist attack in Tikejda. Ahmed had some health troubles and couldn’t assure the guard of the camp while we sleep at night. I allowed him to skip his turn and get himself some rest. It was my duty to watch over fifty-seven soldiers including me, the fifty-eighth. They were here for training; they had no experience in the field. I opened my eyes all over the night without giving a chance to an unexpected event... Strange sounds came up to my ears at 2:57 AM so I focused my feeling on every side of the camp to find out where the sounds were coming from, but it seemed it was coming from multiple directions as an uncountable group of armed men was coming and with no doubt the camp was their prey. We had no chance against them. We were more like apprentices than soldiers. The first thing I did was wake up the boys. Then I made the plan. “Run away as fast as you can. It’s your surprise test. Everything is fake.” The boys ran to the

north while the enemy came from the south. To be honest, I felt relieved even though my life was about to end, but the other fifty-seven heroes would remain and take the throne of responsibility. Tomorrow, the news and TVs would call me a hero and maybe my story will take the headlines on newspapers, but it didn't really matter... Tomorrow will be my funeral... My mother will lose her child... My wife will be a widow... My little girl will get an imaginary me looking for her from the high sky... Algeria will lose a man, but the fifty-seven are willing to live. Is it worth it to keep thinking about a nonexistent tomorrow when I should've been buying time for my brothers? The time to make my move is up. A wise man once told me, "The last move has to be the best one." Today, I'm going to visit him... Finally, we're going to meet up for the first time since he left us two years ago, my first and favorite hero of all time... My dad was the man who taught me how to love my country and family. I'm glad for being so close to him again.

No more time for thinking. The enemy has come and the one on two double zero war has been released. At first, it was easy. Every shot had her prior. They didn't realize I was alone

inside until they broke in just before I ran outside, leaving a surprise for my guests. Suddenly, everything turned to dark. It was a beautiful today, the air seemed fresh... The sky was blue... The plane rose and I could see a rainbow created by fields of flowers in Blida. It's already called the City of Flowers here in Algeria. My team is with me. We just came back from a training camp where I was responsible; now we are heading to the Sahara. Some of them brought their families on the plane. One of them is Mimi Ahmed's daughter and she's adorable; she loves playing the weekdays game but hates it when she loses. I see a lot of persons happy for riding a plane for the first time in their lives... We are one big family composed of two hundred fifty- eight members including the plane's staff. I just closed my eyes. I'm very sleepy after the exhausting camping. The screams covered the place... The smell of the fire came to my nose. I woke up from my sleep to find the passengers freaking the hell out of them. The plane is on fire and the captain lost control of it as he couldn't avoid the fall. "Uncle... Uncle... Uncle... Uncle," a soft voice is screaming, so I turned and see it's Mimi calling me for help when she fell. Her legs are melting inside the fire. I want to help her, of course,

but I need to cross the distance between us. Finally, I reach her and I just have to pull her out of it, so strange... My arms cannot touch her. Am I a ghost or what? I tried to avoid it, but I did watch an angel burning on fire. Did I earn her trust or Ahmed's? I couldn't stop my tears when the plane reached the ground and everything went dark again.

I woke up in an unknown room. I guess I'm at the hospital as I can see medicine kits. I need to scream until they come for me. Indeed, the nurse is coming. "What happened to the plane? Where's everyone? Is Mimi still alive? Reply," I'm yelling at her.

"What plane, sir? You must've had a dream." She may be right but it was too real for a dream. I still feel the hit of fire on my body... But not the whole body... I'm a half man.

The nurse came back and seemed shocked. "We just heard about a plane crash in Blida, sir. Our condolences." I thanked her but I didn't get what was happening. I was on the plane a few minutes ago. The general of the Algerian army came to my room, locked the door, and explained everything. "You have been a hero for the kids.

You sacrificed your life to protect them and you succeeded against two hundred terrorists. Unfortunately, a plane just crashed and it was our plane... Two hundred fifty-seven people lost their lives, among them the fifty-seven you saved three days ago." I didn't believe it... I saved fifty-seven and killed two hundred. The karma did the job. The question is : Does Algeria deserve my sacrifices? Our sacrifices...

The heroes will remain in our hearts... the two hundred fifty-seven martyrs."

The novel...

**THE POWER
OF
SOLOVE
The Curse**

Available soon...

Just a Cover

This story is about a young man who knew all kinds of problems. He never had a childhood like the others. No one liked him, not even his parents. He had no friends his age to play with. The other parents told their children to avoid him; he was treated as a curse. No human spoke to him after his birth. He couldn't spell. He wasn't mute but he looked like one of them.

Six years spent, he went to school and still had no friends. Even his teacher hated him. He was young and he didn't realize what was happening. He kept wondering why he wasn't a simple kid like the others.

He learned everything by hiding himself while studying in the roof of school. He said his first word at nine. He didn't hit ten until he learned enough words to communicate. He tried to join the kids in school. He thought he could because he was able to talk; the boy was just trying to fit in.

He was a successful student but was hated for no reason. He was a young and innocent kid. He would never understand their reasons if they didn't tell him the truth, a truth they all knew

except him. He never gave up. For him, life is only a game, and God chose him to play alone. He believed this theory, so he made from his shadow his only friend.

He got through primary school and went to the middle school where he would meet new people and maybe have some real friends. Over the years, he took few lessons from life, so he didn't try to talk with the new people. He wasn't waiting for someone to come toward him and say 'hello'. He didn't ask for a friendship or a greeting; for him, friendship didn't matter anymore. He wasn't sad about it anymore; he accepted it like he always did. He became a grown man in a boy's body, and nothing could make him afraid. He didn't ask for any help or mercy; he only cared about himself. He took the humanity from his soul.

He lost his feelings and became a zombie. The world has never known intelligence like he had, and he could become a good doctor or a great scientist... but he never had the chance. The world rejected him.

His third and last years in high school began and the day had come. The day when he saw a girl at the high school. She was so beautiful. He

couldn't stop looking at her wild beauty. He never felt anything like it before. She was his first love, and she became the angel of his dreams... the only person he cared about.

Everything was fine until an unrevealed person came to the class and...

Now the real story shall begin. This part was just a cover.

To be continued...

