



## STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

### MIJA (ENGLISH) – 302: Giddo Marzouk

[0:05]

Hi, I'm Mija, or Binty, in Arabic. And this podcast is about my family - those alive, those long gone, and those still dreaming.

Now, this is what you need to know about Giddo Marzouk: First, "Giddo" means "Grandfather", and he LOVES telling stories,

[0:26]

He can sew and patch up ANYTHING,

He's an attentive dad,

And he's always there to help you out.

[0:33]

Marzouk is my grandfather, Mona's dad.

So, here goes - 10 minutes to tell his story.

[0:54]

To observe the insides of the ancient Egyptian pyramids is a gift.

A blessing.

Every person in the world should be able to do it at least once in their lives.

[1:06]

Marzouk does it for the first time when he's nine years old.

Marzouk and his dad travel from Alexandria to Cairo just for one night to see these marvels.

It's the 1930s, a time when people could climb the pyramids if they wanted to.

[1:23]

(Yes, literally)

But let's get back to Marzouk, who is inside one of them.

Because what he sees there...well, it stays with him forever.

[1:36]

The statue of the Egyptian god Horus with its giant falcon head!

[1:43]

And beside it, he puts his little fingers over the carved shape of an eye.

"The Eye Of Horus", says the tour guide. "It gives protection anywhere it is found."

[1:55]

Marzouk runs his hands along the other images carved in the stone

They leave him stunned.

Hieroglyphics.

[2:06]

The writing system of the Ancient Egyptians.

It is over 5000 years old!

Every hieroglyph is an image that represents an object or an idea.

[2:22]

They end the tour and at the exit,

Marzouk gets on his knees

and BEGS his dad to go to another pyramid

But they can't.

[2:33]

They have to go back to Alexandria the following morning.

On the way home, little Marzouk thinks obsessively about the world he witnessed inside the pyramid.

[2:53]

He starts drawing, at night, in his bedroom.

He dreams himself in Ancient Egypt.

Like a pharaoh, Marzouk plans battles to defend his land...

communicates with the gods...

[3:05]

And has tea with Tutankhamon, the young pharaoh who passed when he was only 19 years old...

One night not long after that, he has an idea:

[3:20]

He takes one of his father's galabiyas and starts to draw his vision of ancient Egyptian fashion and art...

(A galabiya, by the way, is a long tunic men use in Egypt.)

He draws and draws... until his father comes home and finds him.

[3:28]

Marzouk is flustered. He snaps back to reality and realizes he just drew on his father's clothes.

With tears in his eyes,

he tries to explain.

[3:49]

But his father is really excited.

He scoops little Marzouk up in his arms and says:

"Ya salaam ya Marzouk. Enta fanan."

"Wow Marzouk, you're an artist.

[4:02]

But let me teach you something that *will* help you in life."

So he starts teaching his son how to sew.

Turns out, Marzouk also has great talent for sewing and he loves it.

[4:20]

By the time he's 18, Marzouk is known  
for his hieroglyphic designs on galabiyas.

Women from all over Alexandria stop by his home atelier.

[4:32]

He measures them, and creates magic.

Marzouk sells his creations with his father.

Sometimes, even foreigners would buy some of his designs.

[4:43]

They would *Ooh* and *Ahh* and speak in languages he didn't understand.

One day, when he's 20, his father asks him to get a special fabric at a store a few kilometres outside of the city centre.

[4:57]

Marzouk opens the door, goes in, and finds himself in paradise.

But not because of the store and its beautiful fabrics, but because of a woman.

A tall woman, with beautiful large round eyes. Eyes that automatically made him hear romantic Abdelhalim music in his mind.

[5:23]

In his head, everything happens really quickly.

Marzouk imagines her in a golden dress, sewn by him.

She's a queen,

[5:34]

And he feels like a pharaoh. Together they build an entire world of their own.

Suddenly, the woman approaches Marzouk...

And snaps him out of it.

"Good afternoon, sir"

[6:01]

She is Nubian, from Aswan. That day they get to know each other. She is shy and her name is Arbab. He asks around about her and learns she's Bint el giran, a neighbor's daughter. So Marzouk's dream soon comes true. They get married right away.

[6:47]

Both families - hers from Aswan and his from Alexandria - join. They build their world together, just like he dreamed. They move to a small house above the shop owned by Arbab's father. And there, Arbab gives birth to two daughters: Mona and Ne3ma.

[7:05]

This is when Marzouk finds a third passion besides sewing and Ancient Egypt - being a dad.

He loves spending every evening telling his daughters wonderful stories about Ancient Egypt.

[7:22]

About pharaohs, battles between gods, about how women could own their own businesses, be priestesses, doctors, have their own lands... Marzouk wants his daughters to be like these grand women of Ancient Egypt. That's why as soon as he has the chance, he enrolls young Mona at school.

[7:44]

Mona gets married after Na3ma, and Marzouk and Arbab find themselves at home again, alone, with each other. But they still live near their daughters,

[7:54]

Until.... Mona gets a job offer at the British Museum  
and decides to leave home for good.

[8:02]

Every time his neighbors ask about Mona and England,  
he insists that he rejects the choice she made.  
He can't believe she's going off to the land of their colonizer.

[8:14]

They took their Rosetta Stone, after all!  
Though the ideal scenario is that she stays in Egypt, close to her community and her family,  
In his heart, Marzouk secretly supports Mona's choice to honor her family

[8:29]

And celebrate Egyptian culture abroad.  
"Ana fakhoor biky", he says to Mona behind closed doors.  
Which means "I'm very proud of you."

[8:43]

The day before Mona moves to London, Marzouk gives her a stone with a big eye engraved on it. It's the Eye Of Horus, to protect Mona wherever she is, especially in the West!

[9:01].

So when Mona moves to London with Abdou, Marzouk visits them frequently, He wants to make sure she doesn't get washed up into British culture. When he visits, he compels Abdou to keep the tradition of taking their shoes off before going inside, and reminds Mona to pray.

[9:31]

He brings incense and fills their London flat with the Quranic verses and Oum Kulsum, the superstar singer of the Arab speaking world. On many nights, Marzouk would make himself black tea, *shay aswad*. He would sit in the living room with his two grandchildren, Omar and me, Binty. And he would tell us stories like the one you heard in El Beit.

[9:59]

Before going back to Egypt, Marzouk promises his grandchildren that he'll keep telling them stories on the phone.

[10:06]

In those calls, he realizes Omar enjoys his stories but that he also has stories on his own to tell.

About hip hop. As for me, I understood why Mona loved grandpa's tales so much.

[10:19]

They're empowering stories of ancient Egyptian women being so dope!

As years go by, Marzouk starts to spend his days between his workshop and the telephone.

He spends time sewing gifts for me and Omar

[10:34]



Galabiyas for him

And scarves for me.

One for each

Year of my life.

[10:40]

When I turned 18, I had 18 scarves from Marzouk!

Each with a hieroglyphic message on it.

And... Despite the distance between us,

[10:50]

Marzouk taught us to be brave,

And to never forget who we are,

No matter where we go.

**FINAL DEL EPISODIO**