ADVOCARTSY presents

The Adventures of Her Ladyship

a series of limited edition collages

by Afsoon

Artist Biography

Afsoon is an Iranian born, London based artist. Occident and Orient coexist in her works, which are multi layered and often combine text and sound with images, using various media such as Linocuts, watercolour, photography, collage, and etching. She returns emotionally to her motherland via her work, which results from painstaking research into her chosen subject matter.

Afsoon's works have been extensively exhibited and can be found worldwide in prominent collections and museums, including the British Museum, Los Angeles County Museum and Berger/YSL Collection, among others.

Artist Statement

I grew up reading fairytales like many other kids of my era. I loved how I could imagine myself being a part of the story. I could be riding horses, sailing ships, going hunting or even searching for a golden egg. However, I was always slightly uncomfortable if the tale was just about finding a prince to marry. One fairytale especially always scared me: the Little Mermaid. While some friends loved the mermaid's long blond hair in illustrations and the blue-eyed prince, I found the idea of giving up your voice to walk with painful feet was terrible. Surely it was a much better idea to be able to sing, talk, laugh and swim around the blue sea. To me having a voice was better than being able to walk!

I grew up, but I continued reading fairytales and folk tales from around the world. It was by luck that I came across the story here. The small and long out of print book of obscure Persian fairytales from the 19th century came into my hands almost 20 years ago. I was so intrigued by the overt sexuality, cruelty and the humour of all the stories that I read them many times throughout the years. However, my favourite was always The Adventures of Her Ladyship. I admired her confidence, resilience and, of course, her voice which would not be silenced. A voice which we all have and most would never give up for anything. And you never know, you might even catch a king with it.

The Adventures of Her Ladyship

Once upon a time there lived a grand old woman. She was respected and liked by all and sundry. Her words had power and she was a believer.

One day the little useless bit of skin which lived between her legs suddenly began to talk and even have an opinion! If someone knocked at the door, it was Her Ladyship who answered before the old woman could even open her mouth. There was no time to smoke waterpipe or relax her tired feet as Her Ladyship bossed her around the house and gave her no peace.

The old woman got so fed up that, ignoring the pain, she took out a big pair of scissors, opened her legs in front of the mirror and cut off that opinionated piece of meat and threw it over the garden wall onto the dirt road leading to the city.

Now let us forget the old woman and hear from Her Ladyship. Covered in blood and dust, she heard a horse galloping nearby. She shook herself and hopped to the side of the road. A young prince on horseback was passing by. He was a handsome bachelor and a member of the king's cavalry. He was minding his own business until he heard a lovely, soft voice. "I beg your pardon sir, may I have a word?" The prince looked around but saw no one. Where was this amazing voice coming from? There was no one around in the early afternoon heat, just a little bit of meat jumping up and down by the side of the road. He stopped his horse and dismounted. Then he bent down and picked up Her Ladyship and, blowing the dust off her, he asked, "What on earth are you? Was that amazing voice yours?"

Her Ladyship stretched herself a bit and said, "Well of course! Can't you see?"

The prince laughed out loud, wrapped her in his handkerchief and took her home.

Once home, he rushed to the market and bought a tiny gold cage. Once Her Ladyship had been washed and carefully dried, he put her inside. From then on, all he thought about was rushing home to talk to her. Even when his friends visited, they would all sit around and talk and Her Ladyship, inside her cage hidden from view behind a curtain, would join in. She would tell jokes and stories and entertain. It was only a matter of time before someone informed the King about the woman with a heavenly voice at the house of the young prince. The King was furious. Surely, the best of the best were always his. Who was this girl of whom he had never heard before?

He called the young prince and said, "So, you are hiding a girl from us! What is it with all this secrecy? Who can be a better husband than me?" The poor prince kept saying, "Your Highness, she is not a girl, she is just a thing!" But he was not listening.

The king dismissed the prince and asked a couple of his most trusted advisers to go to the prince's house and ask for the girl's hand. The men set off and, as it was the custom in those days, Her Ladyship stayed hidden behind the curtain. No one could see her, but she could certainly talk.

The advisors nervously called to her and said, "The King has asked us to talk to you about a delicate matter." Her Ladyship, more breathless and captivating than usual, replied, "Who am I to be worthy of the King's interest? His decision is my command. What is it that his Majesty wants from poor little me?" The advisors, excited to be so close to this enchanting voice, puffed on waterpipes and nibbled on fruits before finally asking for her hand. She was delighted to talk to these honourable advisors and her answer was yes. There was just one condition.

The only condition Her Ladyship had was that prior to her wedding, she wanted to go to the Hammam at which time no one should be allowed in the streets of the city. The Hammam were to be empty except for few bowls of perfumed soap, hair remover cream and body lotion. She was to be collected from the house of the prince, taken to the baths and no one was to be allowed to see her. When the king heard her request, he thought to himself, "Hmm... She must be so beautiful that she is scared someone might curse her. How wonderful! No one will be allowed to see her then." The King issued a public announcement banning anyone from looking at his future wife or risk losing their head.

Meanwhile, the daughter of the Emperor of the Fairies was passing by and heard of the announcement. She was curious. "Who is this woman and why is everyone making such a fuss over her?" she wondered. She decided to sneak into the public baths and have a look.

Now, this poor Fairy had been suffering from a fishbone which had lodged itself inside her throat for years, and no matter what she did, the bone refused to be dislodged. When she saw that the king's future wife was nothing but a bit of skin which was hopping from one bowl into another in the vast empty Hammam, she laughed so hard that she coughed out the bone.

Delighted to be free of the fishbone, the Fairy showed herself to Her Ladyship. Between giggles, she said, "Now that you have got rid of this annoying bone for me, I will grant you one wish". Her Ladyship asked to be a real woman and as pretty as a fairy.

We all know the powers of Fairies and in no time at all the little, wrinkly, bruised bit of skin turned into an amazing woman. You had to see her! What skin, what fragrance, what beauty! She was perfect except for one thing. She had everything, except for the little hole and the skin down there. Her Ladyship looked down and said, "What's the point if I don't have that?" The Fairy shrugged, replied, "Sorry, but I don't make that part" and disappeared.

You can imagine how worried poor Her Ladyship was. What is the point of being this beautiful when the real stuff is not there? She imagined what the king would do after he found her in bed like this. Her head would be chopped off for sure.

At that moment, a skinny, hungry cat passed by and entered the baths. Her Ladyship had an idea. She offered a kilo of the finest meat in return for the use of the bits in between the cat's legs. The cat agreed.

The beautiful bride got the bit and the hungry cat got the meat. The king was delighted to see his bride in the wedding bed but as they were getting intimate, the cat turned up. She went to Her Ladyship and said, "I've eaten my meat, now give my thingy back. I want to go and have fun!" Her Ladyship tried to ignore the cat, but it kept on asking for its thingy back. The king got impatient and said, "What does this cat want?"

Her Ladyship answered, "She wants my thingy to go and have fun with." The king became angry, got out of bed, took his sword and with one move sliced the cat in half.

Well, my dear readers, they lived happily ever after and may you all do too.

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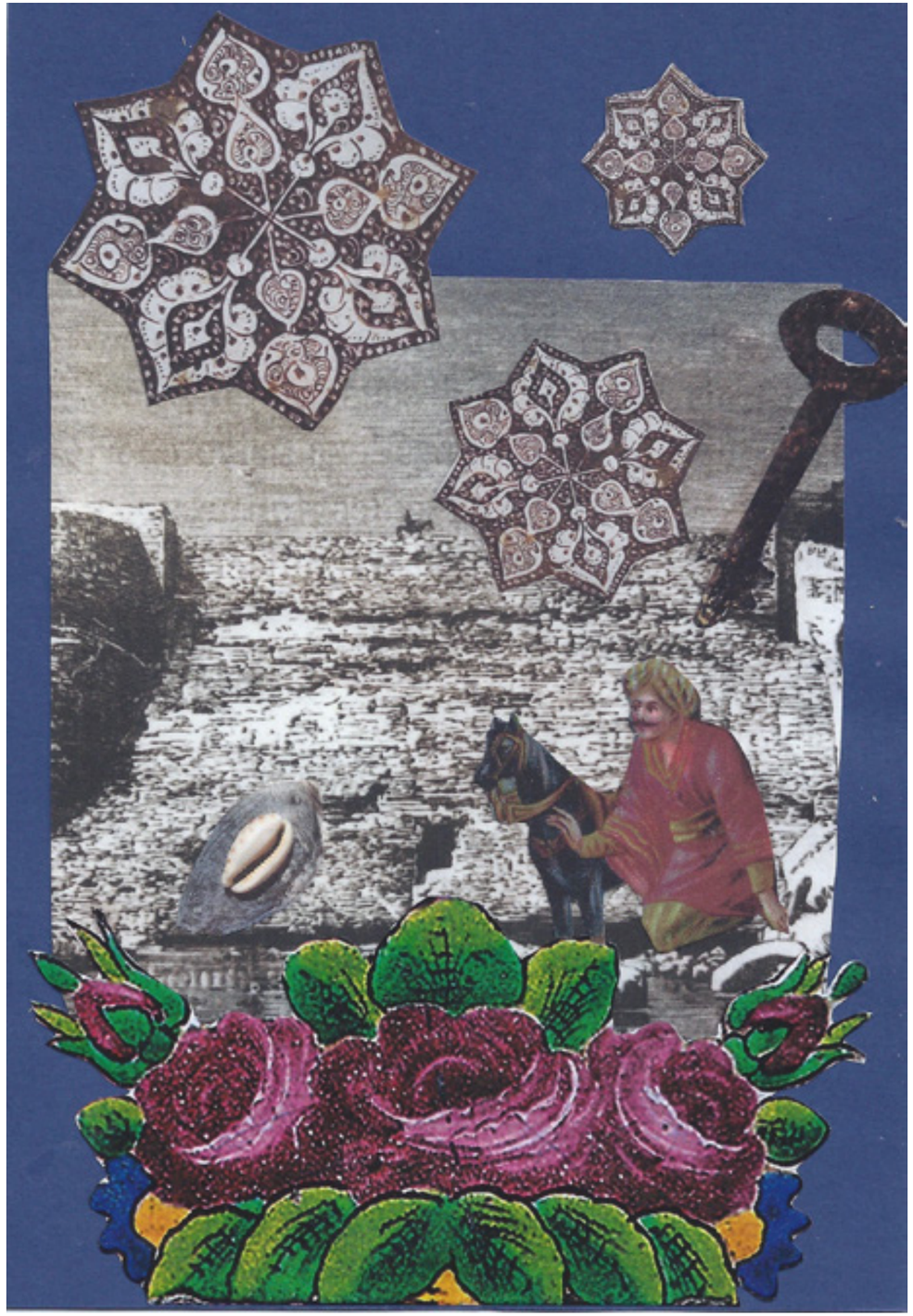
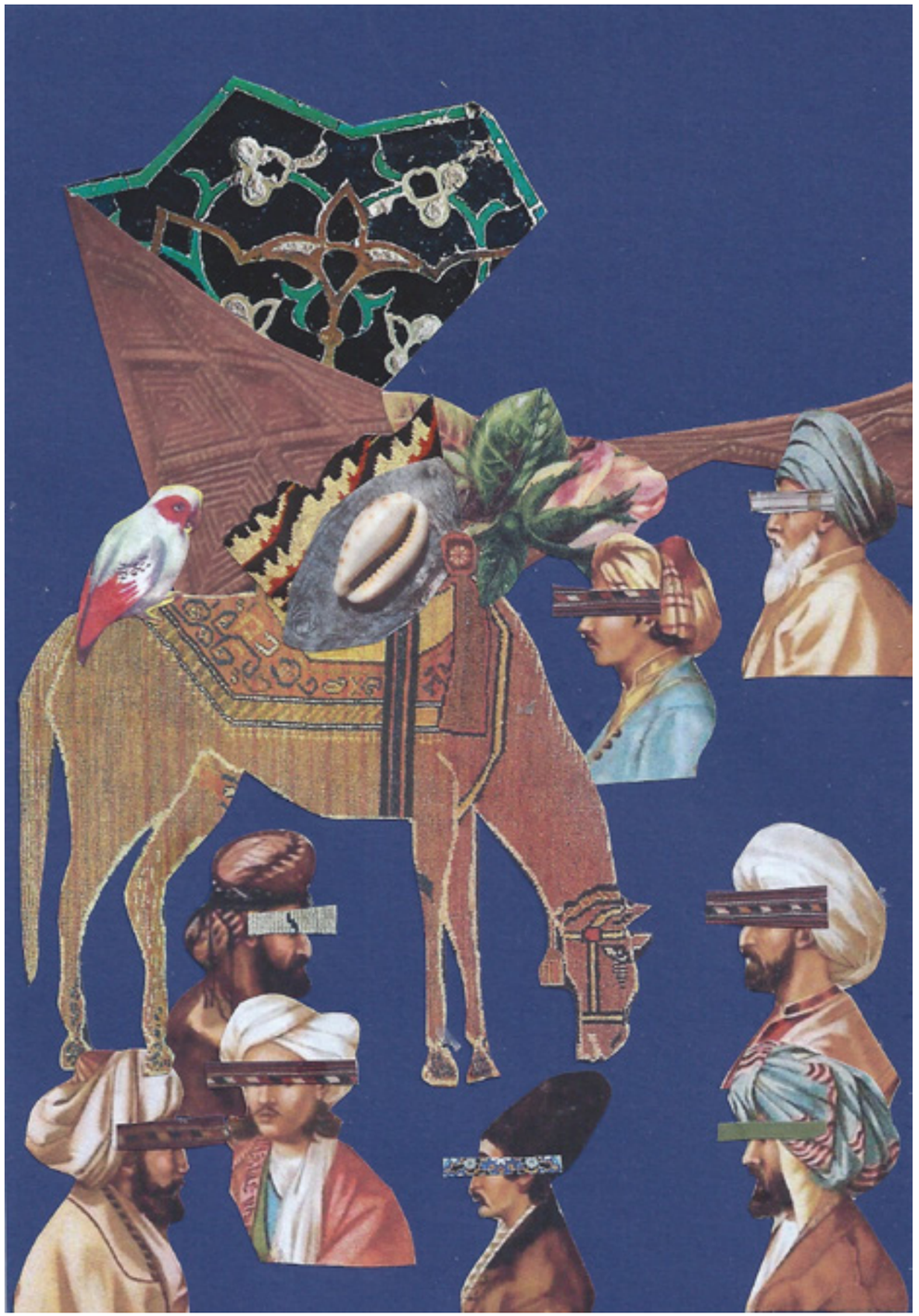
The Arrival of Her Ladyship (3/10), 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Her Ladyship Meets a Young Prince (3/10) , 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

Her Ladyship in the Golden Cage, (3/10), 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

The King Asks for Her Ladyship's Hand (3/10) , 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Her Ladyship Visits the Hammam (3/10) , 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

A Fairy Grants Her Ladyship A Wish (3/10), 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

Her Ladyship Makes a Pact With a Hungry Cat (3/10), 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

Her Ladyship has a Wedding (3/10), 2019, Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in