

Ali Shams and Rumi

In the evocative chapter of "Ali Shams and Rumi, Martyr!", we find Cyrus dreaming of his father, Ali, a man marked by the weight of his past experiences—wartime service, the sudden death of his wife, and years of grueling manual labor in a new country. In this dream, Ali sits casually outside a music venue, smoking a cigarette, a nod to the little sacrifices parents make that children often overlook. Accompanying him is the striking Rumi, clad in vibrant silk robes, who expresses excitement at meeting Ali.

Their conversation reveals an exchange rich with philosophical insights. Rumi emphasizes the importance of the small details over grand narratives—a contrast to their pasts filled with obligations. As smoke wafts around them, stars seem more vivid and close, mirroring their introspective dialogue. Ali expresses his reservations about smoking marijuana, yet recognizes Rumi's unique nature, allowing him some leeway in this chapter.

The conversation takes a deeper turn when Rumi asks Ali to share something real, leading Ali to reveal his feelings of betrayal from his late wife, Roya. Ali recounts unsettling moments during her pregnancy, hinting at emotional unavailability and secrets that plague him. Rumi reacts empathetically, acknowledging the weight of Ali's confession.

As the two discuss the concept of fate and the burdens they face, Rumi underscores the literary potential in Cyrus, referring to the boy as someone who might craft an impactful narrative out of sorrow and struggle. Their time together blooms richly in a setting marked by youthful exuberance and the throbbing rhythm of music from the venue.

As Rumi prepares to take the stage, the atmosphere shifts. Upon his arrival, a remarkable silence blankets the hall, transforming energy into expectation. Rumi, radiating brilliance, begins to chant, prompting the audience to join him in a powerful chorus that culminates in a surreal spectacle. The imagery of Rumi's head igniting in flames reverberates through the crowd as they chant repetitively, blending the ethereal with the real, embodying themes of sacrifice and transcendence .