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# LALEH JAFARI

# Biography

## My share of life

There were still two months left, but when we felt the smell of May and we could not stand it anymore and two of us were born in the historic city of Isfahan in 1966. My companion was bored after just three hours, left me alone, and flew away. Everyone said I would depart too. Maybe it was for my mother's heart that I did not follow my twin and stayed in this world, or it may be for another reason that I had to search and find.

Of the three apple trees in the yard, one was mine, and the other two were my sisters'. Next to my tree was our grapevine, which was climbing over the wall. She did not produce more than one bunch of grapes in her whole life. A bunch that I visited every morning to see if it is in place. The day the seeds all grew old, I took the big and heavy ladder to the garden and leaned against the wall to take and have the bunch to stay next to my heart and not die alone.

On that very day, my two green and blue chickens, whom I loved as much as all the greens of the earth and the blue of the sky, stopped moving. It was as if they could not bear to see the empty space of the bunch. In a glorious ceremony, I laid them both on the soils next to my apple tree and soaked them in tears until the lovebird tree of my imagination turned green. Remembering them, I sat down next to my ants' nest and, as always, made a thousand slices of bread for them, and I was drowned in the world of ants that came one by one and soon formed a long bread line. I went inside their nest to become their special guest. I was told from every door to forget the passage of my chickens. When the party was over, I went to the pool in the middle of the yard. My goldfishes were in place, and the cat on the wall looked at them as usual. I also gave the fish bread crumbs ... wish they enjoy eating!



When it became dark, I ran and lay on the green big swing. I also pulled my blanket over my head to pretend that I am sleeping, it was a sign for my father to say that I was going to sleep on the swing tonight. We both loved sleeping on the swing. Whoever arrived earlier had his own space on the swing. I stared at the sky full of stars and lovebirds and fish and ants until I fell asleep.

The yard was the home of my world, and the ruined house of the adjacent alley was an important part of this world. I had access to the ruin through the roof. The balcony railings on the second floor of the house that was right in front of my room were the passageway to the ruined house. Noon, when the house was asleep, was the best time to spy. I grabbed the railings and sneaked across the narrow, dangerous edge. I did not look down so that the high height would not scare the eight- or nine-year-old Laleh away. From there I sneaked to the ruins. I jumped from the roof into the crumbled house, digging through its broken bricks and half-ruined walls. The house was both my Robinson Island and Tom Sawyer Cave simultaneously. I never found treasure there and I was never threatened by any Injun Joe and I never became tired of looking there.

My explorations were not limited to the ruins, the school was also a good place to do it. Especially the market near the school. Leaving the school was forbidden and indeed a great crime, and I desired to see how the market I went through every day, was different when I was at school. One day we quietly left the school with my kind and precious friends. We looked in horror at the market where no single bird was flying at that time of day. We jumped at the slightest sound of the heel of a shoe, because our school principal's shoes also had heels, and the sound of

her heels froze the blood in our veins. We bought three sandwiches and returned to school. But the Farahnakian twins saw us at the last minute and exposed us. If it were not for the kindness of our kind blonde-haired Vice Principal, Mrs. Shahdadian, it would not have been clear what punishment the principal would have inflicted on us. The kind Mrs. Shahdadian, who is not a character in my new novel, when she saw me, gently touched my curly hair by hand and pinched my cheeks with a smile. When his son brought Soroush Sehat, the famous actor and a celebrity even at that time to school, we ran to share the last book we had read. Soroush, like me, loved books.

As I got older, my spy and investigation locations shifted from ruins and bazaars to unfamiliar alleys around the house. During middle school, in the evenings after school, Behnaz and Katayoun, and I would choose an alley each time and go to see where it would lead up. Once we went to a camera shop with whatever money we have collected as Eid souvenirs and bought three cameras, all of them with the same mark and model. After that, my explorations were associated with photography, and the love for photography gradually filled my heart. I still remember that camera, the one that recorded my first pictures.





Behnaz sometimes visited our house that was closer to the school, and sometimes I visited her house. My friendship with Behnaz gave me the sweet experience of friendship for the first time and our two-person adventures found narration in some of my stories. The first book I read by Jalal al-Ahmad was *Visit*, the book that Behnaz gave me for my birthday, she loved books like me.

My father used to tell me the story of a firewood collector every night. I wish my mother knew all the stories of the world and she would tell me stories for days. But instead of telling stories, my mother brought home storybooks. Ever since I went to the second grade of elementary school, my mother became the headmaster of the school and I was left alone at home for half a day. My mother brought me a book from her school library every day. It was the reward of being alone. Those lonely halves at home made me in love with books and later, in love with writing. It was in the third grade of the elementary school that I wrote in a composition about the future job that I wanted to become a writer.

Reyhaneh, my sister, was a member of the Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, and she took me whenever she went there. She registered me at the library, and I fell in love with those magical bookshelves. All the time Reyhaneh was doing artistic works with her friends in the Center, I glued myself to the library chair to read books. I read such books as *The Trilogy of Jean Christopher* and *Joao from Tintubal* by Jacqueline Cervon and *Paulina, el mundo y las estrellas* by Ana María Matute... I walked around the library looking at the books and picking them up and flipping through them. I wish one day my name would be on one of the library books. The first book I borrowed from the library was *The Clover Girl* by Reza Ostad, a Persian writer, which later became the title of one of my stories. Every year, on the sixth day of the Nowruz holidays, I have been waiting

in the “Omid Bookstore” since morning to open. Whenever possible, I would pour all I have earned as Eid souvenirs on the counter, saying to Mr. Behrooz: “Give as many books as these can buy!”

Mr. Behrooz made me the owner of the best books. The stories of Dariush Ebadollahi, Ghodsi Ghazi Noor, and the golden book series by Amirkabir Publications that made my world golden; *Heidi*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Music Box*, etc. The treasure trove of golden books made me hate to attend family reunions at Nowruz. I wanted to read them all before the holidays were over and the schools were open again, and whenever I became tired I would watch “*The Little House*” on TV. I imagined myself as Laura Engels, and each time I experienced a new adventure with her. When my mother wanted to punish me, she would stop me from looking *The Little House*, and that was the biggest punishment for me. But even if the sky was falling, I did not miss the series, *Zorro*. I was going to fight the swaggers with him in my imagination. I fought with the neighboring Lady Esmat because every time one of her brides came to my mother crying and complaining about her words and behaviors. At night, I wished that Pinocchio’s Blue Fairy would come to me to ask her to do something so that I would ask Lady Esmat would not be able to bother her bridesmaids. When *the Little House* and *Zorro* and *Pinocchio* were over, I went back to Mr. Behrooz’s books. Still, I have and keep the first book I bought from him, *The Two Friends*.

It was not only the sixth day of Nowruz that I was in front of the Omid Bookstore. On Tuesdays, I was there all Tuesdays, waiting for the Keyhan for Kids, the only magazine of the time for us kids. Keyhan for Kids in my hand, I ran to the home and kept reading its pages from cover to cover until the next Tuesday. First of all, I read the Princess Stories. My love for fairy tales flowed into my heart from the same pages and flourished there to become the basis of my writing on myths in the future.

I did not like my high school. I had to go to that high school; where there was no news of my middle school friends. Behnaz, Niloufar and Mitra were not there. If it was not for my literature teacher, Mrs. Radhoosh, I probably would never have stayed there. It was she who introduced me to such classical



Persian poets as Rumi and Saadi, immersed all my mind and soul in literature, and made me interested in ancient Iranian literature. This interest took root in me and later led to writing the novel *Weis and Ramin* for teens. It is a romance novel based on the poetic work of Fakhraddin Asaad Gorgani, an 11th-century Persian poet. In her composition classes, Mrs. Radvash always asked me to read my composition while I saw her eyes were filled with tears. I still go to her house or call her and she knows how much I appreciate her. I was posting my poems for the Literature Center of the Center for Intellectual Development in Tehran. Mr. Assadollah Shabani responded to them and encouraged me. When I heard the sound of the postman's engine, I ran to the door as fast as I could imagine. Some of those poems were published by Mr. Shabani in two collections, *Wings of Emotion*. In my final year of high school, I realized that I had to study in the field of experimental sciences was not following my life path. Although I was a very good student at school, secretly from my family, I decided to take an art entrance exam. I bought art books and put them next to the Physics and Chemistry books so that I would not be exposed while reading

another subject. But unfortunately, the sun of truth did not stay behind the cloud, and finally, I was exposed and faced strong opposition from my parents. They believed that I, like my older sister, should become a dentist and should work to build a dental clinic together in the future.

I was forced to take the entrance exam in experimental sciences. In the morning, they woke me up by force and sent me to the entrance exam session, and I was accepted as they wished, and it was decided that I would become a dentist. College classes started in the second semester, and during this period of unemployment, I participated in the entrance exam of the Young Cinema Association, the largest association of filmmakers, and earned the second rank among the participants. The result of a year of filmmaking and photography training at the Association was making five films about children and participating in the production of twenty short films and dubbing cartoons for children. I loved making animated films, and since there was no class to teach it, I bought the only reference book about it, *The Animation Book* by Kit Laybourne, and through reading the book I made the puppet short films *Happiness* and *An Encounter* and I became known as an animator in the Young Cinema Association! I did not like to use common music for my films, so for the first time in the Association, I asked my friend, who was learning the piano, to make music. Thus, cinema occupied my days and nights.

I subscribed to *Film Magazine Monthly* and kept reading it from cover to cover up until the next issue. On Fridays, I was a member of the Farang Cinema Center where I





followed the discussions about the history of cinema. I wrote reviews about the movies and submitted them to *Film Magazine*. I asked my questions about the films and they answered them in the readers' section of the magazine, sometimes they published my reviews in the readers' column. Finally, my classes started at Shahid Beheshti University School of Dentistry, and my task was to be absent from university classes and instead to attend the Young Cinema Association's editorial room to edit my films, to go to Mohammad Reza Atashzad's painting classes, and to play in Behrouz Gharibpour's puppet shows. The Young Film Festival awarded my productions several times and once when I didn't have a film for presentation, my collection of photographs won an award.

At the age of eighteen, I took my screenplays to the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. One of them was a documentary about the blind, for which I had gone to the blind centers many times for the research phase, and I had interviewed with many of its blind members and the managers. I have also prepared detailed photography of the center. I handed the script to the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and wrote on it: "I just want Mr. Abbas Kiarostami to comment on this." Kiarostami's movie, *The Bread and the Alley* has already fascinated me in the cinema. I was crazy about his movies. The day I went to the Center to receive Kiarostami's reply letter pinned to my script, I arrived just as he was departing in a hurry to a production location. I greeted and introduced myself. He paused for a moment, then set his bag on the ground, and we talked about my long screenplay for about forty-five minutes. My heart was pounding with excitement and joy, he liked my script. After he left, Mr. Ebrahim Forouzeh, another director and scriptwriter, who was present at the meeting of the three of us, said, "Do you know that he left his job to explain to you?" And I continued in my heart for me, an eighteen-year-old girl ... and how can I ever forget the shock I received from Kiarostami's greatness.

I finally dropped out of dentistry and despite the storm of family opposition,

I took the art entrance exam and became a dramatic arts student at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran.

College time was full of playing in student puppet shows and participating in international puppetry festivals and getting to know music. The two pianos in the corners of the two classrooms of the college always invited me and I started learning. I went to college early in the morning to be able to practice in the piano room. Dr. Arianpour whose music classes I was freely but actively participating in, has provided the keys to the room and allowed me to practice. In the evenings, I mostly stayed in college and practiced. The best period of the college was the characterization classes of Dr. Farindokht Zahedi. She made me and my classmates, such as contemporary artists Mr. Asghar Farhadi the Oscar winner and Naghmeh Samini the famous film journalist, and others to fall in love with Shakespeare and fall in love with writing. I married when I was a second-year student, which resulted in the best gift of my life, my son Arshia who is now a graphic designer and my best advisor.

Marriage and a small child made me stay home and sad. But consulting with Dr. Nasr, a psychologist, sparked a new path for me, a path that became my whole life. He told me how Piaget became Piaget, he looked at the works of his two children from morning till night, and the result was the founding of the new science of child psychology. Think about your child and I did. We were ready to go to the park every day from 3 pm to 8 pm, with his backpack containing a soccer ball, badminton rackets, a chessboard. The old men of the park were his chess champions, and among them, he had made a name for himself. My son and I were regular members of the painting and skating classes and the chess federation. Having passed storytelling courses in Howzeh Honari and also passing children's literature course in the Children's Book Council, in 1998, my life became occupied with writing for children. I posted my stories for such magazines as *Soroush for Kids* and *Keyhan for Kids* magazines. My first story, *Chick Chick and the Shy Earth* was published in *Soroush for Kids*, and my first collection of stories, *Honey Adventures*, was published as a serial story in *Keyhan for Kids*.

One day in the Children's Book Council, I met Mohammad Reza Shams, the contemporary writer for children, with whom we worked as puppeteers in Behrouz



Gharibpour's *Six Crow Chickens and a Fox*. Shams invited me to participate in *Soroush for Kids* story sessions. At the same time, during my visit to Isfahan on behalf of the Children's Book Council, I met Mohammad Reza Yousefi, another writer for children, and he also invited me to *Soroush for Kids* story sessions. As a result of the joint invitation of Shams and Yousefi, I was introduced to the sessions of storytellers of professional child writers. Meetings where my work as the only amateur member of the meetings was dealt with very harshly. Once, in one of the stories I read in the meeting, I presented a fresh narrative of the folklore story of Aunt Beetle. I stripped her of her lifetime grief and black dress for Mr. Mouse and brought her back to life through a new love with the Golden Beetle. This story was met with a sharp response from the writers of the meeting, and I was severely reproached for tarnishing folk tales with this narrative. After a while, some of the members of the same meeting encouraged me and told me that the story was beautiful and should not listen to such criticisms and continue the work. The late Susan Taghdis, the writer for children who sadly left us recently, was among these.

It was at this time that I was seriously learning English. Fariba Kalhor, an editor of *Soroush for Kids*, upon seeing the



language book in my hand, offered me two pages of translation in *Soroush for Kids* Magazine, and I wholeheartedly accepted it and became a content contributor. This time I suggested new pages for myself, the “My Stories, Your Paintings” page, which was warmly received by Fariba Kalhor. With this idea, I wrote a story inspired by the drawings submitted by the readers of the magazine. So, the children were illustrators and I was a writer. These pages received a warmly welcome and were nominated for an award at the Press Festival. Gradually, my number of pages increased. Fariba Kalhor also liked my idea of phone chat. I listened to the children’s phone calls, listened to their desires and aspirations, and reflected them in the magazine. The room I worked in *Soroush for Kids* on two weekdays, became a fixed place for me to write stories. The room that was in front of the room of the later Gheisar Qaisar Aminpour, the famous poet. Each time I raised my head to hear Gheisar reciting a poem, I closed my eyes and flew to another world.

To a world where it is never too late and Laleh, the curly-haired girl is constantly running after her dreams ...

*Soroush for Kids* became my launchpad for becoming a writer for children. My first book, *The Wedding of White Bean to a Pinto Bean*, was published by the House of Literature in 2000. After that, I flooded my stories to the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, where was my love from childhood and I wished to publish my stories. Finally, my first book was approved there. *The Red*, which included seven tales, was announced by Susan Taghdis. “Laleh, you are a writer,” Susan happily told me.

One day, a long time after publishing *The Red*, I was at sitting at home with my son. The day when the sorrows of the world fell on my shoulders and I was crying hard in my room alone. Right at the height of despair, the phone rang, the voice behind the line said that he is Houshang Moradi Kermani, the great figure in contemporary children’s

literature. As I was listening to his voice, which resounded like a bell in my soul and collapsed the tower of sorrow. He had read *The Red* and told me “you are a phenomenon in Iranian literature for children.” He told me that he liked *The Red* and this encouraged me so much that my tears evaporated and I returned to a life full of energy. After that, I participated in the story writing sessions of the Association of Writers for Children and Adolescents and also the meeting of the



Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, and later I became the director of these two sessions.

For the first time, I invited critics to storytelling sessions of the Center that turned to be an innovative model for the storytelling sessions of the Association of Writers, and later I became the responsible person in charge of the Center’s council for approving the children’s story

and also a member of the board of directors of the Association.

The storytelling sessions in the office of Child Development Magazine were such new experiences that led to a serious flow of children's writing for me as well as for the whole field of Iranian children's literature. Wednesday meeting with the management of Mrs. Shokooh Ghasemnia and with the participation of we ten children writers who for the first time started spontaneous writing stories. These sessions resulted in many stories that were initially published in *Child Development* magazines for first graders, and later published independently and won many awards.

Gradually, my books were translated and published by different publishers in different countries and different languages including English, Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, and Malay.

The project of writing for teenagers at the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, which was started by the management of Hamid Reza Shahabadi, led me to write for teenagers. Among these included such novels as *Narwal, the Unicorn Whale* that is a work of fantasy with an under-the-sea setting that made my dreams blue. The novel, written in the year 2012 was based on serious rumors of the destruction of the world and an ocean that was being destroyed by a secret explosion.

Journalistic experiences have always been full of passion, love, and excitement for me and are always with me and I still pursue them. I have started my journalistic works as an expert and consulting editor in two magazines, *Little Nabat* and *Nabat*, which are published three to six and also seven to twelve years old children, and I continue to work in the field as the editor of *Nini Nabat*. The latter is the first and only specialized magazine for children under the age of three in Iran and even in the Middle East. Children's Book Council had to compare it with foreign examples to review it in the press section and happily announced that the magazine is comparable in quality of form and content to equivalent foreign magazines, an announcement that relieved the fatigue of me and my colleagues. The editorial of this magazine started the formation of a specialized writing process for under-threes in me and also the introduction of this age group among the country's children's literature

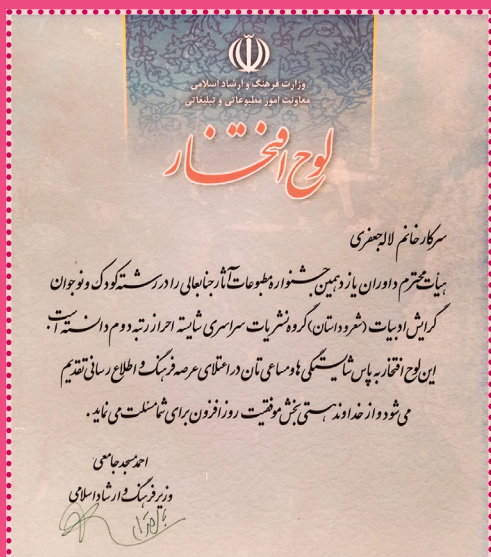


which eventually culminated in the start of a wave of writing for under-threes. Reading promotion programs and workshops in cultural centers and schools was an experience that introduced me to my audience more and more closely. In these workshops, we read books with the children and shared storytelling techniques with them, and set up storytelling workshops, and wrote stories together. The experience extended to trips to the country's villages, including a three-day trip to the village of Abavisan. Talking to rural children and teenagers and seeing their great desire to read surprised me and made me love writing for them even more. The videos that I get from reading my books by children in low-income and far from the central areas of Iran, such as Sistan and Baluchestan, reveal a greater truth to me. The truth that I have believed in from the bottom of my heart.

Now I know why I did not depart with my other twin and stayed in this world. Now I know why life became such an important part of me; what reason could be stronger and more convincing than writing for children. This is the reason I respectfully love it and never will leave it aside.

Laleh will continue to write for children until she is alive and will pay her debt to life...





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## Resume

### Activities

- Creator of short films about children
- Writing plays for children, making puppet shows, and also playing them
- The person in Charge of Approval of Children's Stories, Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, 2011.
- Member of the editorial board of Soroush for Kids Magazines and Children's Development and Novice's Development
- Member of the board of the Association of Writers for Children and Adolescent for one term
- Editor and reviewer of books for Qadiyani, Chekkeh, and Scientific and Cultural, and Parandeh Book publications
- Judging in various fields of international festivals of theater, books, and journalism.
- Editor-in-Chief of *Nini Nabat* monthly magazine, since 2010
- Advisor to the editor and literary expert in two magazines, *Nabat* and *Nini Nabat*, since 2014.

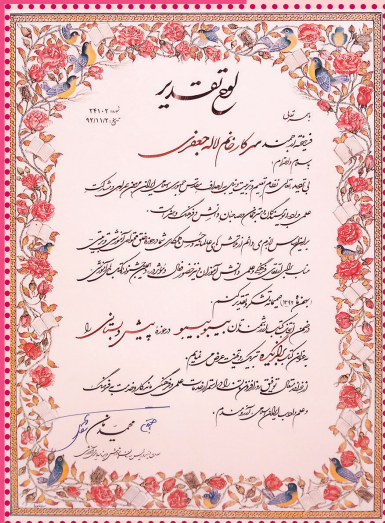
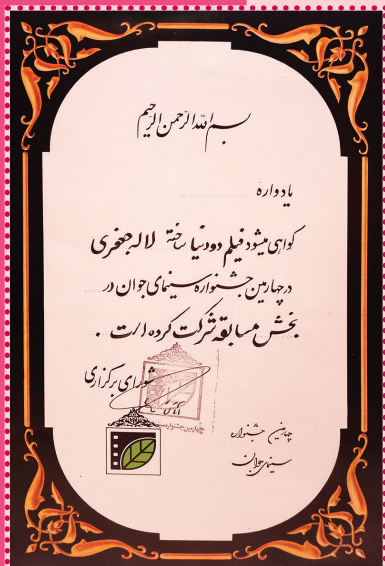
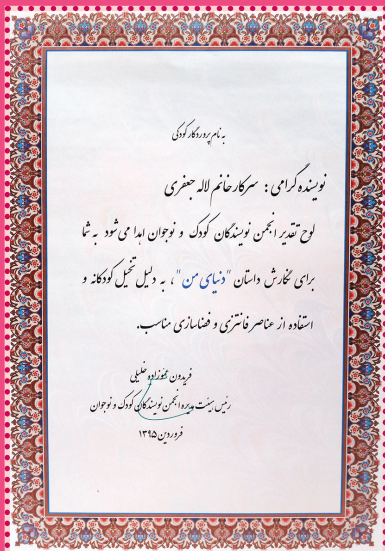
### Awards and Achievements

- The selected message of the 100th anniversary of Hans Christian Andersen, 2005.
- Selected story collection in the 11th Press Festival of 2004 for Child Friend Magazine.
- The selected book of the year Salam Bacheha Poopak, 2006, *The Red*



- Candidate for the book of the year, Ministry of Culture, 2006, *Delicious Smell*.
- Candidate at several Book of the Season Awards in different years.
- Nominated by Shahid Ghanipour Book Festival: *That Day at Eight, One Name and Some Tales*.
- Nominated for 1<sup>st</sup> Children's Development Book Festival: *Bibo Bibo*.
- Books listed in Flying Turtle List: *Bib Bib Story, Mrs. Giant, and Mr. Giant, Alaky Palaky Tales, Stories of the Little Mouse* (5 volumes), *Do you like to be friends with numbers?* *Adventures of Eji and Ghor*i (10 volumes).
- Selected by Best Book Festival, 2015, *Tales of Alaki Palaki*.
- Selected story of the meetings of the Association of Writers for Children and Adolescents, 2016: *The Story of My Life*
- Selected by the Children's Book Council: *Narwal, the Unicorn Whale, Tales of the Prophets* (in 12 volumes)
- *Tales of Prophet* (12 volumes) introduced on the cover of school textbooks
- Nominated for Children's Book of the Year Award of Roshd Book Festival 2018: the seven collections of *Do you like to become friends with...?*
- Winner of the 11th Book of the Year Award for the Growth Book Festival 2014: *A Collection of One Name and Several Stories*
- Selected for 11th Book of the Year Award for the Growth Book Festival 2013: *Bibo Bibo*
- Nominees for the 8th Biennial Best Children and Adolescent Book Festival Award: *Narwal, the Unicorn Whale*
- Selected by the 9th Top Book Festival: *Do you Like to be Friends with Numbers?*
- Nominated by the Ninth Best Books for Children and Adolescents Festival: *Googooli's Stories*, 2017
- Selected by the 17th Roshd Book Festival, 2019: *A Collection of Short Stories*





- Selected by of the Writers' Association Story Meetings 2016: The Story of My World
- Selected by the twelfth book of the year of Shahid Habib Ghanipour Festival: *One Name and Several Stories*
- Selected by the 9th Martyr Habib Ghanipour Festival: *That Morning at Eight*
- Plaque of Honor from Commemorating the Third Anniversary of Today's Novel Project, Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, 2012.
- Letter of Acknowledgment for Evaluating the Books of the Office of Educational Technology and Publications, 2017.
- Nominated by the 4th International Puppet Festival of Tehran, September 1992.
- Nominated by the 18th Roshd Book Festival 2020: *First Class - First Books Collection*.

## Published Articles and Papers by the Writer

- Reviewing the Garden of Blessings, Thousands of Thanks, 1 and 2, Laleh Jafari, Mohammad Ali Dehghani, *Quarterly Journal of Children and Adolescents Book Review*, No. 13 (Spring 2017).
- Children's Cinema, Isfahan Young Cinema Bulletin, 1984.

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- Googooli Stories for Googooli Children (Collection of 50 Sto-

- ries for Children), Illustrated by Roya Bijani et al., Ghadiyani Publications, 2017.
- *The Long and Short Stories*, (10 volume) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ameneh Arbaboon and others, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2016.
  - *Nini Ghesseha*, (4 volumes) Children's Story, Illustrated by Niloufar Boroumand, Dastan Jomeh Publications, 2016.
  - *Legends of Horns and Tails*, (4 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Shadi Delpaak, Khaneh Adabiat, 2019.
  - *Little Stories*, (20 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Azadeh Moezi and others, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2018.
  - *Nineh and Nani stories*, (6 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Alireza Jalaeifard, Payam-e-Mashreq Publications, 2019.
  - *Adventures of Eji and Ghouri*, (10 volumes) Children's Illustrated Stories, Illustrated by Solmaz Joshaghani, Khaneh Adabiat Publications, 2017.
  - *Do you like to be friend with...?*, (7 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Fariba Asli, Madreshe Publications, 2017.
  - *Zalzalak Stories*, (12 volumes) Children's Stories, by Shirin Sheikhi, Ghadyani Publications, 2020.
  - *Storytelling Cards*, (12 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Sahar Haghgoo and others, Ofogh Publications, 2009.
  - *Tales of the Prophets*, (12 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ali Khodaei et al., Ofogh Publications, 2014.
  - *Little Green Stories*, (5 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Azadeh Moezi, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2018.
  - *Little Blue Stories*, (5 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Niloufar Boroumand, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2018.
  - *Little Purple Stories*, (5 volumes) Children's Stories, children's story, Illustrated by Somayeh Alipour, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2018.
  - *Little Orange Stories*, (5 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ilgar Rahimi, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2018.
  - *Little Mouse*, (5 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ali Khodaei,



- Amirkabir Publications, 2016.
- G- G- Giraffe, (8 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelou, Peinama Publications, 2019.
  - My Little Zoo (5 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Hadiseh Ghorban, Ofogh Publications, 2016.
  - Children's Stories Collection, Illustrated by Ali Kho-daei et al., Hamshahri Publications, 2018.
  - The Seven, Children's Stories, Illustrated by Fariba Asli, Madrasa Publications, 2017.
  - Collection of Alaki Palaki Tales, Children's Stories, Illustrated by Sana Habibirad, Peidayesh Publications, 2013.
  - Brave Makar from the 10-volume collection of Think, Think, Three Tales, Children's Stories, Illustrated by Hajar Moradi, Madreseh Publications, 2018.
  - Terrible Policho from the Collection of the Best Iranian Writers, Children's Stories, Illustrated by Ilgar Rahimi, Shahr Ghalam Publications, 2019.
  - One Name and Several Stories, (20 volumes) Children's Stories, Illustrated by Somayeh Alipour et al., Chekkeh Publications, 2012.
  - What Was A, Who Was B: 32 Stories with 32 Letters, Children's Stories, Illustrated by Somayeh Alipour, Panjereh Publications, 2017.
  - Mr. Rooster, Children's Story, Illustrated by Maryam Tabatabai, Scientific and Cultural Publications, 2010.
  - Soup of White Maman and While Baba, Children's Story, Illustrated by Azadeh Seljuqi, Khaneh Adabiat Publications, 2019.
  - Kiss of the Wind, Children's Story, Illustrated by Hadiseh Ghorban, Peidayesh Publications, 2016.
  - Mrs. Giant and Mr. Giant and Ten Other Stories, Chil-



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  - Ghergheri, Children's Story, Illustrated by Shirin Sheikhi, Ghadyani Publications, 2020.
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  - Mommy Tales, Children's Story, Illustrated by Elahe Javanmard, Surah Mehr Publications, 2014.
  - Tales of Five Moms, Children's Story, Illustrated by Ali Mafakheri, Safir Ardehal Publications, 2016.
  - Delicious Smell, Children's Story, Illustrated by Narges Delavari, Madreseh Publications, 2010.
  - True or False, Children's Story, Illustrated by Mahnaz Soleimannejad, Neshaneh Amooz Publications, 2016.
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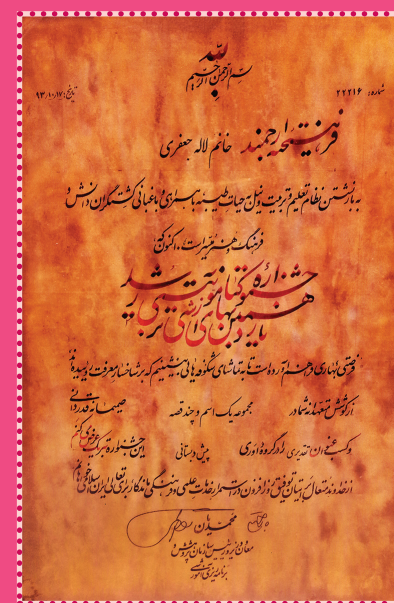
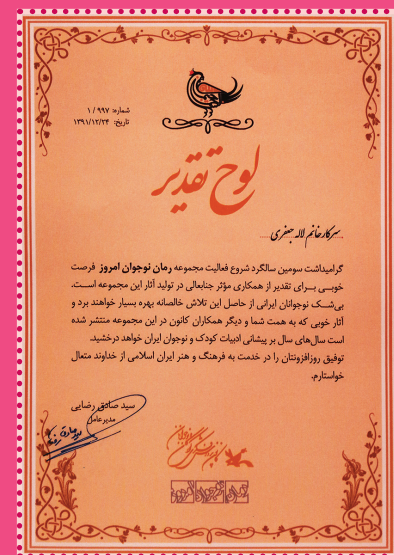
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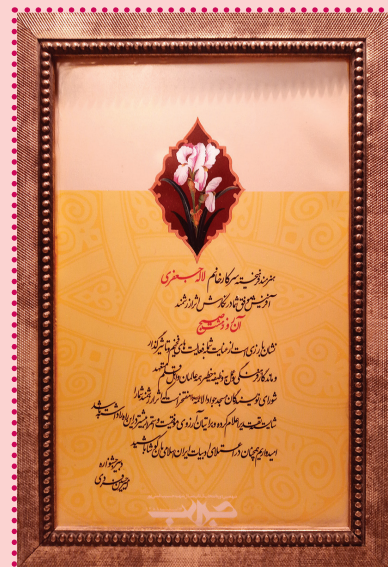
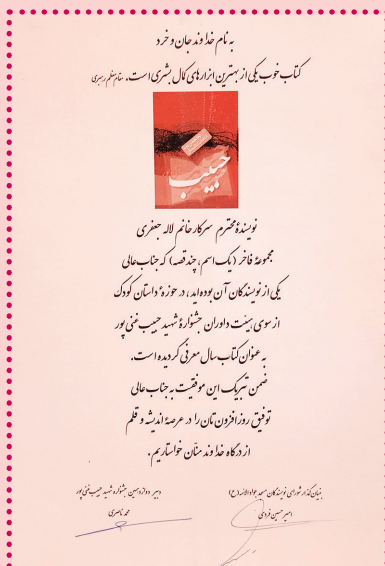
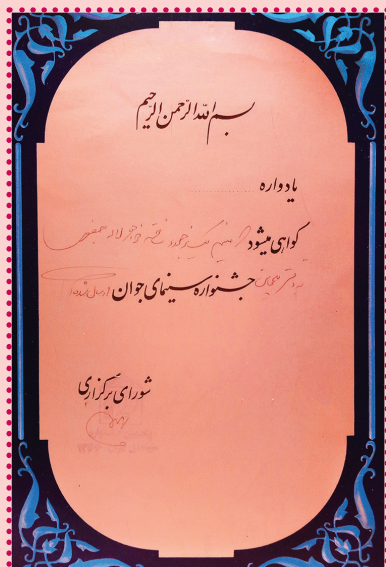


## Translated Works

- The Guardian of the Sun: Translated into Spanish, Turkish, and French.
- Circle (Gerdali): Translated into Korean and Chinese.
- One Red Sock: Translated into Korean and Chinese.
- The Brown: Translated into Chinese.
- The most beautiful place: Translated into Korean.
- Aunt Orange: Translated into English.
- Elephant Umbrella: Translated into English, TINY OWL Publications, 2017.
- Do You Like to Be Friend With...?: Translated into English, Superm Sanjar Publications, 2018.
- Ali and Goli Adventures: Translated into Malay, Al-Amin Publishing, 2010.

## Conferences and Lectures

- Conference on the Pathology of Criticism and Theory of Children's Literature with a lecture by Laleh Jafari, Book of the Month, February and March 2007.
- Meeting of Children's Writers, Society in Tabriz, December 2016.
- Conference on the status of short stories for adolescents, March 2009.
- Meeting to Review "Snowman" Play, Directed by Anahita Ghanizadeh, December 2008.
- Group Exhibition of German, French, and Iranian Children's Books: Red Book.
- Meeting with Readers, the 8th Book Cultural Center Book Exhibition.
- Kindness Time, Meeting of Students in Golestan Cultural Center



- Book as the Kind Friend, Meeting of Writers with People, Ibn Sina Cultural Center.

## TV Talk Show

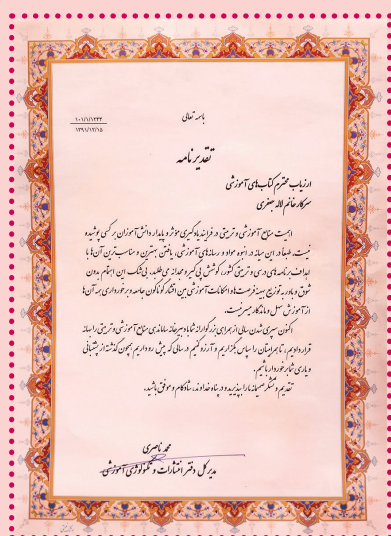
- Radio Farhang program, Introducing the Writer, 2008.
- World Children's Day TV program with Mr. Mehdi Zabetian Jahromi, 2019.
- Book Worm TV Program, Commemorating Hans Christian Andersen, 2020.

## Workshops

- Story Writing Workshop for Adults, Fictional Literature Foundation, 2018.

## Judgments

- International Festival of Children and Adolescent Theater.
- Top Book Festival.
- Book Festival of the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.
- Children and Adolescents Press Festival.
- Book of the Season Festival of the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.



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- Pashae, Roshanak (2015) Reviewing the Rewritings of Laleh Jafari: Rewriting Myth, Intertextuality, and Metanarrative, *Research Journal of Children and Adolescent Literature*, No. 67 (pp. 80-87).
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### My Secrets

- Written by Lale Jafari
- Illustrated by Ghazale Bigdeloo
- Published by AmirKabir (Shokoufeh Books)

"My Secrets" is a book consists of seven parts which are connected together with a piece of thread and that thread is praying to God.

In this book, the author puts the tale and the notes together. She has talked about the secret with the children in an intimate note and then she has written the tales and has forbidden the children under ten years old to read them.

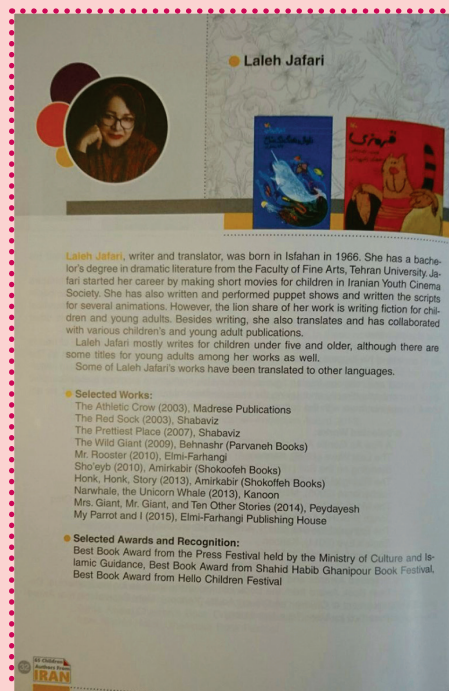
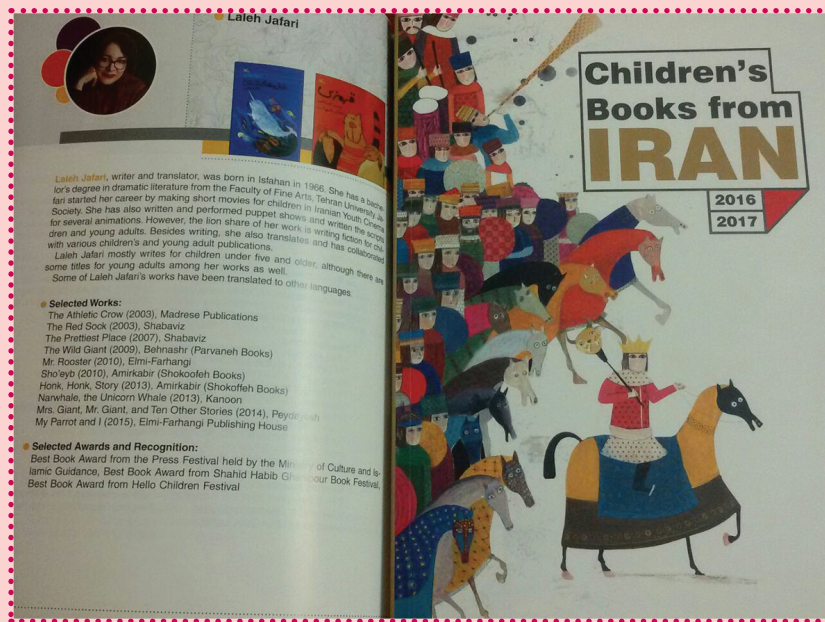
The author has tried first to look at the subject of praying to God in children's eyes and then express it for her readers. She wants to talk about ethical issues to children in the form of praying to God. Some of the titles of these stories are: "the Dinner of Wedding", "Collared Doves", "Child's Fortune", "the Doll", "the Mirror", "the Ampule" and "Beetles".

One attractive thing about this book is its illustrations.



Fall and Winter 2014 - Issue 10 (pp. 107-128).

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# Overview of Works

## A Writer for Children

Writing books for the specific age group of small children is new in Iran. Writers for children and adolescents are slowly learning to write for this age group. Laleh Jafari is one of those who have very successful books for this young age group and has managed to establish her name as one of the prominent authors in the field.

Laleh Jafari is a children's writer, editor, translator, and journalist. She is one of the most prolific writers for children and adolescents in Iran and has written more than 250 books and translated 90 books over the years. Many of his books have been translated into other languages. Her main activity is in the field of children and she has also written several books for teenagers. She is best known as a young writer. Most of Jafari's popular books are illustrated books for children, which reach more than 40 volumes.

Her language is simple, concise, and attractive. However, this simplicity of language and writing is accompanied by deep layers of meanings. The choice of words and the arrangement and rhythm of her sentences in most of her works are simple, intelligent, and precise. Her stories illustrate the daily lives of children and combine so much imagination and real-life that every child is attracted. As she says in an interview, like Piaget who analyzed his children to arrive at educational and psychological discoveries, she managed to identify the needs and interests of children by studying children and analyzing their behaviors, and providing material for her artistic production in her books. That is why Jafari treats children gently in her books. She simplifies concepts and creatively presents them. She has a true and comprehensive knowledge of her audiences as children and teaches the needs, concerns, and interests of the child well in a simple setting and language. The form and content of her stories are creative and indirectly communicate life skills. For example, *Antelope* is a work that teaches such essential skills as empathy and stress management. In the story of *The Gypsy Goat*, it is the goat-kids who, seeing the grief and pain of their mother, think of a solution. Since they have not learned anything about it, they go out to find help. The joyful and cheerful

behavior of the gypsy goat - which can be read as a symbol of happy, positive, and energetic human beings - attracts the goat-kids so much that they forget for a moment what they came out for. The gypsy goat first resorts to herbal medicines to improve the condition of the mother-goat but when he finds that the goat's mother is still not good after using herbal drinks, he starts a quest for another solution.

In the other work, *The Desert Giant*, two important skills "effective relationships" and "interpersonal communication" are addressed. These two skills are very close and related and Jafari managed to write and indirectly transmit these skills to children.

In the story of *The Desert Giant*, the connection between two opposite and distant beings (giant and man) is beautifully depicted. The two creatures, who have always been considered enemies of each other in fictional and creative works, find a point of agreement in the story. They use the effective method of dialogue to build this relationship, listen to each other, and ultimately reach wise decisions as a result of their constructive, mutual interaction.

In her other book, *The Brown*, Jafari seeks new experiences. She presents and demonstrates creative thinking and problem-solving techniques and skills in this work. In *Brown*, the audience can easily identify with the main character, who is a girl and the narrator of the story, and looks for a solution to solve her problem (the relationship between cat, chicken, and canary).

The point that is reflected in most of Jafari's stories is her creativity. She uses simple narrative techniques to convey important concepts.

Laleh Jafari is a second-generation writer after the revolution, and her field of study, Dramatic Literature, together with her background in short film-making seem to have indirectly affected her desire for pictorial books. Jafari has done well in this field and has created many interesting works. An important issue that is important in the critique of pictorial books for children is the importance of the mutual and complementary relationship between the text and the picture, the author and the illustrator, that Jafari was lucky enough to build such a strong mutual relationship with her illustrators.

Unlike adults, children do not indulge in logical assumptions. They simply enjoy the colors and textures of the image, and if the writer and the text could narrate the story for them and could match the narrative and the images, the children will understand the metaphoric connection between the text and the image, the narrative will be pleasurable to follow by the children. This the fact that has enabled Jafari to build a proper relationship with children in her stories.

In addition to writing stories, Ms. Laleh Jafari also has experience in writing and performing puppet shows and writing screenplays for several animations, and perhaps this pictorial perspective on life has led her to write appropriate illustrative books for young children. She is a prolific writer who has her style of writing in sequels. Many of the children's collection books are the result of Jafari's storytelling. Among the most important of these books, we can mention such works as the ten-volume Collection of Long and Short Stories, the ten-volume collection of *Eji and Ghoris' Adventures*, the seven-volume collection of *Do you like to be friend with?*, and the five-volume collection of *The Little Mouse*.





## Review of important works

### Do you like numbers?

In this book, the child is acquainted with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in a sweet text and playful and imaginative pictures! This numerical picture book helps the child to understand the meaning of numbers. The author uses the moon, the sun, mom, and dad, who are one in nature, to introduce the meaning of the concept of one in the mind of the child. In addition to harmonizing with the text of the book, the illustrator uses concepts such as polite fox for number 1, playful mouse for number 2, free rooster for 3, curious four-legged animal for 4, searching chicken for number 5, devil cat for 6, the surprised goat for 7, the rough crocodile for 8, and the proud swan for 9 playfully and imaginatively to introduce numbers to children. In the children's book with two golden and at the same time simple and clear phrases "We would like to be friends with you" and "Do you want to be friends with us? Through the story, the children are introduced to the two golden and at the same time simple and clear phrases "We would like to be friends with you" and "Do you want to be friends with us too?" They practice and experience how to use these phrases through the book and find the different meanings of friendship. The children understand that to be friends with one another, it is enough to declare readiness for friendship in a simple and clear language, and at the same time, it is essential and necessary to allow the other party to declare readiness. In the final part of the book, the writer states these two golden phrases:

I am Laleh Jafari and I would like to be friends with you.

Would you like to be friends with me too?

### Desert giant

*Roshanak Pashae*

*Desert Giant* was published in 2009 with the illustration of Rashin Kheirieh. It is re-written folklore and the main character of the story is a desert giant. According to popular belief, a giant is



usually evil and dangerous creature, and in many writings and rewriting they are portrayed as an evil creature. Usually, in the earlier versions of oral literature that have a giant or a demon, it is assumed that the protagonist fights with the giant, destroys him, and in some cases takes possession of his property. Despite this, in *The Desert Giant* Laleh Jafari has challenged this popular belief, because her desert giant has human needs together despite his different appearance. In this rewriting, the main character in the story is a desert giant who is not only an artist and is knows the art of quilting for himself, but also has an aesthetic sense because he uses ornaments and pearls to decorate his quilts. He is also skilled in political discourse and diplomacy. When he sees that people are afraid of him, he enters into a deal with them to meet everyone's needs.

It seems that the metanarrative of fear of strangers and those who are different, which are often portrayed in myths as a fearful and cannibal giant, together with the need to destroy them, has been replaced by Laleh Jafari's metanarrative of tolerance, mutual understanding, and dialogue. In this revision, humans do not kill giants. Even the problems that arise on their way, stem from basic human needs, such as the need for beauty or a warm, soft dwelling, and not greed or avarice. In this sense, the desert giant has transformed moral stereotypes that are very old in folklore with a few exceptions, such as the myth of the Moon Face in Persian literature.

Another noteworthy thing about this pictorial rewriting is that it moves in the direction of the writer's ideology and helps to understand it. The intertextuality resulting from the contrast of primary and secondary text in this rewriting contributes to a meaning production process that opens up a new semantic horizon for the reader and invites the reader to look at things differently.

Among the types of children's literature, myth is of special

importance and part of this importance is due to the consequences that different types of rewriting can find. Rewritings that simply provide another version of the primary texts or older ones in a simple and understandable language for children and adolescents are valuable because they introduce the new generation to ancient myths. At the same time, those rewritings that are based on a true understanding of the primary and secondary texts, to motivate the reader to think and become conscious, have their special value and importance.

### **Mrs. Giant and Mr. Giant and ten other stories**

*Niloufar Shahsavarian*

There are 11 short stories in the story series of *Mrs. Giant and Mr. Giant*. As the children enter the imaginary space of Laleh Jafari's stories, the entertaining aspect of these stories finds prominence. Strong streams of imagination follow in all the stories of this collection. For example, in the story of the witch, both the daughter and husband of the witch are lost. The witch must work with the spells she knows to find her family members. From the cheek dimples of the witch, a green flower grows and falls into her skirt.

Reading the story of characters that are fascinating and mysterious to children makes this collection of stories a readable book. Also, the characters of giants and fairy are derived from Iranian folk culture, and the stories of these characters have been exchanged between people for hundreds of years. This is why the story finds its place among the readers so immediately.

Also, the rhythm of the stories is fast and children enjoy reading it without becoming tired. Parts of the story are melodic and make the reading more enjoyable for the audience. Humor is also an important ingredient of the story. Mrs. Fairy, Mr. Lulu, Mrs. Demon, Mr. Monster, Mrs.

Angel, Mr. Giant, Mrs. Giant, and Mr. Giant, Mrs. Dragon, Mr. Ghoozi, Mrs. Witch, and Baby Fairy are the titles of the stories in this book.

## The Story of Bibo Bibo

*Ensieh Mousavian*

“Four pencil sharpeners and the four crayons join to form a machine called Bibo. They walk like a garbage truck and collect the garbage of pencils until they reach a white paper and want to take it as garbage. The white paper resists and says I will not ride; I am not garbage! The paper goes into the pencil box and returns with the image of a flower on her. Pencils both paint flowers and provide soil and water for them.”

In the story of Bibo, the main character of the story is a white paper. A white paper can be a symbol of a pure conscience and the white and innocent soul of a child who easily accepts any role. The white paper, when confronted with a garbage car (Bibo), which can also be a symbol of danger for the child, stands in front of him with courage and firmly says “no”! Saying no changes his destiny. He chooses his path and decides boldly. It goes inside the pencil box where the pencils draw beautiful flowers on it.

*The Pistachio Shell* also deals with such skills as empathy, problem-solving, and creative thinking”. Also, the skills of stress management and problem-solving play a significant role in *The Guardian of the Sun*. In the beautiful story of *Orange Aunt*, the skills of empathy, creative thinking, and effective communication are beautifully addressed.

## Narwal, the Unicorn Whale

*Narwal, the Unicorn Whale* is a teen novel that puts the imagination and myth along with each other to create an attractive narrative. Most of the novel's adventures take place in the ocean and between fishes, where everything is calm at first until one day the ocean and the fishes are threatened by the forces of evil from other planets. To overcome the evil force, a group volunteers to help the ocean, among which there is a father together with his daughter who is more active and interested. They communicate with Narwal, unicorn whale and special ocean fish, and his father who is an old fish to ask him for further help.

This story is all about imagination. All the characters including the mermaid, sea horses, jellyfishes, sea horses, and other numerous characters are from the world of fantasy. The story is about the wedding of a mermaid and a hippopotamus when a fishing net and want to catch fishes and there is a hole in the ocean floor. The events that take place in the story are amazing and what amazes the audience is the unique creativity of the writer. The story has a unique setting. The names of the characters, the dialogues, and the great prose all contribute to make the book an enjoyable one.



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