

MORE ABOUT ZOYÂ PIRZÂD'S BOOKS AT ZULMA

THE AUTHOR

Zoyâ Pirzâd was born in Abadan in 1952 of a Russian father and an Armenian mother. Married, mother of two sons, she first published three books of short stories including *Comme tous les après-midi*, in 1991 (Zulma, 2007). The three books were reprinted in one volume by Editions Markaz in Teheran. In 2001, she published a novel, *C'est moi qui éteins les lumières*, which was awarded several prizes and translated into German, Greek and Turkish. Then came a second novel, *On s'y fera*, in 2004 (Zulma, 2007). Three other books.

Zoyâ Pirzâd is also the translator of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Japanese poems. She is one of those Iranian authors who succeed in carrying Persian creation beyond its borders, offering it to the world. She writes in clear, everyday Persian, a harmonious language with natural equilibrium. Four of her books have been published by Editions Zulma.

ZOYÂ PIRZÂD'S BOOKS AT ZULMA

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Note: original language: Persian



> *C'EST MOI QUI ÉTEINS LES LUMIÈRES*
(I WILL GET THE LIGHTS)

May 2011, 352 pages

Original language: Farsi (Iran)
100 000 copies sold in Iran!

Written during the feminine wave of post-revolutionary Persian novels, *C'est moi qui éteins les lumières* is much more than a testimony on life in Iran in the 60's-70s. It is a writer's vision of a society where woman, paradoxically – has become the new player at the heart of social change.

A housewife devoted to her three children and a taciturn husband, Clarisse realizes what a failure her married life really is. Her routine is abruptly disturbed by the arrival of new neighbours: in the Armenian quarter of Abadan, this constitutes a minor revolution. Soon her children make friends with Emilie, the new arrival whose father, a young and still attractive widower, promptly awakens Clarisse from her inertia.

The introverted young woman soon feels the first stings of jealousy. Although she lives in a bourgeois and europeanised environment, Clarisse tries to maintain her family equilibrium by all possible means and will not allow herself to put a foot out of line. Caught in a trap, the narrator feels the need to express her feelings and brings us a narrative set in a seeming immobility which becomes more suffocating with each family upset.

In *C'est moi qui éteins les lumières*, Zoyâ Pirzâd brings us an almost intimate description of a woman's vision of her entourage and her condition, which she accepts; perhaps not with serenity but at least with a humility that has its own kind of spiritual grandeur.

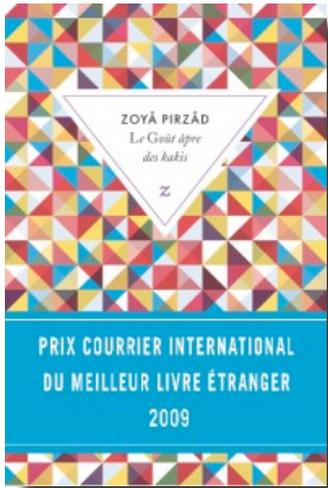
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> *LE GOÛT ÂPRE DES KAKIS*
(THE BITTER TASTE OF THE PERSIMMON)

May 2009, 224 pages

Short Stories

Original language: Farsi (Iran)

Prix Courrier international du meilleur livre étranger 2009

***Exploring the relations between men and women in Iranian society today,
this book of short stories nevertheless achieves a universal status
thanks to the exactness of tone and sensitivity of writing.***

An ornamental pool, rose bushes and a persimmon tree keep the old lady's gardener busy. Since the death of her husband, she feels alone and vulnerable in a big house in the centre of the town. The tree's flowers bring forth fruit, the persimmons become ripe and she enjoys giving them away, especially to her lodger. A subtle bond is created between them which is upset when a fiancée arrives. With the young couple, the old lady relives, one last time, the forgotten joys of her own marriage...

The lives of couples: there is also Ali and Leila, Manhaz and Faramarz, Sismine and Madjid, Morad and Taraneh, the characters of the five short stories that make up this book. Feminine needs for emancipation, masculine infidelities, from love at first sight to painful separations; Zoyâ Pirzâd explores the couple in Iran with lucidity, tenderness and a touch of nostalgia.

'A major author of contemporary Iranian literature, Zôya Pirzâd exports very well, as the many translations of her work show [...]. Apparently, [her success] is well deserved. Le Goût âpre des kakis provides supplementary proof.'

LE MONDE DES LIVRES

'By cunningly combining lightness and gravity, humour and intelligence of the heart, Zoyâ Pirzâd makes a case, in filigree, for the emancipation of women in Iran.'

ELLE

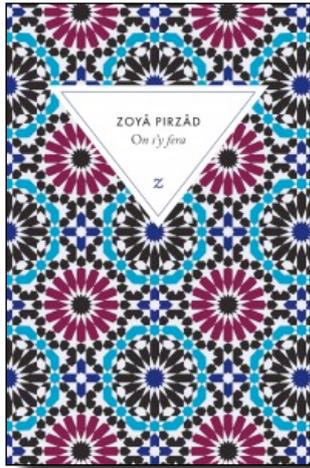
'The essence of her work flows either from indulgent and despairing malice, or the lightness of a watercolour. The elegance, too, with which she suggests the melancholy of passing time.'

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

RIGHTS SOLD IN:

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> *ON S'Y FERA*
(WE'LL GET USED TO IT)

August 2007, 332 pages

Original language: Farsi (Iran)

Zoyâ Pirzâd describes Iran's gradual evolution to modernity and the role played by women

Arezou is a divorcee in her forties, from a comfortably-off family. She has a teenage daughter and an extravagant mother. She manages a real estate agency which is doing well. She is actively wooed by the charming Zardjou, who, to Arezou's great disappointment, turns out to be no more than a seller of locks and bolts. Nothing very original so far. But Arezou lives in Iran.

Zoyâ Pirzâd could have made a rigorous report of the woman's lot in Iran; but she preferred to write a novel filled with the light and gaiety of a Bollywood movie. These women laugh a lot, argue a lot, do a lot of talking; but they never complain.

The description of Teheran as a boisterous and colourful city is subtle, tender, even sensual. *On s'y fera* portrays fascinating, funny and endearing women, Persian women who, like Jane Austen's characters, try to reconcile the tough reality of their universe with dreams of freedom and longing for change. Uncompromisingly, Zoyâ Pirzâd describes Iran's slow drift into modernity, and the role played by women in the evolution, light years away from European prejudices on the woman's condition in this country.

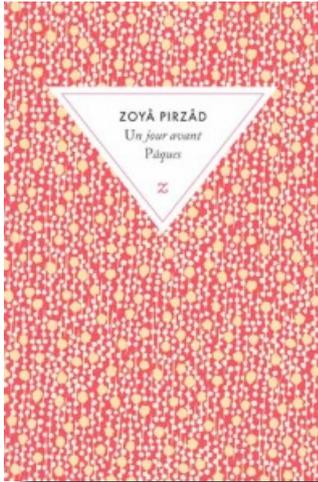
'On s'y fera is a brilliantly composed love story. Arezou advances like a tornado, sweeping aside all taboos. This poetic, elliptic novel, constructed in the great Iranian tradition, paints the portrait of a woman who is tough, nostalgic, tormented by doubt, the fear of growing old, seeing her daughter leave and losing the affections of a man who, after spending his whole life waiting for her, teaches her to love herself. A lesson in harmony.'

LE MONDE DES LIVRES

RIGHTS SOLD IN:

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> *UN JOUR AVANT PÂQUES*
(A DAY BEFORE EASTER)

August 2008, 144 pages

Original language: Farsi (Iran)

***In the form of love stories, a bitter-sweet journey
into the complex Armenian community in Iran...***

On the shore of the Caspian Sea, a young boy discovers the minuscule wonders of the universe, such as a visit from a ladybird or the joys and games of childhood with his friend Tahereh. He is Armenian. She is the daughter a Muslim caretaker at school. In the little Armenian community, Christians and Muslims rub shoulders at church, school or in the cemetery; men and women, their ancient frictions and spontaneous aspirations.

Easter is a time for decorated eggs, empty thoughts and cakes flavoured with orange blossom. To the narrator of this novel, it's also a time of vacillation between the present and the past, Teheran and his childhood village, the desire to live and love freely and his attachment to traditions and the Armenian community. Everyday life, evoked with the precious art of detail and great subtlety.

'This narrative is brimming with nostalgia; sensual, attentive to detail, as delicate as a Persian miniature.'

LIRE

'Zoyâ Pirzâd, in this sober, poetic story, reveals the essential beauty of life.'

ELLE

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> *COMME TOUS LES APRÈS-MIDI*
(LIKE EVERY OTHER AFTERNOON)

January 2007, 160 pages

Original language: Farsi (Iran)

These short stories, whose style recalls the haiku, evoke poetic snapshots of the everyday life of women in Iran. By the force of her writing, Zoyâ Pirzâd enters into the intimate lives of her female characters.

Zoyâ Pirzâd has chosen the short story to present women who, under the calm appearance and exoticism of their interiors, are engaged in a constant struggle with the reality of their existence. Like so many windows onto the world – a world so far yet so close to ours – Zoyâ Pirzâd paints scenes of daily life whose complexity is revealed through attentive observation. With light brushstrokes, she paints a discreet but audacious picture of woman's condition, even the political yoke that weighs down on Iranian society.

'A little gem of simplicity.'

LE FIGARO LITTÉRAIRE

'In a style of limpid simplicity that doesn't seek effects, Zoyâ Pirzâd touches the heart of an archaic feminine.'

LIVRES-HEBDO

'With her uncluttered style on the borderline of poetry, Zoyâ Pirzâd reaches into the depths of life while employing as few words as possible.'

ELLE

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