

May 2018

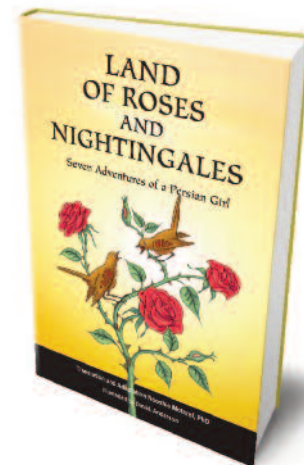
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Persian folktales from 500 BC speaks directly to young women of this moment; New book to be released August 15, pre-release copies available June 15

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TUCSON, ARIZONA — Women from 500 BC emerge as role models for women and girls today in a new book: ***Land of Roses and Nightingales, Seven Adventures of a Persian Girl***.

It was while author Nooshie Motaref scoured bookshops and libraries of her native Tehran, Iran, for old folktales in the research for her doctoral thesis that she came across these seven stories with women protagonists.



“These stories inspired me to share them,” says Nooshie. “The stories convinced me that anything is possible if I rely on myself using my mind and my heart as my guides.”

Each fable starts with the main character who is also its narrator claiming, “I don’t know if you believe in reincarnation, but I do because I have been reincarnated as a Persian girl many times, I remember, once...”. According to some experts, the ancient Aryans believed in reincarnation as part of their monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism.

In the seven stories:

Bibi rescues her husband from a wicked witch.

Noor is eaten by a lion yet returns to achieve her utmost in life.

Neda and **Sahar** use their wisdom rather than the supernatural to solve riddles to reach happiness.

Roxana travels through a dark, dangerous jungle to save her husband.

Neda challenges the king and ultimately solves all the riddles presented to her.

Zara beheads thieves who have diabolical intentions for her.

“Having grown up in Persia, my veins carry the oral tradition of storytelling as vital as life’s blood,” says Nooshie. “As a little girl, I loved the summer nights when my grandmother and I would move our mattresses outside. Laying down, we gazed at a sky filled with stars. Listening to her stories of ‘Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp,’ ‘Ali-Baba and the Forty Thieves,’ or ‘The Seven Voyages of Sinbad,’ was a delight.”

The title, ***Land of Roses and Nightingales, Seven Adventures of a Persian Girl***, refers both to the setting of the seven stories, Iran, and the vein of mysticism that runs through the text: reincarnation. Roses and the nightingales are familiar in Persian literature and visual iconography representing the earthly and spiritual. Both the flower and the bird still delight visitors to Iran.

In her research, Nooshie collected 72 stories, translated 39 stories and curated these seven stories with female protagonists for the book.

“Seldom in western culture are women the protagonists. Men are always the storytellers, so for them it is rare to tell stories in which women are the protagonists,” says Nooshie. These stories date from the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian time circ. 500 BC.

Nooshie says the Persian tellers of these stories were ahead of other ancient cultures in positioning a female as the hero in their stories—even ahead of Greeks and Romans.

Peoples of this part of the world, even in old times, looked on women as equal to men.

“My major goal in translating and retelling these tales is to provide our young generation with the tools to depend on their own wits, bravery and resilience.”

In these stories readers live vicariously through a Persian girl who reincarnates at different times during the history of Persia and faces adversity in each of her lives. She encounters two opposite forces—Good and Evil. She learns that sometimes it is impossible for good to win over evil right away. However, she never loses her convictions.

“We all live with these two opposing forces. We need not only be aware of this truth in order to make better choices but also to teach our children to live with these polar oppositions perhaps helping them to overcome some harmful situations,” Nooshie says.

These fables teach us that the world consists of conflicts—morality and corruption; material and spiritual; beauty and ugliness.

“Sadly not many contemporary works have endured and explored the universal issues that youth experience on their road to maturity. I believe that educating our youth about other cultures is a step forward to seeking a peaceful solution to the turmoil of today’s world.”

Land of Roses and Nightingales, Seven Adventures of a Persian Girl is published by A3D Impressions and available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble and local bookstores for \$24.95. Sign up for notification of book signings and speaking events at a3dimpressions.com and nooshiemotaref.com.

FOLKTALES

Folktales and fairytales have played a major role throughout human history because they are the origin of any literary work. Yet their importance was not fully recognized until the twentieth century. As modern psychology gained prominence, scholars such as Carl Jung in *Man and his Symbols* and Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* came to the conclusion that the pattern of the mind and its productions are the same everywhere. This theory is known as “Collective Unconscious”. In other words, what man has told us as tales in the past resembles what he is writing as fiction in the present. Jung believes that the primitive man everywhere has produced the “hero myth”. According to Jung, the hero has some general traits like “humble birth, his early proof of super-human strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with the forces of evil....” These seven stories provide proof of Jung’s theory.

In these stories, the benevolent act is always rewarded and the devilish act is punished. Hope and happiness have a special place in these tales. The narrator is the main character instead of a storyteller. Therefore, each hero is able to depict her story the way she sees it rather than to be manipulated by the storyteller’s imagination.

Reading these stories is a journey much like a magic carpet ride — a Persian girl’s odysseys through time and space. She steps out of a dream, an embodiment of a hero and battles evil forces or solves riddles by using her wits and strengths. She serves for the good of others, consequently in the process she metamorphoses to a mature woman. In the end, through endurance, she is triumphant so that even the Persian king takes a bow to her. Her adventures are based on Persian fairytales and folktales narrated by her.

The tales are timeless and carry a feminist message. It does not matter where we live, we are all fascinated by ordinary heroes. We love to read stories where a single unexpected event can utterly transform a life. These thousand-year-old fables show the timeless issues all teens go through: love, heartache, family matters and challenging authority. These adventures are gripping and compelling, chosen to help teens recognize they have the same conflicts as other young people throughout history, in different cultures.

Fairytales of each country are like the folk music or science fiction of that nation. These adventures are adapted to appeal to Young Adult readers. Yet they carry redeeming social value that attracts teachers, professors, librarians, storytellers and parents.

—Nooshie Motaref