



Rumi's Fables

Translated by

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*"When you are with children, talk about toys,
From playthings, little by little, they reach
into deeper wisdom and clarity.
Children have a sense of wholeness in them already."*

Rumi

* * *

This book is dedicated to children of all ages.
May these stories remind them
of the hidden mysteries of each day
and help them live a more inspired life.

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I am very grateful to my soul teachers for giving me the opportunity to co-create this book with them. The journey of each story has been a soul healing and thanksgiving experience even in the face of a slowly debilitating disease like Multiple Sclerosis. At first the thanking for such circumstance felt awkward but with persistence it awakened my heart. In my gratitude, ten percent of the proceeds of this book will be donated to National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

* * *

"You have survived through many diseases because of the teachers you've known. Your limp has turned to a smooth step. Tie the cord around your ankle, so you don't forget what you've been given. Ingratitude and forgetfulness block further blessings they could give."

-Rumi



R*umi's Fables* is a collection of Rumi's fifty most magical and charming short stories that will entertain and educate the whole family. Rumi, the great poet and philosopher of the thirteenth century, has become, as talk show host Bill Moyers said on his television program, "the most popular poet in America." The United Nations called the year 2007 "the year of Rumi" to honor the 800th anniversary of his birth. Rumi's work has been translated into more than twenty-five languages and is being presented in a growing number of media, including workshops, music festivals, dance performances, and other creative outlets.

In this book, *Rumi's Fables*, over 20,000 lines from the *Masnavi*, Rumi's original Persian books, have been translated from Farsi into English. Though, *Masnavi* is a book of devotional poetry, there are many whimsical stories thriving inside the poems. In this collection of short stories the author has hand-picked the most fascinating fables to entertain and challenge younger readers. *Rumi's Fables* comes alive with colorful characters – the sage king, the clever clown, and the bewitched prince – and many talking animals – the wise lion, the cunning fox, and the arrogant mouse. Each tale can be read as a simple bedtime story or as a profound and thought-provoking group discussion. At the end of each story there is a "contemplation box" to make the experience more interactive. There is also a summary of the moral of each story. These stories are reminiscent of the style of Aesop's fables. Readers, young or old, will find themselves in a land of mystery and myth that can transcend an ordinary life or even a difficult life. These fables, with their deep and soulful content, communicate a personalized message to the reader.



About The Author

As an Iranian-American immigrant, Negar Niazi was brought up in a culture rich in ancient Persian literature and mythology like that of Rumi, Hafez, and Ferdowsi. Even though her educational background is in the sciences, with a BS in Chemistry from UCLA and a Doctorate degree in Optometry from UC Berkeley, her life challenges rekindled her passion for the works of Rumi and led her into the path of a spiritual seeker. After Negar's life changing diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis, she found herself on a journey into the world of mysticism, ancient literature, and mythology. She would like to share this new world through the magic of *Rumi's Fables*.



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1. The Prince And The Village Girl

Thousands of years ago, there was a kingdom ruled by a handsome young prince. He was famous for his kindness and for the generosity of his fortune and spirit. One day the young prince decided to go hunting with a group of his friends. They rode on their horses to distant places, passing through many remote villages. As they were passing through one village, the prince saw a village girl whose beauty was unmatched. He fell in love with her instantly and invited her to his palace. The girl, overwhelmed by the majesty of the prince, agreed.

However, shortly thereafter, the girl fell terribly ill. The prince was heartbroken and called for the best medicine men from all over the kingdom. He promised big fortunes as the reward for the one who would cure his beloved. Each medicine man promised that he had the girl's cure. Each one claimed mastery of his craft but without any mention of the divine power. Even though each one tried very hard, they all failed terribly. Mysteriously, all their medicines produced the opposite effect of what they were designed to do. The girl continued to get worse.

When the prince saw this, he became very desperate and started to pray to God for a solution. He was in the middle of this intense praying when he fell asleep. In his sleep, he had a dream of a wise old sage who gave him this message: "The true healer will arrive tomorrow; he will have divine power and can do miracles." The prince woke up from the dream and the sun was shining so brightly that no stars were visible. He started to look out for the healer who was described to him in his dream. Medicine men kept arriving from all over the kingdom, but this time he knew who he was looking for. As soon as the prince saw him, he knew, for the healer was like a new moon, very bright but barely visible.

The healer was taken immediately to the girl's bedside. He started to examine the girl by first observing her pulse in response to a series of special questions. After a short while he came out of the room and told the prince he found the cause of her illness. He said, "Dear prince, the illness is caused by an emotional upheaval. During the pulse observation, I found out that there is a village boy that the girl was infatuated with, and the separation caused an emotional distress that triggered her illness. I know how to cure it; just follow my instructions."

According to the healer's instructions, the prince sent for this village boy. The boy and girl were allowed to be together once again. The girl improved rapidly and they lived happily together for six months. Then the village boy suddenly fell ill and the girl mysteriously lost interest in him, allowing the prince and the girl to live together happily ever after.

* * *

Sometimes in life good things (such as love) come with obstacles and difficulties, be persistent.

What would you do if you encountered a difficult situation?
What if you tried everything in your physical power and could not solve the problem?



2. The Farm Animals And The Lion

Once upon a time, there was a farm full of chubby and happy animals who lived together in harmony and peace. However, in the nearby mountains lived a fierce mountain lion who would come around regularly and disturb their peace by scaring them, and sometimes it would even capture one of the animals and take it back to its cave to feast on it for dinner. One day all the animals circled around and planned a clever scheme to keep the lion from coming to their happy farm.

They all walked to the mountain where the lion lived and said, "O, mighty lion, instead of you working hard to hunt us, we'll have a drawing amongst ourselves and send you an animal. This way you'll get what you want without having to travel to our farm, and in return, you have to promise to never step foot on our farm." The lion eagerly accepted.

After this agreement, everybody kept their end of the bargain for a while. Then one day at a drawing, the name of a clever little rabbit was drawn. The rabbit said to his fellow farm animals, "I have an even better plan that could set us free for the rest of our lives; all I need is some extra time." The animals got excited and accepted the small rabbit's idea. The rabbit took some time to purposefully make him late for the appointed time with the lion.

Once he got to the lion's den, he found the lion very angry. The small rabbit said, "O, mighty lion, I'm so sorry for being late. I was bringing you a fat and meaty rabbit, but we encountered a strange lion along the way and he stole the fat rabbit." The mountain lion got even angrier and ordered the small rabbit to take him at once to the place where the strange lion had been. The small rabbit obeyed the mountain lion and took him to a deep water well. He pointed to the well and said, "Look for yourself, it's in there."

As soon as the mountain lion looked in the well, he saw the reflection of a lion and at once jumped in the well to kill the lion that he thought had stolen his tasty dinner. As soon as he jumped in, he realized it was a trap, but it was already too late. The rabbit returned back to the farm and gave the news. The animals rejoiced and lived happily ever after in peace and harmony.

* * *

The greatest physical strength cannot win over great cleverness.



How would you handle a situation if you were physically challenged or not strong enough? Would you give up?