

My phone rang.

- Hello, cousin, HELLO
- What's wrong why are you crying?
- Oh Ali, my son Ezzedine!
- I can't hear you, the kids around me are screaming, what about him?
- The army shot him in his head. People told me that he is at Al-Shifa Hospital, in the operating room on the second floor. Please cousin, go check on him.
- OK, Calm down, don't worry, I will go and reassure you about him. When do you return from Egypt?
- Tomorrow morning.
- I can't hear you!!

A missile landed next to us and shook our house.

- I arrive at Rafah tomorrow morning
- Then I'll pick you up from the boarder
- Iman, take care of the children they are afraid. Take them in your arms and give them chocolates.
- Hello
- Hello Ali, my son Abdullah is dead.
- What Abdullah is a martyr.
- Abdullah, Ahmed and Mahmoud are all dead, and Ezzedine was hit with a bullet in his head.
- Oh God, I am coming to you, be strong, may God have mercy on you.
- Hello Ali
- Hello Fares
- Abdullah was martyred
- I'm coming to you
- Coming where? There is a lot of danger here cousin, and the distance is far, stay where you are. Just go and check on Ezzedine in the hospital. We are managing our situation here.
- Alright, alright!
- Iman give chocolates to the kids. Amjad, go to the bakery and bring a bundle of bread. May God protect you.

I go to the hospital to see Ezzidine.

- Is this the operating room?
- Yes, but no interference is permitted.

I saw two people entering the room so I followed them.

- Excuse me, doctor, do you have a wounded man called Ezzedine Yassin who was shot in the head?
- A bullet in his head?! Go and ask in the second building for major operations. Here are the less serious operations.

Less serious. I see half of the people here are cut. Oh God! I smell death everywhere. This is the first time I know that death has an odor. I go to the second building.

- Doctor please, tell me where I can ask about an injured person called Ezzedine Yassin, who was shot in the head.
- He was here, had an operation and now moved to another ward.
- Doctor, your face is full of blood spots, and your neck is too. You need to wash. He doesn't respond.

I go to another ward. What is this? All the patients here are alike, they all have gauze on their heads, chests, hands and feet. How can I know Ezzedine? Oh God, the stench of death has filled my nostrils. This is the first time I know that death has its stench.

The sound of explosions do not stop, but the silence here is more than the silence of the graves. Where can I look for you, Ezz? The best thing to do is to call my cousin Abu Abdullah, maybe he knows.

- Hello Abu Abdullah, listen, do you know where Ezz is? I got dizzy while looking for him in the hospital. Do you have any information about him?
- Yes, I know. He was in surgery ward and his condition is stable, they moved him to the men's ward on the second floor. Go and ask the nurse and she will show you to his room.
- Thank you, Abu Abdullah

I arrive finally to his room.

- Thank God for your safety, dear. We were worried about you and thought you were martyred.
- God bless you, uncle. My head is very strong the bullet could not penetrate it.
- Your mother is very afraid for you
- God protect us

I call his mother

- Hello cousin, I am by the side of your son. Ezz is fine, he still has a life
- Thank you cousin Let me talk to him
- Oh my love, I'm coming tomorrow I'll be with you and take you in my arms. Take care of yourself and thank God for your safety.

I leave Ezz at the hospital and head home. Oh God, the smell of death is everywhere in the city. I thought it is only at the hospital, but no death is everywhere.

Ali Abu Yassin

Gaza - Palestine

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