



Source: Barry Rubin, Project Syndicate, 'Kadima may still win Israel election', *The Australian online*, 09/01/06.

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Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, a land that exists only in the minds of those who imagine, there lived a woman who wandered the earth, a woman who was half content, half in search of the truth, the essence of life. She would stop, every so often, and talk to this person and that person, the tall man, the short woman, the intelligent child, the cruel despot, the generous-hearted soul, the fresh-faced adolescent, each was a messenger, giving her at least one important fact. She stored these facts inside a green hat that she wore upon her head. It was a bowler type hat except it had a wide brim that flopped up and down as she walked the streets, the dirt paths, the cobbled lanes in search of something akin to enlightenment, or was it really a search for meaning, she wasn't sure, but she knew that she had to walk, that there was no other way to reach her goal, whatever that goal was. For you see, she did not really know.

Every night, wherever she happened to be, she would stop walking, find a comfortable spot to lie down for the night and spread leaves around her to keep warm. Lying on her back she would look at the starry night sky, or the cloudy night sky, if that's what it happened to be, and let her mind fly away wherever it wanted to go.

The woman continued this solitary wandering, this journey, for many years, years that flew like wild birds escaping the winter, like a delirious snow storm, like hot blood pouring out of a wound...

One day, she stepped on a thorn on the path and fell over in agony. A tall young man had been walking nearby and, hearing her scream of pain he rushed to the woman, knelt down and gently removed the large thorn from her foot, then tenderly rubbed the gaping wound. The woman looked up at the young man. He reminded her of someone she had once known, someone who had meant something to her, who had been gentle but afraid of the shadows that moved in the night.

They walked together for many months after that day, talking and enjoying each other's company. They shared with each other many interesting facts that they each had discovered along their travels, and the sharing made each of them happy. But all things eventually must come to an end, and so it was that the woman and the young man reached a fork in the road; in one direction was the woman's path, the continuation of what she was still to discover, while the other path was for the young man to follow. The woman looked up at the young man, and smiled, although she did not really feel like smiling for she knew that she would miss his company. The young man smiled in return, turned away and began walking to where he needed to be. The woman stood watching him until he was a speck on the horizon. She was surprised to find herself whispering, 'turn around and look at me before you disappear forever. If you look at me, then I know that you truly care, that we will meet again'. She was also surprised to find that while her heart was beating at double time, her breath had slowed almost to a standstill as she waited...waited...and waited...but the young man did not turn around, he continued to walk over the curve of the horizon until he was gone.

The woman sat down on the warm earth, removed her hat and leaned against the trunk of a strong straight gum tree. She sat there silently gripping the grass blades with her fingers. She felt too tired to continue her journey, so she rested under that strong straight gum tree and as she slept the generous tree covered her with fresh gum leaves and kept her warm, kept her safe, gave her time to find strength again.

The green hat lay beside the woman's sleeping body when a playful breeze came along and swirled a typhoon inside the hat, scattering all the facts that had so carefully been stored inside into the night sky.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Helen Boettcher.*