



Translating Al-Fuzai's 'An Increase in Worry'

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ABSTRACT

In 'An Increase in Worry'¹, Khalil I. Al-Fuzai² presents and tackles a social problem; violating a wife's rights as seen by the local society. By translating and introducing this story to the English readers, I will introduce the Arabian author of this story. Also using translation is used here as a device of communicating with those who have no access to the original text.

Keywords: Al-Fuzai, Saudi, An Increase in Worry, short story.

Introduction

When a man violates his wife's social rights, the nameless hero of this story is adamant about getting even. As a result, he waits in ambush for that guy, assaults him later, and does not sleep at night because he expects something worse to happen. Later, he finds his opponent still alive. Apparently, he experiences a psychological moment that he mentally lives and plans, but nothing happens. Usually, in the Middle Eastern societies, the man is the protector of his relative women, and this fact causes him to pass through such an internal conflict³.

Translation

An Increase in Worry

He returns late in that winter evening. His body is shivering... he can hear the beats of his heart... nausea overwhelms him violently. He's never been so thirsty as he is right now. His tongue is like a piece of pottery... he tries to call his wife, but he finds out that he has lost his voice. He comes to a halt in the house's lobby... in order to maintain his composure. He recovers his calm... slowly goes up the stairs with caution... and quietly opens the door. In the quiet, he sees her sleeping and goes under the cover with her. He does not put his arm under her head as he used to do every night... lest she hears the beats of his heart and wakes up. If she does, he will have to then relate the minute details of that horrible night.

Peace spreads across the room, and gradually tranquillity makes its way into his heart. He feels more secure while lying beside her... dark light hardly allows seeing things, yet her angel face is surrounded with a halo of bright light... that sends assurance to him while she is sleeping. As is the case while she is awake, when he resorts to her... escaping his worries... naps in her lap, she tickles his head hair with her fingers and addresses him using loving words. He becomes sorry that they spent a long time before they got married... twenty years they lived a beautiful and wonderful love story. After their marriage, their love becomes more wonderful and beautiful. "Love alone works wonders... days alone repair injuries... dreams alone allow for short distances of longing and nostalgic times, and when wishes come true... memories still remain memories, full of fragrance from the past brings perfumes to the present and the future," he used to tell over and over.

He tries to forget the events of last night, but they insist on his mind... and nothing saves him from their atrocity except for lying beside her... receiving from her presence with his energy to conquer the fear that begins to leave him, replaced with peace of mind that gives him a chance to remember what took place with a clear mind that is not disturbed with fear which controlled him a few minutes ago.

One day she complained about her male colleague's annoyance at work... a volcano of anger exploded inside him... satans of humans and demons got involved. And he decided to take revenge on this idiot who is known for his bad name because of his play and recklessness, and who had lessons with some people, but he did not benefit from those lessons. And it is time to have a lesson that he will remember as long as he lives. And he did not tell her what he decided to do.

He kept track of his movements and knew when he'd return from the soiree. On this night he hides for him near his house. When he approaches the door of the house, he attacks him from behind. And with all the anger he has, he takes his neck in his arm... the other tries to shout, but he locks his mouth with his hand. He tries to resist but in vain... the resistance continues... the pressure on the mouth and the neck continue. The smallness of the other body aids him... he continues to press on the neck and the mouth... in a fit of anger, he does not realize what he is

¹ 'An Increase in Worry': this piece of writing was translated from the Arabic source: Al-Fuzai, Khalil. *A Moment of Collapse and Other Stories*. لحظة انهيار و قصص أخرى Tabouk (Saudi Arabia): Tabouk Literary Club, 2000: 7-15.

² Khalil I. Al-Fuzai (1940-) is an author from Saudi Arabia. He incorporated his culture in his writings, discussing many social, educational, and religious problems that he encountered in his society.

³ This introduction may assist readers in comprehending the context.

doing. He intends only to punish him... slap of the truth returns to him, something of his conscience; he sees the other man fall down like a lifeless corpse...

He looks at her again... he wants to cling to her, but he worries lest she feels his status... it is enough for him to contemplate her lips about which he said at their wedding party whispering what the daring Arabian poet said:

Who said this red cut could be a mouth?

It is, after all, a red rose made of flesh and blood.

She gave a shy smile at the time.

This beloved satisfies him, becoming more beautiful and shining... the most beautiful, the joy of his inclination in the nights of gloomy despair. The early dawn approaching to assassinate distances... dream of the past, the present, and the future. The rashness of longing, the thoughtlessness of hopes, and the whim of possibility change into a type of passion and a course of pleasant wishes... and the distraction of the heart and the wish of the self... she is a woman, yet she is not like other women.

She moves restlessly in her sleep... runs her hand over the pillow as if she were searching for his arm. He extends his arm to put her head on... he moves toward her until her head is about to touch his chest. He is afraid she may awaken because of the violent beats of his heart... this is one of the habits she insists on as she insists on his beautiful appearance when he leaves home. Before her, no one was concerned about him. She wants to hear continuously the words of love, and she becomes annoyed more than anything else when she sees him engaged in watching TV because she does not want this machine to busy him even for a few hours... this time may make up for the days he spends away when he travels to his city that doesn't sleep. She accepts all with pleasure... it is a way of expressing love for him... why not accept so thankfully? When she talks, springs of passion burst out... her voice is full of beautiful dreams of the evenings that they spent on the shores of her silence-infected city.

She occasionally rides the crest of a rise and a challenge. All locked doors leading to stubbornness open before her... so prairie flowers with colocynt and skies become pregnant with storms and thunder. Yet the rebellious monster inside her does not stay long before yielding without giving in its mutiny and stubbornness. And when the cloud of anger clears, prairies become grass-covered... wormwood, and lavender... and skies get incomparable perfume, and life wears the most beautiful and pleasant jewels.

And because he loves her, he is ready to do anything to protect her from the reasons of worry. When she smiles, he feels as if the entire universe smiles for him; when she is sad, all bright colours fade from his vision, and he only sees the dark sides of everything. That night, he does not sleep.

She notes the paleness of his face and the lack of thinking in the morning. "What's up with you today... you seem strange and worried?" she inquires.

He stutters... his response is ambiguous, so she inquires, "What did you say?"

"I said, 'I am fine.'"

"But you don't look so."

He makes a dumb grin on his mouth, which makes her even more worried. "You look pale and absent-minded! Why?" she exclaims.

"There is no particular reason for this."

He skims through the morning newspaper. He does not find any news... he tries more than once to tell her about what happened... each time he changes his mind at the last moment... repeats the trial and takes it back. Finally, he decides to fold this secret between his wings for a while and sooner or later will come... that day when he will admit to her what happened.

After he drives her to work in the gloomy morning, he sees the other man get down from his car, alive and healthy, so one thousand and one questions jump to his mind.

September 23, 1995.

Conclusion

After reading this story, English readers will get a glimpse of Al-Fuzai as a writer belonging to a different culture. In the Arabic culture, males take the responsibility of protecting their relative females as depicted in this story. In addition, this piece of writing may lead readers to seek more similar writings to explore the Saudi Culture; a lot of translated texts might be traced through the web.

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