



Analysis of the translation of some Arabic stories and folktales
selected from *Throne of the Crescent Moon* by *Saladin Ahmed*

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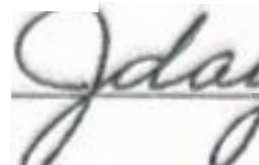
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Perception of Women in Society in Hadriya Al-Bahr' find and the authors

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Abstract

This research aims to shed the light on the process and the issues of translating “*Throne of the Crescent Moon*” by Saladin Ahmed. The book was published back in 2012. The story sets in a fantasy world that is based on the Arab culture. The characters’ names, the mythology, and even the religion of that world is all inspired by the medieval Arabia and the stories of One Thousand and One Nights. The characters want to save their world from the evil forces of ‘ghuls.’ However, this is not the only thing that is threatening their world. There is also a war between the Khalif and a thief known as the Falcon Prince. The main characters are a doctor, a dervish, and a Badawi girl. This book was chosen because of the world building and the interest of translating a book written by an Arab-American. The issues the translator faced are lexical, phonological, grammatical and structural. The translator used communicative approach. The strategy that was used to solve these problems is domestication. This study would help translation students in their researches.

Keywords: *Translation issues, communicative approach, translation approaches, communicative translation, translation strategies.*

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Dedication

I dedicate my research work to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My sisters and brothers have never left my side and are very special.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgment	2
Dedication	2
Chapter I: Introduction	5
Chapter II: Literature Review	6
Translation Definition	6
Communicative Translation	7
Domestication	8
Domestication and Foreignization	8
Equivalence	9
Conclusion	11
Chapter III: Methodology	12
Chapter IV: Discussion	13
Introduction	13
Lexical Issues	13
Phonological Issues	15
Grammatical Issues	16
Structural Issues	18
Conclusion	19
Chapter V: Results	20
Chapter VI: Conclusion	21
Bibliography	22
Appendices	24
Throne of the Crescent Moon	25

Chapter I: Introduction

Translation is an important tool to introduce different cultures' literatures to other cultures. It is a way of communicating. The book that this research has choose to translate is "*Throne of Crescent Moon*". It is a novel by Saladin Ahmed, an Arab-American writer. It was written in 2012. Ahmed has written many comic issues, but "*Throne of Crescent Moon*" is his first novel, and he has not written one since it. The story sets in a world that is based on Arabian culture. It is inspired by it and by its literature. It tells a story of a fictional world where jinns, ghouls, and other supernatural creatures are threatening that world. However, they are not the only threat. The Khalif and a thief are fighting each other. The language of this book is literary. It has a lot of figures of speech like similes and metaphor, which is difficult to translate.

The approach that was used in translating is communicative. To render the meaning of the ST and produce a text that has the same meaning as it. There were lexical, phonological, grammatical, and structural issues faced while translating the book. There are many strategies that were used to solve translation issues. However, this research aims to spotlight on domestication. Before developing translation studies, domestication has always been a strategy in translating. Some books through the history has been domesticated to the TT readers' culture. Domestication is seen as dangerous strategy by some translation scholars. They believe that it kills the beauty of the ST. Domestication is chosen because the translator wants to produce a text that the TT readers can relate to. In addition to that, this book already has elements that the TT readers can relate to. She also wants to show that domestication is not as bad as some translators think. Domestication can also be used in communicative translation because it presents a text that affect the TT readers as much as the ST affects its readers.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Translation Definition

Translation is transferring of the meaning from one language to another. Hasan Ghazala (1995) defined it in his book '*Translation as Problems and Solutions*' (p.1) that "translation generally refers to all the processes and methods used to render and/or transfer the meaning of the source language into the target language as closely, completely, and accurately as possible." He also says that we do not translate words, grammar, style, nor sounds. We translate only *meaning*. He says that meaning is a network of language components comprised of syntax, vocabulary, style, and phonology. He suggests that we only translate what is related to the meaning, and we drop out what is not necessary to translate.

However, sometimes the style of the text is important as well. If the author intended to make the text ambiguous, the translator has to render an ambiguous style in his translation. Even the grammar of the text, if the author used the past tense the translator has to render the same tense in the target text (TT). Although, the meaning is the most important aspect. The translator has to produce a text that has the same meaning as the source text (ST).

Peter Newmark (1988) defined translation in his book '*A Textbook of Translation*' (p.5) as "Often, though not by any means always, it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Common sense tells us that this ought to be simple, as one ought to be able to say something as well in one language as in another." He sees it as complicated, artificial and fraudulent because the translator pretends to be someone else, by transferring that person's words into the other language. Newmark (1988) believes that a good

translator is never satisfied with his translation. He also thinks that there is no correct or perfect translation (p.5).

Translation is a complicated art. The translator writes someone else's words into another language and transfer it to another culture. He or she might not agree with the ST author, but he or she have to produce a TT that has the same meaning as the ST. Even if the meaning is something they strongly disagree on. Revising one's translation is an important step in translation. The translator may not know his or her mistakes, but if he or she read his or her translation he or she may find his or her mistakes. He or she should make someone else reads his or her translation because sometimes the person does not see his or her mistakes.

Communicative Translation

Communicative translation is one of the translation approaches developed by Peter Newmark. In it, the translator has to attempt to render the meaning of the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). He or she has to produce a text that affects the readers in the same way the ST affects its readers (Newmark, 1981, p.39). The purpose of it is to deliver the meaning of the SL in a sense that is acceptable and understandable to the TL readers. The translator has to produce a text that transfers foreign elements into the readers' culture as well as their language (Newmark, 1981, p.39). However, the translator has also to respect the SL.

Naturalness is necessary in communicative translation (Newmark, 1988, p.26). Newmark (1988) states that the translator has to detach himself or herself in order to achieve naturalness (p.26). He says it is difficult to achieve it if the TL is not a language that the translator uses often. When the translator uses this approach, he or she has to produce a text that feels like it was written in the TL. He or she has to ask himself or herself, if a text like this in the TL can be found in

newspapers, books, and children's stories. Naturalness is defined as the natural usage consist of a variety of idioms, styles or registers determined mainly by the setting of the text (Newmark, 1988, p.26).

Domestication

Domestication is a strategy in translation studies. It is defined as a type of translation where the elements of SL culture are changed to adapt the TL culture (Paloposki, 2011, p.40). Domestication has always been a strategy in translation. However the term was coined by Venuti in 1995 in his book '*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*'. Some translators believe that domestication is dangerous, like J.M Cohen, he says in his book '*English translators and translations*' (1962) that domestication reduces the ST author's style (p.35). Munday states in his book '*introducing translation studies: Theories and applications.*' (2016) that Venuti does not think highly of domestication either (p.225). He sees it as a dominating English translation culture (2016, p.225).

Domestication and Foreignization

Domestication and foreignization are two different strategies that lead to different results in translation. They both existed since history, but the two terms are coined and developed by Venuti in 1995 in his book '*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*'. Yang (2010) states that domestication and foreignization are two principal strategies in translation, which give linguistic and cultural guidance (p.79). Domestication aims to make the TT similar to its readers' culture. On the other hand, foreignization aims to bring the ST culture to the TT readers. Foreignization carries the ST and develops a translation strategy along lines which are not dominated by the cultural values in the TT (Munday, 2016, p.225-226). Munday (2016) quotes Venuti and states that foreignization is the closest adherence to the ST structure and syntax (p.226).

Domestication produces a text which a clear, fluent style is adopted to reduce the oddity of the ST for the TL readers, however foreignization produces a TT which has the same elements as the ST, to give the TT readers a similar oddity of the ST (Yang, 2010, p.79). Obeidat and Mahadi (2019) quote Schleiermacher, in which he states that the translator has two ways of translating, he or she either has to be faithful to the ST author, leaves him or her in peace, and moves the TT readers towards the author, or the translator leaves the TT readers in peace, and moves the ST author to them.

Equivalence

In translation, equivalence is the corresponding word or phrase in the TT to the ST. Nida (1964) believes that two languages cannot be identical, either in the meanings or in the ways in which words are arranged in phrases and sentences, there is no absolute corresponding with them. Therefore, an exact translation does not exist. He says in his book *'The Theory and Practice of Translation'* the translator has to achieve equivalence in the TT rather than having an identical text to the ST (Nida, 1982, p.12). Equivalence has two types: formal and dynamic equivalences (Nida, 1964, p.5). According to him (1964) formal equivalence is an aspect in translation. It focuses on the message in its form and content (p.3). Its content is related to the ST than the TT (Nida, 1964, p.5). It tries to produce a TT which remains as close as possible to the ST and to not change the ST author's ideas (Shakernia, 2013, p.2). In other words, it is a word-for-word translation. While dynamic equivalence is divided as an aspect in translation, which aims at a complete naturalness of expression and trying to deliver a message to the TT readers that has a relevant concept to their culture (Nida, 1964, p.3). Shakernia (2013) says dynamic equivalence involves "the thought not only the words" (p.2). In other words, the ST is translated sense-for-sense. Venuti (2012) says a translation which has dynamic equivalence aims to have an absolute naturalness of expression

(p.129). It also tries to relate the TT readers to a relevant context of his or her own culture (Venuti, 2012, p. 129).

On the other hand, Mona Baker (1992) divided equivalence into six types. The first type of equivalence Baker (1992) developed is at the word level (p.15). She says that the equivalence at the word level is when the translator cannot find a word that expresses the meaning like in the ST (1992, p.15). The second type of equivalence is above word level. This type is about collocation, idioms, and fixed expressions (Baker, 1992, p.51). The third type in Baker's equivalence is grammatical equivalence. It deals with the grammar of the SL and the TL (Baker, 1992, p.93). The fourth type of equivalences is textual equivalence. It is about the word order of a text and structure (Baker, 1992, p.131). Textual equivalence is divided into two types: thematic or information structures and cohesion (Baker, 1992, p.132). Thematic and information structures deal with the clause (Baker, 1992, p.133). In a thematic structure, the clause consists of two things; a theme which is what the clause about, and a rheme which is what the speaker says about the theme (Baker, 1992, p.133). While according to Baker (1992) cohesion is "the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of the text" (p.190). The last type of equivalences is pragmatic. According to her, pragmatic is the study of using language (Baker, 1992, 230). Pragmatic has several types, but Baker discusses only two, which are coherence and implicature. Coherence deals with the relations that create and organise a text (Baker, 1992, 230). While implicature means to know what the speaker intends to say or to imply rather than what he or she says (Baker, 1992, 235).

Conclusion

The aim of reading scholars' definitions in different translation studies is to know what we are doing. This literature review is to summarize what translation scholars have said in their studies about these different methods, strategies, and opinions about equivalence. Translation is known as transferring the meaning and producing a TT that has what the ST author said, but in another language and to another culture. The purpose of this study is to apply communicative translation on translating '*Throne of the Crescent Moon*' by Saladin Ahmed. The communicative approach has been chosen because we want to produce a text that affects the TT readers as much as the ST has affected its readers. However, it is not the only focus. This research aims to present a text that is domesticated to the TL readers, in another words it mainly focuses on domestication as a strategy in translating. We chose domestication as a strategy rather than foreignization due to the world building of the novel and to come up with a text that is familiar to the TT readers' culture.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this paper. There are three types of research methodologies: qualitative, quantitative and a combined method. A qualitative research deals with the meanings, concepts, definitions, and characteristics. While quantitative deals with the numbers, data, mathematical and statistics. A combined or mixed method deals with both qualitative and quantitative. This research is a qualitative because it aims to spot the issues and challenges that were faced while translating “*Throne of the Crescent Moon*” by Saladin Ahmed. It also shows how the translator solves these issues by applying communicative translation and using domestication strategy. The purpose of using the communicative translation and domestication as a strategy is to produce a text that the TT readers would feel that it is similar to their language and their culture. As it is known, communicative translation is one of Newmark’s translation approaches. The translator has to try to provide the meaning of the ST to the TT. He or she has to produce a text that affects the TT readers as much as the ST affects its readers. On the other hand, domestication is a strategy that has always been a part of translation as it opposite foreignization. Domestication aims to change elements in ST to be accepted in TT. It domesticates the ST to produce the TT. This paper will show how the translator applied domestication to solve the issues she faced.

Chapter IV: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the issues the translator faced while translating “*Throne of the Crescent Moon*”, and it also explains how the translator solved these issues. The issues were divided into four categories based on their types. These types are lexical, phonological, grammatical, and structural. Each issue contains from five to three examples. The strategy that was used to solve them was domestication.

Lexical Issues

According to Baker (1995) a lexical issue is any issue that the translator faces on the word level (p.9). A lexical issue has to do with the words. Some English phrases would not sound natural in Arabic if it was translated literally. For example, “God’s peace”. One of the characters in the story greets the other character with this phrase. If it was translated literally it would be “سلام الرب” or “سلام الإله” which would not sound a natural Arabic. The aim of this study is to produce a text that is domesticated. Therefore the example was translated into a phrase or a greeting that many Arabs use daily, particularly “السلام عليكم”.

ST	TT
God’s peace	السلام عليكم

Describing an expression, the characters have done is another issue that was faced. This issue is a lexical as well. The expression “sucked her teeth” to show that the character was angry was difficult to translate. Sucking teeth means to draw air into the mouth to produce a sound that shows that the person is annoyed or angry, in other words it is to make the sound “tch”. This expression

has no equivalence in Arabic. In addition to that, if it was translated literally it would be “امتصت أسنانها” and that would be weird in the TL. The expression was replaced with “تنهدت” to show that she was angry and to have a domesticated TT.

ST	TT
sucked her teeth	تنهدت

Another problem that the translator faced while translating is the phrase “Holy man”. A holy man is a person who lives his life for religion. It has a lot of synonyms. It can be translated as “رجل مقدس”, “رجل تقي”, “رجل الدين”, “ولي”, or “الولي الصالح”. The equivalence that was used is “الولي الصالح”. It is familiar to the TT readers, and also it is similar to the context. “رجل تقي”, “رجل مقدس” and “رجل الدين” are more religiously and stronger than “الولي الصالح”. They also mean saint more than a person who practice religion and he is a religious.

ST	TT
Holy man	الولي الصالح

There are countless ways to write anger in Arabic. In the ST it says “Zamia felt anger flare”. This could be translated as “شعرت زينة بالغضب يشتعل”. However, a better way to say that is “تضرمت زينة غضبًا”. It shows that she is really angry, and she felt that there was a fire inside her.

ST	TT
Zamia felt anger flare	تضرمت زينة غضبًا

Phonological Issues

Phonological issue is any issue that deals with sounds. For example, when we transliterate a word that has /p/ in it to Arabic it would be changed into a /b/, in which it lost something. Most of the names in this book are based on Arabic names. Anyhow, the author changed the sound of these names slightly. Since this translation aims to come up with a text that is domesticated to the TL, these names were changed to fit the TL. One of the phonological issues that was faced is the word “bas”. In this chapter, “bas” was explained as “the old way to say ‘only’”. Before this explanation, the translator was planning to translate it as “باس”. However, ‘bas’ is a reference to the informal Arabic language that means “only”. Therefore, “bas” was translated as “بس”.

ST	TT
Raseed <u>bas</u> Raseed	رشيد <u>بس</u> رشيد

As it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, most of these names are based on Arabic names but they went through some changes. One of these is the name of the character “Zamia”. Zamia is not an Arabic name, but there are some names that are similar to it, such as “زين” or “زينة”. The name “زينة” was chosen because it is closer to “Zamia”.

ST	TT
Zamia	زينة

Another phonological issue that the translator faced is the name “Mahloud”. There is no such name as Mahloud in Arabic. Although it can be replaced with another name to domesticate the TT. Mahloud was replaced with “محمود”. The /h/ sound was replaced with a /h/ sound. In addition to that, the /l/ sound was replaced with /m/ sound.

ST	TT
Mahloud	محمود

The last phonological issue that will be discussed in this chapter is the name “Adoulla Makhslood”.

A similar name to Adoulla in Arabic is “عبدالله”, which is significant because the character mentions that he was a servant of God. The sound /a/ was replaced with /ʕ/. Furthermore, the sound /b/ was added. As for his last name, it was kept as it is, but the /kh/ sound was changed to /x/ sound.

ST	TT
Adoulla Makhslood	عبدالله مخسلود

Grammatical Issues

A grammar, according to Baker (1995), is any set of rules in a language that explains the way the words and phrases are combined in a language (p.82). Of course, every language has its own grammar. English and Arabic are two different languages from two different families, English is a Germanic language, while Arabic is a Semitic language. A lot of grammatical issues were faced while translating, but only four are mentioned here. In order to make this text domesticated as much as possible, a lot of words were omitted. For example, in the ST it says “she found herself moved by them (words)”. The phrase “found herself” would be translated as “وجدت نفسها”, yet this phrase is not commonly used in Arabic in this context. Hence, it was translated as “تأثرت بها”.

ST	TT
Yet she found herself moved by them, and intrigued by their stern-faced speaker	لكنها تأثرت بها وفتنت بصاحبها ذو الوجه الصارم

Unlike English, Arabic assigns gender to inanimate objects and abstract. Therefore, some of the grammatical issues were gender. For example, “virtue is my son”. In English, virtue does not have a gender, thus ‘son’ can be used. However, in Arabic ‘العفة’ is a feminine. If the sentence was literally translated it would be ‘العفة هي ابني’ which results an unnatural sentence. In consequence, it was changed into ‘daughter’ to have a domesticated TT.

ST	TT
virtue is my <u>son</u>	والعفة هي ابنتي

As the previous example, Arabic is a language that assigns gender to inanimate objects and abstract nouns. One of these issues was with the words “King” and “Cities”. In English, “Cities” does not have a gender. Nevertheless, Arabic does. In Arabic, both “city” or “مدينة” and “cities” or “مدن” are feminine. On that account, we cannot use the word “ملك” in the TT, so it was changed to “ملكة” collocate with “مدن”.

ST	TT
King of Cities	ملكة المدن

Assigning gender to inanimate objects and abstract nouns is not the only difference between the two languages. In English, a sentence has to have a verb. Hence, helping verbs exist in it. However, Arabic does not have to have helping verbs, so they are omitted in translating. For example, “That is how many people are in the city before you” the verb ‘is’ is important English, if we did not have it the sentence would be a fragment sentence. However, we do not have to render the exact verb in Arabic. A literal translation would be “هذا هو عدد الناس في المدينة أمامك”, some words are not

that important and so is 'هو'. For that reason, the previous example was translated as “هذا عدد سكان المدينة التي أمامك”.

ST	TT
That <u>is</u> how many people are in the city before you.	هذا عدد سكان المدينة التي أمامك.

Structural Issues

A structural issue is any issue that deals with the structure of the sentence. As it was mentioned before, English and Arabic are different languages from different language families. Thus, they have different structure. An example given is in “They were mad words, Zamia knew.” In English, the structure of a sentence is “subject-verb-object”, but in Arabic it is usually better to use “verb-subject-object”. Therefore, instead of translating it “تلك كانت كلمات مجنونة، زينة علمت”, it was translated as “علمت زينة أنه يتفوه بالترهات”.

ST	TT
They were mad words, Zamia knew.	علمت زينة أنه يتفوه بالترهات

One of the issues that was faced while translating is the use of italic to emphasize something. In Arabic, it is better to not use italic in typing due to its weirdness look in Arabic. Hence, it should be replaced with something that can be used in the language. The translator used bold in Arabic to emphasize the words. For instance, “if it *had* a center”. If we used the same style it would be “إذا كان **لديه** مركز” but as it discussed before, the translator chose to use bold. Thus, it was produced as “إذا كان **لديه** مركز”.

ST	TT
if it <i>had</i> a center	إذا كان لديه مركز

Dialogues in English are written differently in Arabic. In it, the verb has to be in the beginning and after that we use a colon. As an illustration, “And *I* hate your calling me ‘girl,’ Doctor” it was not mentioned who said that, but in Arabic the verb of saying and the person were added to clarify who said it.

ST	TT
“And <i>I</i> hate your calling me ‘girl,’ Doctor.”	ردت زينة: "وأنا أكره عندما تناديني 'فتاة' يا طبيب."

Conclusion

Nothing is easy, everything has its difficulty. However, we have to face and overcome these challenges. While translating, the translator has to face some issues, but he or she has to solve these issues. Finding the right equivalence will take time. This chapter discusses these issues and how the translator overcome them. They were lexical, phonological, grammatical and structural issues. The translator tried to find the right way to solve these issues and used domestication as a strategy to solve them.

Chapter V: Results

This chapter aims at presenting the results of chapter four, discussion chapter, that deals with the issues the translator has faced. This study shows how the translator overcomes and solves the issues she has come upon. The problems that she has faced are lexical, phonological, grammatical and structural problems. She has used domestication as a procedure to fathom these issues. The table below shows the type of issue, the method that was used, and the result.

Issue	Method	Result
Lexical	Domestication	Found equivalences to the lexical issues in the TL to present a text that is acceptable to TL.
Phonological	Domestication	Changed the names to Arabic names.
Grammatical	Domestication	Changed subject gender in Arabic to fit its adjective. Came up with a natural text.
Structural	Domestication	The structure of some sentences was changed to fit the TL. The translator changed the structure of the dialogues. Italics were replaced with bold.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Translation is the process of converting the meaning of the SL into the TL and to produce an effective text. Translators should not translate word-for-word. They should translate sense-for-sense. This research aims to spotlight on domestication as a strategy. Domestication is defined as a type of translation where the text elements are changed to adapt the TL culture. The translator also used the communicative approach. Communicative translation is to produce a TT that affects its readers like the ST affects them. The issues that the translator faced during translating are lexical, phonological, grammatical, and structural issues. The translator solved these issues by using domestication to provide a text that is relatable to the readers.

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Appendices

Throne of the Crescent Moon

Saladin Ahmed

عرش الهلال

صلاح الدين أحمد

Chapter 6

ZAMIA BANU LAITH BADAWI stretched and flexed her muscles by the light of the still rising sun. She sipped from her waterskin, pulled on her gazelle-hide boots, and packed her bedroll. Just as her thoughts went to last night's battle and to her new allies, she caught the approaching scent of the dervish Raseed. A half moment later, the lithe little holy man peeled himself from the shadows of a rock not ten feet away. She felt a flash of shame—no man or animal had ever gotten so close to her without her scenting them before! The last traces of the ghul pack's corrupt stench had blown away on the night wind, and she was better rested than she had been the night before. She had no excuse! But when she did get a clear scent on the dervish she was shocked out of her self-scolding.

Ministering Angels help me! She had never been in the presence of a scent that was so strong, yet so clean. Zamia found her shame deepening, but for new reasons. It was all she could do to keep from staring at the pure-smelling, clean-shaven little man in blue. She made a small, surprised noise.

“God's peace,” the holy man said by way of greeting, his angular face unreadable.

“God's peace,” Zamia repeated. The morning air felt warm and thick in her lungs.

الفصل السادس

مددت زينة بنت بني ليث البدوي عضلاتها في ضوء الشمس المشرقة. ثم ارتشفت الماء من الوعاء، وارتدت حذائها المصنوع من جلد الغزال، وحزمت كيس النوم. ثم بدأت تفكر في قتال البارحة وفي حلفائها الجدد. اشتمت رائحة الدرويش رشيد وهو قادم من مقربة، وفي غمضة عين، أظهر الولي الصالح النحيل نفسه من ظلال صخرة تبعد عنها عشرة أقدام. أحست بشيء من الخزي – لم يسبق لرجل أو لحيوان أن يقترب منها لهذا الحد من غير أن تشعر به! ذهبت رائحة الغيلان من الليلة السابقة في مهب الريح وكانت هي قد نالت قسط من الراحة بما يكفي لتتجدد حاسة الشم لديها فلم يكن لديها أي عذر بأن لا تشعر بقدومه من مسافة طويلة! لذلك عندما اشتمت رائحة قوية من الدرويش صُدمت ولامت نفسها.

ساعديني أيتها الملائكة!

لم يسبق لها أن اشتمت رائحة قوية جدًا ونقية كهذه. أحست زينة بأن خجلها يزداد، لكن لأسبابٍ جديدة هذه المرة. أصدرت صوتًا منخفضًا بشكل مفاجئ، لأنه كان الشيء الوحيد الذي سيمنعها من التحديق في الشاب الأملط ذو الرداء الأزرق صاحب الرائحة الزكية.

حياها الولي الصالح قائلًا: "السلام عليكم". وملامح وجهه الحاد تخلو من التعبير.

- و عليكم السلام.

تنفست بصعوبة.

“I apologize if I startled you,” the dervish said flatly. “We are packing up and will leave soon now.”

She snorted. “You didn’t startle me. And, as you can see, I am ready to leave already.”

The dervish bowed his turbaned head. “Of course.” Even standing at ease here, he had an air of war about him. Zamia would have known that the little man could fight even had she not seen his handiwork against the ghuls the night before. The dervish’s confident grace as he moved, the hardness in his tilted eyes, the way his hand rested naturally on his sword-hilt—these were signs her father had taught her to recognize in an enemy or an ally.

Though she could not say why, Zamia found herself recalling the taunts that two of the boys in her band had made—never to her face—about her rough, ugly looks. They had been jealous of her power and renown, no doubt, but.... It had never mattered to her before whether their insults were rooted in truth.

The dervish was staring at her.

She scowled at the little man. “What is it?”

A tiny lizard darted across the rocky ground between them. Raseed eyed it for a moment but looked directly at her when he spoke. “I have been wondering about something, Zamia Banu Laith Badawi. From what the Doctor has told me, it is not your people’s way to seek help

- أعتذر إذا أخفكتك، نحن نحزم أمتعتنا وسنغادر قريبًا.

نخرت زينة من باب السخرية وقالت: "لم تخفني. وكما ترى

أنا مستعدة للرحيل أيضًا."

حتى الدرويش ذو العمامة رأسه وقال: "طبعًا."

رغم سكون مظهره إلا أنه كان يوحى بأهبتة للحرب. كانت ستعلم زينة أن هذا الشاب مقاتل حتى وإن لم تراه يقاتل الليلة الماضية ضد الغيلان. ثقته واضحة من مشيته، وعزمه ظاهرٌ في عينيه، طريقته سلسلة في إحكام قبضته على السيف - كلها إشارات علمها إياها والدها لتمييز حليفها من عدوها.

وفجأة تذكرت زينة صبيين من جماعتها كانوا يتحدثون من وراء ظهرها عن مظهرها القبيح. لم تعرف لماذا تذكرت ذلك ولكن ما تعرفه أنهما كانا يغاران من قوتها وشهرتها، رغم أنها لم تكثرث إن كانت شتائمهم حقيقة متأصلة.

حدق الدرويش فيها.

عبست وجهها وقالت: "ما الخطب؟"

في هذه الأثناء زحفت سحلية صغيرة حول الأرض الصخرية بينهم، نظر رشيد إليها للحظة ثم وجّه نظره مباشرة إلى زينة وقال: "كنت أتساءل عن شيء يا زينة بنت بنو ليث البدوي.

حسبما أخبرني الطبيب، ليس من عادات جماعتك أن تطلب مساعدة خارجية. وأعلم أنك فقدتي جماعتك فلماذا لم تطلبي المساعدة من الجماعات الأخرى في قبيلتك؟ كنتِ لمسة لملاك أم لا، أنت صغيرة لكي تكون بمفردك."

from the outside. I know that you have lost your band, but why have you not sought out the help of the other bands in your tribe? Angel touched or no, you are young to be on your own so.”

“Young! I am five and ten! How much older are you, little man? Two years at most?” Zamia sucked her teeth in annoyance. *But he is straightforward, at least, not like the Doctor with all of his words and smiles.* The dervish held her eyes with his, and something powerful moved through her body.

“At our last tribal council my father’s band was water -shunned by the other bands of the tribe,” she said finally. “Because of me. Because he dared to name a girlchild Protector of the Band. And now—” she laughed bitterly, despite herself—“now I can’t even avenge my band, for no Badawi will answer my rally. And so I have failed as Protector.” Zamia finally stopped herself, not quite believing she had just spoken those words. *Why are you telling this stranger about this? Because his scent is clean? Because you will fight beside him? The tribe’s business is the tribe’s, the band’s business is the band’s!*

The dervish scratched beneath his blue turban. “But you—”

“We will speak no more of this,” she said firmly. “What of you, Raseed bas Raseed?”

-صغيرة! أنا في الخامسة عشر! كم عمرك أيها الشاب الصغير؟ سنتين؟

تنهدت منزعة.

لكن على الأقل هو صريح، ليس كالطبيب بكلماته اللبقة وابتساماته.

نظر الدرويش مباشرةً في عينيها وأحست بشيئا ما قوي يتحرك في جسدها.

-في آخر مجلس للقبيلة، تجنبت باقي الجماعات جماعة أبي، بسببي، لأنه تجرأ أن يلقب فتاة صغيرة بـ ‘حامية القبيلة’. والآن-

ضحكت بألم رغماً عنها وأكملت: "والآن لن أستطيع أن انتقم لجماعتي، لأنه لن يستجيب لي أي بدوي. وبهذا فشلت في كوني حامية."

توقفت زينة عن الحديث، ولم تصدق أنها أفصحت له بالأمر. لماذا تخبرين غريباً عن الموضوع؟ هل بسبب رائحته الطاهرة؟ هل بسبب أنك ستقاتلين بجانبه؟ أمور القبيلة خاصة بالقبيلة، أمور القبيلة خاصة بالقبيلة!

حك الدرويش رأسه وقال: "ولكن أنت-"

- لن نخوض في هذا الموضوع أكثر، ماذا عنك، رشيد بس رشيد؟ أين هم أقرباؤك؟ لماذا ليس لديك اسم عائلة؟

كانت نبرة الاستخفاف في صوتها واضحة: "لا أقارب؟ لا جماعة؟ لا قبيلة؟"

Where is your kin? Why have you no family name?" She found that she could not quite keep the scorn from her voice. "No kin? No band? No tribe?" Her stomach clenched as she realized that the same could now be said about her.

The dervish sighed and then recited what seemed familiar words with a quiet intensity. "My name is Raseed bas Raseed—the old way of saying 'Raseed, only Raseed.' I am a dervish of the Order. I need no father among men, I need no brother among men, I need no son among men." He drew up to his full height, which somehow seemed taller now. "God is my father, the forked swords of the Order are my brothers, virtue is my son."

They were mad words, Zamia knew—for what was a person without family? Yet she found herself moved by them, and intrigued by their stern-faced speaker. Again shame crept up within her, wearing the bloody bodies of her kin. She had no right to be looking at a man so. She was the Protector of the Band, and she had failed. All that was left was giving up her life for vengeance. The road of wife and mother was not hers to walk.

But what if—God forgive her for daring to think it—what if she lived? She was the last of the Banu Laith Badawi and she bore the burden of keeping her band from dying out. She would

أحست بألم في معدتها عندما أدركت أن هذا ينطبق عليها أيضًا الآن.

تتهد الدرويش وسرد كلمات تبدو مألوقة بحدّة هادئة.
- اسمي رشيد بس رشيد - الطريقة القديمة في قول 'رشيد،
وقف رشيد.' وأنا درويش من المُنصّفين. لست بحاجة إلى أب
بين البشر، ولا أحتاج إلى أخ بين البشر، ولا ابنة بين البشر.
استقام في وقفته وبدأ أكثر طولًا وواصل حديثه: "الرب هو
أبي، وسيف المُنصّفين المفقور هو أخي، والعفة هي ابنتي."
علمت زينة أنه يتفوه بالترهات - أي شخص لا يملك عائلة؟
لكنها تأثرت بها وفُتنت بصاحبها ذي الوجه الصارم. أحست
مجددًا بالخزي يتشكل لها على شكل هيئة جثث جماعتها. لم
يكن لديها أي حق في أن تنظر إلى رجل، فقد كانت هي حامية
الجماعة، وفشلت في واجبها. وكل ما تبقى هو أن تتخلى عن
الحياة من أجل الانتقام. فمن غير المقدر لها أن تكون زوجة
وأما.

ولكن ماذا لو - وليغفر لها الرب لتجرئها للتفكير بهذا - ماذا
لو عاشت حياتها؟ فهي آخر بنو ليث البدوي وتحمل عبء
استمرار نسل جماعتها. فعليها أن تتزوج وأن تنجب أطفالًا
لتستمر جماعتها...

اختفت أفكار زينة المحيرة والمخزية عندما شعرت بقدوم
الطبيب. بعد ثانية رأت رداءه الأبيض الواسع تحت صخرة
مرتفعة.

need to marry and bear children for that to happen....

The confusing, shameful thoughts fled as Zamia scented the Doctor's approach. A moment later she saw his big, white-clad bulk trundling under the rock overhang.

"All -Merciful God, is the holy man spitting pious sayings at you already?" he asked. "The sun is barely up! Don't misunderstand me—his laconic little jewels are all inspiring enough the first couple of times you hear them. But after that they start to sound a bit pompous."

Raseed made a small, unhappy noise in his throat. "Doctor. Please." He sounded like a bullied boy.

The ghul hunter waved a conciliatory hand, and when he spoke Zamia heard annoyance and affection dance in his voice. "Oh, to be sure, Raseed is most useful to have around. The boy can cross a room in the space of a breath and—God is my witness!—I've even seen him kill a *Cyklop!*"

A *Cyklop? Truly?* Zamia's desert-bound people knew little of the one-eyed giants of the mountains, but she had heard tales of their legendary strength. She risked a brief, impressed glance at Raseed. The dervish stood stock still, saying nothing.

The Doctor went on. "But, you see, Raseed thinks he is 'wise beyond his years.' I will tell

-الرحمة، هل بدأ الولي الصلاح يثرثر بأمر الدين فوراً؟! بالكاد أشرقت الشمس! لا تسيئ فهمي، موعظته المختصرة تلهمك في بداية الأمر وبعدها يتبين أنه مبالغٌ بها.

أصدر رشيد صوتاً خفيفاً يعبر عن استيائه وقال: "أرجوك يا طبيب." وبدا كأنه طفلٌ متمتر عليه.

لوح الطبيب صياد الغيلان بيده، سمعت زينة مزيج من المودة والضجر في صوته عندما قال: "من المؤكد أن وجود رشيد بالجوار يجدي نفعاً. فالفتى سريعٌ للغاية، يستطيع أن يعبر غرفة في لمح البصر و- وأقسم! - رأيتُه يقتل سايكلوب من قبل!"

سايكلوب؟ بحق؟

عرف البدو القليل عن عمالقة الجبال ذات العين الواحدة، ولكنها سمعت قصصاً عن قوتهم الأسطورية. استرقت النظر بدهشة إلى رشيد. وقف الدرويش بهدوء، ولم يقل شيئاً.

وواصل الطبيب حديثه: "الكن، كما ترين، رشيد يظن أن حكيمته تفوق عمره. سأخبرك يا فتاة: لا يمكن أن تفوق حكمتك عمرك. فالشخص يتعلم بمقدار معيشتة، لكن بالطبع يمكن أن تتعلم علماً في وقتٍ قصير. فالفتى تعهد مُنصف في سن صغيرة وشهد حياة درويشية صعبة. وهو أكثر جدية من الشباب في سنه، فكم واحدٍ منهم تعلم كسر الصخور بقبضة قبل تعلم الحلاقة؟ لكن حقيقة أن كاسر الصخور شابٌ صغير سيكون بحال أفضل لو تذكرها دومًا."

you this, girl: There is no such thing as being wise beyond your years. One can only know as much as one has lived to know, though it is certainly possible to learn a great deal less than this. The boy entered the Order at a young age and has had a hard dervish's life. He is more serious than most young men his age. How many of them, after all, learned to split rocks with their fists before they learned to shave? But rock-splitter or no, he is a young man who would do well to remember that fact more often."

Fifty different feelings filled her. She kept her eyes on the ground and said, "We should be going." Seeming to speak to no one in particular, the dervish said quietly, "I am a young man, but as there is an elder amongst our number, one of us at least ought to act in a proper manner." Zamia looked up and saw a tiny smile on the dervish's pretty, birdlike face. Then he walked away, heading for the mules.

Clearly such retorts were rare, for the old man just stood there for a moment blinking in shocked silence, watching the dervish walk away. The ghul hunter turned to Zamia and let out a laugh that shook his broad shoulders and big gut. "Ha! 'One of us ought to!' Hee hee! 'Dignified and proper!'" He shouted at Raseed's back, "Indeed, boy, indeed! And since it clearly isn't going to be me, it might as

غمرتها مشاعر مختلفة. لم تتشبح بعيناها من على الأرض وقالت: "يجب أن نذهب."

قال الدرويش بهدوء وكأنه يخاطب نفسه: "أنا شاب صغير، ولكن هناك شيخٌ بيننا ووجب أن نتسم بالأخلاق على الأقل." رأت زينة ابتسامة خفيفة تعلو وجه الدرويش الجميل ذو الملامح الحادة. وبعدها مشى بعيداً متوجّهاً نحو البغال. من الواضح أنه غير معتاد أن يتحدث بهذه الطريقة مع الطبيب، فقد تجمد الرجل العجوز في مكانه ورمش بصدمة ولم ينبس بكلمة. ثم التفت صائد الغيلان إلى زينة وضحك بقهقهة.

- ها! 'وجب' ههه ههه! 'جليل ويتسم بالأخلاق!'
صرخ على رشيد وأكمل: "صحيح يا فتى، صحيح! ومن الواضح أنه ليس أنا، من الممكن أن يكون أنت أيضاً!"
ورفع حاجبيه الكثيفين الرماديين وغمز لزينة قائلاً: "إنه يكره عندما أناديه 'فتى'."

-ردت زينة: "وأنا أكره عندما تناديني 'فتاة' يا طبيب."
نخر الرجل العجوز بسخرية وقال: "هراء. سأناديك مثلما أناديه - أناديكما أطفال كما يحلو لي! وأنا كبير كفايةً لأكون بعمر عمك الأكبر."

تضرمت زينة غضباً والتفتا ليتبعوا رشيد.
-قال عمي الأكبر قبل أن يموت أنني حامية الجماعة.

well be you!” The Doctor waggled his bushy grey eyebrows and gave Zamia a conspiratorial wink. “He hates it that I call him ‘boy,’ you know.”

“And I hate your calling me ‘girl,’” Doctor.

The old man gave an offended sniff. “Bah. I’ll tell you like I tell him—I call you youngsters as I like! I am, after all, old enough to be your granduncle, my dear.”

Zamia felt anger flare inside her as they turned to follow Raseed. “Before he died, my grand-uncle called me Protector of the Band.” Her mind’s eye conjured an image of her gnarled gray grand-uncle Mahloud, whose age had not diminished his skill at water-finding. The ghuls had killed him, too.

Again the memories hit her like a hammer blow to the stomach. Why could she not shut them out? She could not sit here and make herself sick with this mourning every few hours. Vengeance would never come from such weakness.

The old man said something, apparently repeating himself. The third time, Zamia actually heard him. “Are you all right, Zamia?”

She growled, low and long. She shoved weakness to the side. “I am fine, Doctor. Why are we standing here chattering? Were we not about to depart?”

بدأت تتخيل عمها محمود ذو الشيب والبشرة المجعدة، لم يقلل عمره من مهاراته في إيجاد الماء. وقُتل بسبب الغيلان هو أيضاً.

تذكّر لها الأمر مرة أخرى كان مؤلماً للغاية. لماذا لا يمكنها إيقاف الذكريات؟ لا يمكنها أن تبقى هنا وترهق نفسها كل ساعة بهذا الرثاء. فلن يأتي الانتقام أبداً من ضعفٍ كهذا.

قال الرجل العجوز شيئاً، وكرر كلماته عدة مرات. سمعته زينة في ثالث مرة.

- هل أنت بخير زينة؟

تذمرت بصوت منخفض وأخفت ضعفها.

- أنا بخير يا أيها الطبيب. لما نحن واقفان هنا نثرثر؟ ألسنا مغادرين؟

تتهجد الرجل العجوز تنهيدة تعب وظل ساكناً. نظرت إليه زينة بتمعّن. فقد رأته يدمر ثلاثة من المخلوقات المريعة اللاتي ذبحن أشرس المحاربين في جماعتها بسهولة تامة. علمت أنه يمتلك قوة عظيمة. ولكن عندما نظرت إليه كان يبدو رجلاً

كبيراً في السن وسميئاً يتعرق بكثرة على الرغم أن الشمس بالكاد أشرقت، ولم تجد أيّ من الإشارات التي علمها إيها والدها لتعرف بها المحارب. بصراحة تامة، علمت زينة أنها

لم تكن لتستطيع أن تذبح ذلك العملاق الضخم إن لمن يكن تركيزه على الطبيب. ولكن لما بدا الطبيب ضعيفاً للغاية؟ كان مصفر الوجه وبدا وكأنه مستعدّ للموت ولا يهتم ما إذا قتل أعداءه. كون صائد غيلان في صفها سيزيد من فرصتها

The old man sighed a tired sigh and fell quiet. Zamia looked at him more closely. She had watched as he destroyed three of the foul creatures which had so easily slain the fierce warriors of her band. She knew that he wielded great power. But as she looked at him now, a fat old man sweating heavily though the sun was hardly up, she saw none of the sorts of signs her father had taught her to watch for in a warrior. Being honest with herself, she knew she would not have been able to slay that massive ghul had its attention not been focused on the Doctor. But why had he seemed so helpless? Whistling and looking like he was half ready to die without caring whether he took his enemies with him. Having a ghul hunter on her side would improve her chances for revenge—she was not fool enough to think she needed no allies. But this old man....

And then there was the dervish. The Badawi were not as coy as villagers about the truths of man and woman. Though Zamia was Protector of the Band, the older women had taught her, the same as they had the other girls, of the things she had to look forward to. The things she would feel when she looked at a man, and the things she would do when wed. When she looked at Raseed, though, what she felt was confusion. The dervish was a powerful ally but

للانتقام – فهي لم تكن حمقاء لتظن أنها لا تحتاج إلى حلفاء...
ولكن هذا الرجل العجوز...

وهناك أيضًا الدرويش، لم تكن جماعتها يخجلون من حقيقة أن الرجل والمرأة سيان مثل سكان القرى. وعلى الرغم من أن زينة كانت حامية الجماعة، فقد علمتها مسنات القبيلة أمور تخص المرأة مثل باقي الفتيات. أشياء مثل ما تشعر به عندما تنظر إلى رجل وما تفعله عند الزواج. ولكن عندما تنظر إلى رشيد، ما تشعر به هو الحيرة. كان الدرويش حليفاً قوياً ولكنه يسبب لها التشتت وتضارب مشاعرها سبب لها الدوار.

في فترة الصباح، شقو طريقهم في طريقٍ وعرة، كانت تتوسّع وتصبح سوية كلما قطعوا مسافة أكبر. عرض الدرويش عليها بغله. رفضت أن تركب عليه، وإفترضت أنه لم يكن يقصد الإساءة، فكيف له أن يعلم أن قبيلة البدوي لا يمتطوا إلا خيلاً أصيلاً؟ كان المشي على هذه الطريق مشابهاً لامتطاء خيل أصلاً.

مشت زينة خطوتين خلف حلفائها الجدد، تحاول أن تتدرب على المشي على الأرض الوعرة وتحاول أيضاً ألا تفكر بسلبية. مشى الجمع الصغير بصمت، اشتاقت زينة إلى دعابات الطبيب التافهة. فكانت تلك الدعابات أفضل إلهاء لها من ذكرياتها المؤلمة.

سافروا لساعات، تبادل الرجل العجوز ورشيد أطراف الحديث من وقتٍ إلى آخر، وتجاهلتها زينة تماماً عندما كانت تُمنع النظر في السكينة بجيبها. لم تستخدمها من قبل، طبعاً،

a distraction. Her mind spun with contradictions.

Over the course of the morning they made their way along a road of packed dirt that grew broader and smoother the farther they went. The dervish offered her his mule. He meant no insult, she supposed. How could he know that a Badawi would ride nothing but a pureblood horse? Walking on a road was compromise enough.

Zamia walked two steps behind her new allies, trying to train her feet to the hard earth of the road. And trying to keep her troubled mind from spinning. The little party walked in silence, and Zamia found herself almost missing the Doctor's inane, griping banter. Better than being alone with the painful pictures in her head.

They traveled for hours, the old man and Raseed occasionally exchanging a few words. Zamia largely ignored them as she dwelled on the knife in her pocket. She would never wield it herself, of course, but in a strange way it had become the most important thing on God's great earth.

It was just afternoon when a strong wind-shift brought Zamia out of her grim thoughts. They were coming upon a large mass of men's scents. A few minutes later the road—already the broadest Zamia had ever seen—passed

ولكنها أصبحت بطريقة غريبة أهم شيءٍ لديها على وجه الأرض.

كان وقت الظهر عندما أوقفت الرياح القوية متغيرة الوجهة زينة عن التفكير بأمور كئيبة. فهم مقبلون على روائح مجموعة كبيرة من الناس. وبعد عدة دقائق، انقضى الطريق - أوسع طريقٍ رأته زينة - عند حجرتين ضخمتين ليتلاقى بطريقٍ أوسع بضعفين. وكأنهم خطو نحو عاصفة رملية من الناس. حاولت زينة أن تنظر في كل مكانٍ في آن واحد، فروائح التهديد من عشرات الغرباء المختلفين كانت تعتدي عليها. وكان الشيء الوحيد القادرة على فعله هو ألا تتحول إلى أسد.

ما مشكلتك؟ هل تصرفت بهذه الطريقة عندما أتت قافلة التجار لتقابل الجماعة؟

كانت بلا توجيهات والدها ، ولكن لم يكن ذلك سبباً. ركزي. فلا يمكنك أن تدعري في كل مرة يمر فيها مجموعة من الناس.

سُحب ثلاثتهم في الزحام ولكن شق طابور المسافرين السريع طريقه إلى دهامسوات. رأَت زينة الطريق يمتد لمسافة طويلة بخطٍ مستقيم ثم ارتفع إلى كثيب هلالى مليء بالشجيرات، وغطت الشجيرات الكثبان بشكلٍ كبير تقريباً بعد أن كانت متفرقة، مما يعني أنهم يقتربون من الماء. رائع، حذرت زينة ذلك من ازدياد اللونين الأخضر والبني.

نهر النمر، لا بد أنه قريب.

between two large rocks to join another road, twice as wide. And it was as if they had stepped into a sandstorm of people. Zamia tried to look everywhere at once, the threatening scents of a dozen different strangers assaulting her. It was all she could do not to take the lion-shape. *What is wrong with you? Did you react this way when the trading caravans met up with the band?* She was without her father's guidance now, but that was no excuse. *Focus. You cannot panic at every pack of men that passes.*

The three of them were absorbed into a dense but quick moving line of travelers that snaked its way toward Dhamsawaat. Zamia could see that the road continued straight ahead for a long stretch, then rose at a sharp angle with a massive, shrubby dune. The shrubs more or less covered the dunes now, instead of dotting them, which meant that they were coming close to water. A good deal of it, Zamia guessed from the increasingly dense web of brown-green. *The River of Tigers*, she thought. *It must be nearby indeed.*

A moment later, she saw the thick green ribbon of it in the distance. Zamia knew that outsiders thought the Badawi dazzled by the smallest stream. The idiots knew nothing of the beautiful brooks and springs that nurtured the great oases of the Empty Kingdom. But this big river, with its boats and the men fishing

وبعد لحظة، رأت مجموعة من الشجيرات بعيداً. كانت زينة تعلم أن الغرباء يظنون البدو يُبهرون بأصغر جداول المياه. لكن لم يعلم الحمقى شيئاً عن جمال غدير الماء والينابيع التي سقت واحات المملكة الفارغة. ولكن هذا النهر الكبير، بسفنه وصياديه... قد أذهل زينة، وحاولت قدر المستطاع أن تخفي ذهولها.

يوجد على الضفة المقابلة من النهر مزارع وبساتين، وتُرسل المحاصيل عامًا بعد عام إلى حشود دهامسوات الجائعة من الزيتون والتمر والقمح وتفتح الأرض والحقول الصغيرة للمراعي، وهذا ما أخبرها أبوها به. تلك كانت المرة الأولى التي تكون فيها زينة بهذا القرب من دهامسوات. فكان بنو ليث البدوي – لقد كانوا، صححت بألم – يعتمدون على أنفسهم تمامًا بالنسبة لبدو. ولم تكن جماعتها على اتصال مع سكان المدن. وإذا احتاجوا منهم بعض الأشياء بين الفينة والفينة – وحتى لو كانوا جماعة مستقلة – من الأدوات والثمار والبقول وعندما يكون من الصعب عليهم أن يجدوا المراعي البرية فهم يراعون حيواناتهم عند أهل القرى. ويتوقع من حامية الجماعة أن تُؤمن سلامة الجماعة، لقد رافقت زينة أباه عدة مرات لتتجار في المعارض التي أقيمت بالقرب من هنا. ولكن شعرت بشيء ما غريب عندما اقتربت من دهامسوات. نبعت من المدينة... حياة، وشعرت زينة بها بالفعل.

it...Zamia was dazzled, though she did all she could to hide it.

Across the river, were the farms and orchards that, as her father had taught her, sent their yields year in and year out to the hungry hordes of Dhamsawaat. Olives, dates, wheat, waxy earth-apples, small fields for pasture. This was as close as Zamia had ever come to Dhamsawaat. The Banu Laith Badawi were—had been, she corrected herself painfully—fiercely independent even for Badawi. Her band had had little contact with townsmen. But even an independent band sometimes needed things from other peoples—tools, fruits and grains, and, when wild pasture was hard to find, grazing for their animals. The Protector of the Band was expected to advise on all aspects of the band's health, and she had accompanied her father several times to trade at the fairs that were sometimes held near here. But this close to Dhamsawaat, something was different. There was a...*life* that came from the city, and Zamia could already sense it.

They pressed on. The incline of the road was steep enough now, and the sun hot enough, that thick rivulets of sweat were pouring down the Doctor's face. Zamia wondered again about doing battle alongside this fat old man. *For the moment*, she reminded herself, *you have little choice—these two are the only allies you have*

تابعوا السير، كان الطريق شديد الإنحدار والشمس حارقة فتعرق الطيب بشدة. وتساءلت زينة مرة أخرى ما إذا كانت حقًا ستقاتل جنبًا إلى جنب مع هذا الرجل السمين العجوز.

تملكين خيارًا قليلة – إن هذان الاثنان هما حلفائك الوحيدان في العالم.

أربكها التفكير، ولكن سرعان ما توقفت عن التفكير به. قلت كئيبان الرمال من على الطريق ووقفت أمامها دهامسوات، ملكة المدن.

توقفت زينة عن السير للحظاتٍ طويلة ولم تستطع الكلام.

إذًا لهذا يسمى هذا المكان بجوهرة العباسيين.

فكرت زينة بذلك وهي تنظر إلى القبة البراقة المصنوعة من الأحجار الفيروزية والذهبية واللون الأبيض وسجائد تزين المباني.

لطالما ظننت أن قصص أبي كانت مبالغ بها، ولكن الآن أعلم أنه لم يعطي الوصف حقه لضخامة حجم هذا المكان الرهيب.

كاد أن يغمى عليها. المباني! لم تعرف كيف تبدأ بعدهم – مسطحة الأسطح ومثلثة الأسطح وقبة ومصنوعة من الصخر

والطوب والعشرات من درجات الألوان المختلفة، وارتفعت المباني بشكل هائل كالجبال! أعلاهم بجانب ما يبدو مركز

الازدحام – إذا كان لديه مركز – ارتفعت قبة ضخمة بيضاء اللون. لم تكن زينة معتادة على المباني وكان من الصعب عليها

تخيل حجم القبة، ولكنها كانت متأكد أن أيًا كان أكثر المباني ارتفاعًا فهو أكبر من أي قرية تجارية رأتها.

in the world. It was a disturbing thought, but it soon flew from her mind. For then, the road crested the dune, and Dhamsawaat, King of Cities, lay before her.

Zamia stopped dead in her tracks and, for several long moments, could not speak. *I see why this place is called the Jewel of Abassen,* she thought, seeing the gleaming domes of turquoise and gold and white that dotted the carpet of buildings. *I always thought father's stories were exaggerated, but now I see he did not do the horrible size of this place justice.*

It almost made her swoon. The buildings! She did not know how to begin counting them — flat, peaked, and domed, in stone and tile, a dozen different shades. And rising up as high as mountains! Above it all, near what seemed to be the center of the jumble—if it *had* a center—rose a huge white dome. Zamia was not much used to buildings and had trouble gauging the dome's size, but she was certain that whatever building it topped must be bigger than some of the trade villages she had seen.

It had to be the legendary Crescent Moon Palace, the opulent home and stronghold of the Khalif and his family. Zamia's people knew little of, and cared little for, the supposed ruler of all Abassen. The Badawi limited their interactions with city men as much as possible, wary of becoming bakgam tokens at best, or

لابد أنها قلعة الهلال الأسطورية، منزل الخليفة وعائلته الفاخر وحصنه. فلم يكن يعلم شعب زينة إلا القليل عن حكام العباسيين المزعومين ولم يهتموا أصلاً. لم تكن تتعامل القبيلة كثيرًا مع سكان المدن خوفًا من تحولهم إلى قطعة في لعبة باكجام في أحسن الأحوال أو عبيد في أسوأ الأحوال. ولكن عُرفت روعة القصر حتى بينهم وأقلية رأت دهامسوات وأكدوا أن القصر لم يتبالغ من عظمة المكان. ويمكن لزينة أن ترى – حتى من بُعد – أنهم لم ينطقوا إلا الصدق.

وصلوا إلى مبنين طويلين خارج أسوار المدينة العظيمة وكانت رائحتها كالخيول. وهناك أعطى الطبيب البغال لرجل ذو ظهرٍ منحنٍ يرتدي ملابس المدينة السخيفة. وبعد ذلك تابعوا السير على الأقدام، واتخذوا طريقهم إلى بوابات المدينة العظيمة ودخلوا في زحامٍ كبير. وكان على زينة أن تذكر نفسها بأن هذا لم يكن كابوسًا.

هناك العديد من الأحجار والطوب، والهواء ثقيل!

أجبرت نفسها بأن تتوقف عن التحديق كطفل مندesh بالشمس. كان السكان أكثر إدهاشًا من المباني. فهي ظنت أن هناك الكثير منهم على طرق المدينة، والآن وهي تمشي في شوارعها رأت أناسًا أكثر بمئة مرة. فأكثر عدد من الناس رأتهم زينة في حياتها هم في القرى ومناطق الحجاج في الشمال الشرقي. وتفاجأت عندما رأت تلك المنازل ذات المنة أسطح والمباني بأكثر من طابقين. ولكن هذا – كان مستحيلًا، مزيجًا مختلفًا من الملابس والطوابيع. وكان مخيفًا، فاجتمعت روائح الرجال

slaves at worst. Yet even among the Badawi the magnificence of the palace was known, and the few who had seen Dhamsawaat had confirmed that the stories did not exaggerate the splendor of the palace. Even from this distance Zamia could see that they had spoken truly.

Outside the great city walls, they came to two long buildings that stank powerfully of horses. There the Doctor handed the mules over to a stooped man wearing ridiculous city clothes. They then proceeded on foot, making their way through the city's massive gates and into an even denser press of people. Zamia had to remind herself that this was not some feverish dream. *There is so much stone and brick. The very air is thick with it!* She forced herself to stop staring about like a sun-dazzled child.

More astonishing than the buildings were the people. If she had thought there was a great mass of them on the road into the city, she saw a hundred times more of them now as she passed through the streets. The densest gatherings of men Zamia had ever seen were the village and pilgrimage sites to the northeast. She'd been shocked when she saw those places, with their hundred roofs and buildings of two stories. But this—this was impossible. A riotous mix of clothing and complexions. It was terrifying. Men's and

مع النساء والألاف الآخرين، وتحرك عددًا لا يحصى من الناس دخولًا وخروجًا في نطاق رؤيتها.

كيف يمكنها أن تشتم الأعداء في حشد كهذا؟

-يوجد الكثير من الناس هنا!

صرخ الرجل العجوز: "كان عليك رؤيتهم عندما خرجنا من هنا!"

نظر إلى رشيد وأكمل: "أظن أننا سنصل إلى البيت أسرع بمرتين."

لم تستطع زينة أن تتخيل الشوارع أكثر ازدحامًا. اصطفت نساء روغالي المخمرات على الشارع يبعن التوابل المطحونة في طاحنات ضخمة وتفوح منها روائح الزكية. ومشت فتياتٌ بجلابيات قصيرة مصنوعة من الحرير يدًا بيد مع رجال يبدو أنهم أغنياء. وقاد صبيين عدد من الأغنام بجانب الحشد. ورأت زينة أيضًا رجلان يرتديان أحذية مصنوعة من جلد الجمل والتي تنتمي إلى قبيلة إحدى القبائل البدوية. تجنبت النظر إلى أعينهم، ولكنهما مهتمان بالمدينة نفسها على رؤية بدويةٍ وحيدة في جوهر العباسيون. حاولت زينة جاهدةً أن تتجاهل كل روائح الحيوانات – والبشر بقدر الإمكان – فرؤيتهم كانت مشوشة بما فيه الكفاية.

ظهر رجلٌ ذو وجهٍ قاسي في طريقها. تأهبت زينة للقتال، مضحية بخطورة التحول لأسد في هذا المكان المجهول. توحى رائحة الرجل بخداعه، هز الرجل كويًا جلدًا وصرخ يتحدث عن نردٍ مثلث الشكل. وقبل أن تتمكن زينة بأن تفعل شيء،

women's scents bled together with a thousand others, and countless people darted in and out of her peripheral vision.

How could she scent out enemies in a crowd like this?

"There are so many people here!" she said without meaning to.

"You should have seen it on our way out of here!" the old man bellowed. He turned to Raseed. "We'll get home twice as quick, I think." Zamia had trouble imagining the streets being any more crowded. Veiled Rughali women lined the street, grinding sweet-smelling spice with pestles the size of war clubs. Girls in gemthread half-robos walked arm-in-arm with soft, wealthy-looking men. Two boys led small goats along the edge of the crowd. She even saw two men wearing the camel calf suede of Badawi tribesmen. She avoided their eyes, but they seemed more interested in the city itself than in the odd sight of a young tribeswoman alone in the Jewel of Abassen. Zamia tried to ignore all of the beast-and people-scents as best she could—the sights were confusing enough.

A hard-faced man jumped in her path. Zamia tensed for a fight, weighing the risks of taking the shape in this unfamiliar place. The man, smelling of deceit, shook a leather cup and screamed about triangle dice. Before Zamia

أبعد الطبيب الرجل قائلاً شيئاً عن أن لعبة الحظ مزيفة. انحنى الرجل باستهزاء وبحث عن لاعبه المحتمل التالي.

قاومت رغبتها مرة ثانية في الهروب من هنا بسرعة الأسد والعودة إلى الصحراء. ولكنها فكرت في أبيها فقد ذهب مرة في شبابه إلى دهامسوات. وأعطاهم هذا القوة – إذا استطاع نادر بن بنو ليث البدوي أن يزور هذا المكان الهجري ويعيش ليحكي القصة فيالتأكيد تستطيع ابنته أن تحيي ذكراه بفعل المثل. امتلأت أفكارها بأبيها وبما آل إليه مصيره وذكرت نفسها أن طريق الانتقام – وهو الشيء الوحيد الذي تعيش من أجله الآن – عبر خلال هذه المدينة الشبيهة بعاصفة رملية وبسجاندها الملونة لـ... مئات الأشخاص؟ آلاف؟ لم تعرف ما العدد المناسب لسكان هذا المكان.

استمروا بالمشي ببطء لنهاية الشارع، فضغط الازدحام عرقل سيرهم بسرعة. استمرت بالالتفات أكثر من مرة لتتأكد أن الطبيب ما زال معهم. قاتلت زينة ضد أقوى المحاربين من القبائل المنافسة، وقتلت غولاً. ولكنها كانت تشعر بالرعب من أي وقت مضى. ماذا لو انفصلت عن الرجل العجوز؟ كيف ستجد طريقها إليه؟ يمكنها تتبع أي شخصٍ أو شيء وسط كثبان الصحراء، ولكن هنا؟ بكل هذه المباني والقوافل والروائح والأصوات والناس؟

يمكن أن تبتلعني هذه المدينة بالكامل ولن يلاحظ أحد.

اقتربت من عبدالله مخسلود، هامسةً: "كم شخصاً يعيش في دهامسوات؟"

could do anything, the Doctor elbowed the man away, spitting something about rigged games of chance. The man bowed mockingly and turned to his next potential player.

Again she resisted the urge to turn on her heel and run at lion-speed back into the desert. But she thought of her father, who had been to Dhamsawaat once in his youth. This gave her strength—If Nadir Banu Laith Badawi had visited this monstrous place and lived to tell the tale, surely his daughter could honor his memory by doing the same. Thoughts of her father and of his fate filled her with increasing resolution. She reminded herself that the path to vengeance—the only thing she lived for now—moved through this sandstorm of a city and its colorful carpet of...hundreds of people? Thousands? She did not have words for the number of people who must live in such a place.

They continued down the street slowly, the press of the crowd preventing them from moving any faster. Every few moments she looked to her left to make sure the Doctor was still there. She'd fought against the fiercest warriors of rival tribes. She'd killed a ghul. But Zamia found herself as frightened now as she'd ever been in her life. What if she were to get separated from the old man? How would she find her way back to him? Amidst the

ابنسم الرجل العجوز بطريقة جعلته يبدو كالأحمق، ظنت أنه لم يقصد ذلك، وقال: "عزيزتي، كم شخصًا كان يعيش في جماعتك؟"

- حوالي خمسون في أغلب السنين.

- وكم جماعة تكون قبيلتك؟

- حوالي مئة. ولدينا مجلس قبلي يحدث كل ثلاثة سنين.

شعرت أن عيناها الجافتين ستذرفان الدموع خوفًا من تذكر آخر مجلس قبلي حضرته، كان قبل سنة. وعلى الرغم من المعاملة السيئة التي تلقتها جماعتها حينها، شعرت زينة باعتراز وفخر وهي تتذكر الحشود الهائلة في اجتماعات بنو ليث. رفعت رأسها قائلة:

-قبيلة بنو ليث البدوي عظيمة. عددنا عندما نجتمع مرعب.

تنصب خيام التجمع في الأكتبة ك...

توقفت عندما أدركت ما مدى سخف ما ستقوله.

تنحرج الرجل العجوز متظهرًا أنه لم ينتبه لحرصها.

-تخليلي أن كل قبيلتك اجتمعت ثم تسع وتسعون قبيلة أخرى

بنفس الحجم. وثم بجانبها مئة قبيلة أخرى بنفس الحجم. ومئتين

من تجمع قبائلكم جنبًا إلى جنب وفوق بعضهم البعض. هذا

عدد سكان المدينة التي أمامك.

كان الفخر في صوته واضحًا.

ظنت أن الرجل العجوز كان يكذب للحظة. ولكن لماذا؟ ومع

ذلك كيف يمكن لكل هؤلاء أن يعيشوا في نفس المكان؟ كيف

trackless dunes of the desert, she could follow anyone or anything. But here? With all of these buildings and carts and smells and sounds and people? *This city could swallow me whole and no one would notice.* She stepped even closer to Adoulla Makhslood, and her voice came out as a whisper.

“How many people live in Dhamsawaat?”

The old man smiled in a way that made her feel like a fool, though she did not think that was his intention. “My dear,” he began, “how many people were in your band?” “Around fifty, most years.”

“And how many bands make up your tribe?”

“Around one hundred. We have a tribal council once every three years.” Her dry eyes stung with recalled tears of frustration as she thought of the last tribal council she’d attended, only one year ago. But despite the unjust treatment her band had received at the last council, Zamia swelled with pride remembering the huge masses at the gatherings of the Banu Laith. She raised her chin as she spoke. “The Banu Laith Badawi are a great tribe. Our numbers when we gather are fearsome. The gathered tents dot the dunes like...” She trailed off, realizing how ridiculous she was about to sound.

The old man cleared his throat, pretending not to notice her embarrassment. “Imagine your

يتنفسون؟ وكيف يتحركون من مكانٍ إلى آخر من غير أن يشعروا بالغضب؟

سألت الطبيب تلك الأسئلة وهي تعلم أنها ستبدو ساذجة ولم تكثرث إلى هذا. ضحك الرجل العجوز.

-عزيزتي، أنا أغضب أكثر من اللازم كل مرة أخطو فيها خارج منزلي. هذا هو الاختبار الحقيقي للمدينة الحية! ذكريني أن أحكي لك المرة التي استغرقت فيها يومين للذهاب من طريق القروء، إلى ‘البساتين البعيدة’.

قل الازدحام قليلاً حينما قادها الطبيب والدرويش إلى ساحة عظيمة أرضها مصنوعة من الحجارة ورص عليها تماثيل.

كان تركيز زينة بأن تبقى قريبة من الطبيب ولم تدقق في التماثيل حتى اقتربت من واحدٍ منها كان يجسد واحدٌ من الملائكة. عندما نظرت في عين التمثال، تجمدت من الجمال التي رأته. كان بنو ليث البدوي من محبي المقايضة جداً، حتى كانت بين أيديهم أصغر وأفضل تماثيل نحاتي المدن والتي جسدت غرورهم ومشاعرهم الزائفة واللاتي كن سبباً في إزعاج زينة. ولكن ما صنع هنا، على هذه التماثيل – كيف تبدو أعينهن مليئة بالحياة.

سحب الطبيب ذراعها.

-أعلم يا صغيرتي، حتى أنا بعد كل هذه السنين مندهش بجمالهن. ولكن فلنذهب.

ابتسم بفخر مرة أخرى، كأنه شيخ القبيلة وهذه المدينة جماعته.

whole tribe gathered, then ninety-nine more tribes of the same size. Then, next to them, one hundred more tribes of the same size. Two hundred of your tribal gatherings next to each other and on top of one another. That is how many people are in the city before you.” The pride in his voice was unmistakable.

For a moment she thought the old man was lying to her. But why should he? Still, how could so many all live in the same place? How could they breathe? How could they move from place to place without going mad?

She asked the Doctor these questions, knowing she would sound naïve but not quite caring. The old man laughed and said, “Why, my dear, I go a bit more mad every time I step out my front door. That is the true test of a living city! Remind me to tell you about the time it took me two full days to get from the Lane of Monkeys to the Far Gardens!”

The crowd opened up a bit as the Doctor and the dervish led her through a great paved square lined with statues. Zamia was so focused on staying close to the Doctor that she took no real notice of the statues until she was right next to one. It was a depiction of one of the Angels, she realized. When she looked into its eyes, she froze in her tracks at the beauty she saw. The Banu Laith Badawi traded vigorously enough that small bits of the city

مشوا أكثر بقليل، والمباني التي مروا منها الآن كانت من الواضح أنها منازل الطبقة الفقيرة. حيا الناس في الشارع الطبيب، ناظرين إلى زينة بنظرة فضولية ولكن لم يسألوا شيئاً. توقفوا أخيراً أمام مبنى طويل مصنوع من السيربتين البيضاء وأمامه كومتين من البرسيم موجودتان في أوعية فخارية. فتح الطبيب الباب بفتح حديدي كبير. وقف هناك للحظة، ثم رفع كفيه للأعلى وابتسم.

صرخ: " حمداً لله أنا هنا أضع قدمي على عتبة بابي مرة أخرى."

جلس الرجل العجوز بقوة على أريكة من الخشب داكنة اللون وفي اللحظة التي دخلوا فيها تناوب أعلى تناوب سمعتها زينة. عرض عليها وسادة، تلك ستكون أثمن ممتلكات بنو ليث البدوي ولكن لا تبدو مقدرة بالمثل عند رجال المدينة مثل الطبيب. اختفى الدرويش إلى غرفة أخرى وعاد بوعاء ماء بارد وطبق من المكسرات والفواكه المجففة. أوقد قنديل صغير، وهدأت رائحته الزكية زينة. أكل وشرب الثلاثي لوضع دقائق قبل أن يتحدث الدرويش.

-أخاف أني أعلم ما سيكون جوابك يا طبيب، ولكني أقترح أن تكون خطوتنا القادمة أن نبلغ رجال الخليفة عن هذا التهديد. أشاح الطبيب بنظره. وقال: " إذا كنت تعرف جوابي يا فتى فلا حاجة لي أن أقول أن إنتباه الخليفة في هذه الأمور سيكون عائقاً أكثر من مساعدة."

carvers' fine stone craftwork sometimes came into tribesmen's hands, inevitably displayed with an untribesmanlike vanity and affectation that had always irritated Zamia. But the work here, on these statues—the way their eyes were full of life....

The Doctor tugged at her arm. "I know, child. Even after all these years, I am sometime s awestruck by their beauty. But let us move on." Again he smiled with pride, as if he were a chieftain, and this city his band.

They walked a bit more, and the buildings they passed now were clearly the homes of poorer folk. People on the street called out greetings to the Doctor, eyeing Zamia curiously but asking no questions. They finally came to a stop before a tall building of whitish stone with two sad-looking clumps of thorncllover sitting before it in earthen pots. Using a large iron key, the Doctor opened the front door. He stood there for a moment, then raised his palms skyward and smiled. "Thanks be to God that I am here to set foot on my doorstep again!" he bellowed.

As soon as they stepped inside, the old man sat down hard on a divan of dark wood and let out the loudest yawn Zamia had ever heard. He offered her a worn cushion that would have been a prized possession among the Banu Laith Badawi but was clearly not appreciated

كانت زينة متأكدة أن لديها نفس ملامح الطبيب الساخرة. نحنت وقالت: " حتى البدوية تعلم أن رجال الخليفة خبيثون أيها الدرويش! لا يهتم كلاب دهامسوات لما حدث لبنو ليث البدوي."

- 'كلاب دهامسوات' ما هذا، الاستحغار الهمجي لاسم رجال المدينة؟ تدرकिन أني كلب دهامسوات أليس كذلك يا فتاة؟ وعلى الرغم من ذلك قبلتي مساعدتي!

منعت زينة نفسها من أن تزار على الرجل العجوز. وقالت: "مساعدتك أيها الطبيب؟ ألم أكن أنا من ساعدك أمام المخلوقات الشرسة الليلة الماضية؟" -إنها محقة يا طبيب.

تدخل الدرويش في المحادثة، ويبدو أنه تخلى عن فكرة تدخل السلطات. للحظة، رأت زينة ذلك الوجه الحاد والجميل ذو الملامح البارزة. فكرت مرةً أخرى أنها لو قابلته منذ فترة قصيرة لفكرت فوراً بالزواج منه. لكان والدها سيعجب ويفخر بفكرة التوافق بينهما، وستعجب الجماعة بمهاراته في القتال. ولكن الآن هذه الأفكار بلا فائدة. فالجماعة - ذكريات الجماعة - يطالبوا باللوة المنتقمة، ولم تشرفهم الفتاة التي تفكر بالزواج.

تذمر الطبيب بخصوص الأطفال الطائشين ومسح بيده على ثوبه المجعد. ثم وقف وبدأ الحديث: والآن، كما قلت الليلة الماضية أمر هذه السكين هو من اختصاص الخيميائيين. أصدقائي الخيميائيون ليسوا في منزلهم الآن، ولكن سنتحدث

as such by a city man like the Doctor. The dervish disappeared into another room and returned with water in a cool jug and a plate of nuts and dried fruits. He lit a small olive oil lamp, and the mellow smell of it soothed Zamia. The trio nibbled and sipped for a few minutes before the dervish spoke.

“I fear I know already what your response will be, Doctor, but I would suggest that our next move should be to inform the Khalif’s men of this threat.”

The Doctor rolled his eyes. “If you know my response, boy, then there’s no need for me to say that the Khalif’s attentions on these matters would be more of a hindrance than a help.”

Zamia was sure she wore the same cynical look as the Doctor. She made a noise in her throat. “Even the Badawi know that the Khalif’s men are wicked, dervish! The dogs of Dhamsawaat care little for what has happened to the Banu Laith Badawi.”

“‘Dogs of Dhamsawaat’,” the Doctor repeated. “What is that, some savage scorn - name for city men? You do realize that I am a Dog of Dhamsawaat, do you not, girl? Yet you are ready enough to accept my help!”

Zamia kept herself from growling at the old man. “Your help, Doctor? Was it not I that saved you from that foul creature last night?”

معهما عند الفجر. وبعد ذلك أريدك أن تقابلي طفل آخر فقد عائلته بسبب الوحوش ذاتها. أنتما الاثنان الوحيدان اللذان شهدا هذا الخطر، وسيساعدني أن أستمع لكما تتحدثان مرة أخرى، جنبًا إلى جنب.

لم تتمالك زينة أعصابها وقالت: "المزيد من الحديث؟! لقد ضيعنا يومًا أيها الرج - الطبيب! بالتأكيد هنالك أشخاص في هذه المدينة يملكون نفس تلك القدرات." رفع الطبيب أكتافه معبرًا بعدم المبالاة.

- عدد ضئيل. ولكنهم يطالبون بمبالغ كبيرة للغاية. وهم ليسوا من النوع الذين يستلطفون أطفالًا همجيين يقتحمون متاجرهم ويأمروهم بما يفعلوا، كما أفعل أنا، فلا أشك بأنك ستجدين.

زمجرت زينة وابتسم الطبيب قائلاً: "إلى جانب ذلك، ليسوا جيّدون بعملهم مثل لطيفة. أيًا كان الوقت الذي سنخسره سنكتسب الكثير بسبب قدراتها. والآن حاولي أن تهدئي نفسك، لدينا الكثير لنفعله غدًا وبمجرد امتلاك ما نحتاجه سنبدأ بالصيد."

تحولت ابتسامته إلى ملامح جادة. "أنت تعتقدين أنني رجل عجوز كسول وأحمق. وعندما أنظر إليك أرى فتاة همجية ووقحة. ولكن باسم الله، لقاؤنا في القتال يذكرني بالصحف السماوية: 'يا أيها المؤمنون! إنما الصدق ليست بصدق!' قدرنا أن نقاتل هذه الوحشية معًا، زينة بنت بنو ليث البدوي. وسنفعل ذلك."

“She has a point, Doctor,” the dervish chimed in, apparently giving up on his suggestion regarding the authorities. For only the second time, Zamia saw that hard-but-pretty, fine-featured face register amusement. Again she thought bitterly that, not long ago, had she met this man, her thoughts might have gone quickly to courtship. To the pride with which her father would have entertained the notion of such a match, and the grudging admiration the band would have had for his battle skill. But now such thoughts were useless. The band—the band’s memory—demanded the avenging lioness. The marriage-minded girl dishonored them.

The Doctor muttered about disrespectful children and ran a hand over the endless folds of his kaftan. Then he stood and began to pace. “Now. As I said last night, this business with the bloody knife is the purview of the alchemists. My alchemist friends are not home now, but we will call on them at first light. Then I will want you to meet another youngster who has lost kin to these same monsters. The two of you are the only ones to witness this threat, and it will help me to hear you speak again, side-by-side.”

Zamia could not contain her anger. “More talking!? We waste a day, old—Doctor! Surely there are others in this city with these skills.”

شعرت زينة بالأمل لأول مرة منذ أيام بسبب البريق في عين صائد الغيلان. فهي كانت تشعر في السابق بأمل مزيف ولكن كان كل ما تملك. سيئنتقم لجماعة نادر بن بنو ليث البدوي. استلقت زينة على الأريكة لساعة أو أكثر داخل المنزل. شعرت بشعور جيد رغم الأفكار الكئيبة التي كانت تحاول أن تعكر صفو مزاجها. وبعدها أعلن الطبيب أنه وقت العشاء.

لم تفهم زينة سكان المدن. أحضرت سيدة كبيرة في السن أطباق من الطعام وكانت هذه السيدة تعيش بجوار الطبيب. ولكنها لا تبدو مثله أبدًا، ظنت زينة أنها أخته أو ربما والدته — فلا يوجد سبب لأن تسكن بجواره، ولم تطعمه؟ ولكنها لم تبقى معهم للعشاء، وأعطاهما الطبيب عملة معدنية قبل أن تذهب! كان هذا أكثر شيء فض ووقح رآته زينة، ولكنها سمعت أن رجال المدينة يدفعون المال لصنع الحب.

ملء الطبيب طبقه بشرائح اللحم المحشي الغنية بصلصة خضراء.

- نبيذ أبيض وضأن بالفتق! الحمد لله القدير أن ليس كل ما يرسل إلي قضية مجنونة!

ملء الرجل العجوز كأسه ثم شربه بالكامل ثم ملئه مجددًا وألح صوته قائلاً: "كلي يا فتاة!"

تطايرت قطع الفتق من فمه فيما كان يؤشر إلى الصحن أمامه.

- أخشى أننا سنتحرك قريبًا جدًا. ووقتها سنتمنين لو أنك أكلت. وشرب جرعة ثانية من النبيذ الأبيض.

The old man shrugged. "A handful. But they all charge *very* dearly indeed. And they aren't the types to take kindly to savage children who come barging into their shops telling them what they must do, as I, do, as I've no doubt you would do."

Zamia growled. The old man only smiled. "Besides, not one of them is as good at what they do as Litaz is. Whatever time we lose in waiting we will more than gain back due to her aptitude. Now do try to settle yourself. We've much to do tomorrow. And as soon as we have a quarry we will begin the hunt."

The Doctor's smile turned hard. "You think me a lazy old oaf. And when I look at you I see an impertinent savage of a girl. But in the Name of God, our meeting in battle together brings the Heavenly Chapters to my mind: 'O believer! Look to the accident that is no accident!' We were meant by God to fight this bloody cruelty together, Zamia Banu Laith Badawi. And so we shall."

The glint in the ghul hunter's eyes gave Zamia the first real hope she'd felt in days. It was a vicious, bitter sort of hope, but it was all she had. Nadir Banu Laith Badawi's band would be avenged. For an hour or so Zamia lay half-dozing on a divan just inside the front door. It felt good, despite the dark thoughts that crept

حاولت زينة أن تقنع نفسها أنها لم تكن جائعة – وأنه لا يوجد مكان لأي شيء غير الانتقام ولكنها علمت أن هذه كذبة. جعلت الرائحة معدتها تصدر صوتاً وكأن اللبوة الجائعة والعطشة داخلها تحدثت. لم تحتاج إلى المزيد من إغراءات الطبيب. فقد شربت نصف خمرها وبدأت تأكل. وبعد عدة دقائق بدأت معدتها بالامتلاء.

-أكل هذه المدينة لذيذ للغاية.

شربت من كأسها جرعة ثانية وثالثة.

ابتسم الدرويش ابتسامة فاتنة وقال: "أوافقك الرأي تماماً يا زينة بنت بنو ليث البدوي. ستلاحظين أنني فقط أأكل الفاكهة وخبز الحبوب. النظام الغذائي للصالحين."

-يمكنك أن تتاديني زينة فقط يا رشيد.

من أين أتى هذا الكلام؟! هذا النبيذ قوي للغاية.

تمتم الدرويش شيئاً بصوت خجول وهدق في طبقه.

إنه أكبر سناً مني لكنه يبدو صغيراً للغاية.

صاح العجوز السكر ليخفف حدة التوتر بينهم: "حسناً، طعام

الطيور هذا ربما يكفي لفم الولي الصالح ولكن ليس لرجل

ذو... ليس لرجل ذو..."

توقف عن الحديث وحرك يديه على بطنه الكبيرة وكأنه

يدفهما.

-لرجل ذو... أهمية.

التف صائد الغيلان على زينة وكان في صوته نبرة شفقة.

in at the edges of her ease. Then the Doctor announced that it was time to eat.

Zamia did not understand city people. A shriveled old woman who lived next door to the Doctor brought over plates of food. Though she looked nothing like him, Zamia assumed that she was his sister or his mother—why else would she live so close, and why would she feed him thus? But the woman did not stay to eat with them—and the Doctor gave her a coin before she left! It was as rude and shameless as anything Zamia had seen, but then, she had heard that city men paid coins for lovemaking as well.

The Doctor loaded his plate with thick slices of meat stuffed with a rich green dressing. “Pale wine and pistachio lamb! Thanks to All-Providing God that not everything He sends my way is a maddening trial!” The old man filled his cup, guzzled it down, refilled it. “Eat, girl!” he bellowed, bits of pistachio flying from his mouth as he gestured to the plates before him. “We’ll be on the move again soon enough, I fear. You’ll wish then that you had eaten!” He took another long gulp of pale wine.

Zamia tried to tell herself that she was not hungry—that she had no room in her for anything but revenge, though she knew it for a lie. The smells set her stomach growling as if the hungry, thirsty lioness within her were

-قضيت عقودًا كثيرة كخادم للرب. سافرت لأماكن لم يسمع بها هذا الولد المتغطرس من قبل. أربعون عامًا تُضاهي أيام الحرب مع الملاك الخائن. هل ارتكبت خطأ إذا تمنيت بأني قضيت الليالي بهذا الشكل؟

شرب الرجل العجوز جرعة كبيرة من النبيذ ونظر إلى رشيد بابتسامة ماكرة.

-أنت أحيانًا بسوء التلامذة المتواضعين الذين تحترمهم جدًا! ربما كان عليك أن تنضم إلى جماعتهم الغبية. خائف من الخمر والرقص وما إلى ذلك.

وبخ رشيد وهو يؤشر عليه باصبعه.

-تذكر ما قالت الصحف: "يتحدث الرب خلال الصحف وليس بالأسنة رجال الدين. كتابه المقدس لم يكتب على بردية أو ورقية أو رق. بل كُتِب في ذاكرة الإنسان وختم في قلبه وحفر على روحه." ومع ذلك يتصرف المُنصِفون الذين تتبعمهم والتلامذة المتواضعين فكأنما كتبت على ألسنتهم.

شرب جرعة أخرى وقال: "كان لصيادي الغيلان دور فعال في بعض الأمور قبل تلاشي مجدهم من العباسيين. ولكن على الأقل لم يدعوا بأنهم أولياء صالحون. إن الله أرحم الراحمين يا فتى! عندما تنسى هذا عندها تنسى لم نقاتل."

انتهت خطبته العصماء، رفع صائد الغيلان يده كمبالغة للعصبية.

لفترة لم يكن هناك صوت غير صوتهم وهم يأكلون وصوت نفس الرجل العجوز العالي. عندما انتهوا من الطعام جلسوا في

speaking up. With no further prompting from the Doctor, she sloshed back half her wine and began to stuff herself with mouthfuls of lamb. After a few bites, though, her stomach began to clench.

“This city food is too rich,” she said, then drained her cup with a second and third gulp.

The dervish smiled a mesmerizing smile.

“I couldn’t agree more, Zamia Banu Laith Badawi. You will notice that I am eating only fruit and bread-and-beans. The diet of the pious.”

She found herself speaking. “You may call me simply Zamia, Raseed.” *Where did that come from!? This cursed wine is too strong!*

The dervish mumbled something embarrassed-sounding and locked his eyes on his plate. *He is older than me, yet he seems so young.*

“Well,” the old man bellowed, tipsily breaking the tension, “such bird food is suitable enough, perhaps, for little holy men’s mouths. But not for a man of my. But not for a man of my...” he paused, hefting up his big belly with both hands, “a man of my...significance.” The ghul hunter turned to Zamia, a note of solicitude entering his voice.

“I have spent long decades as a servant of God, you know. I’ve traveled roads this presumptuous boy has never even heard of. Forty years’ worth of days at war with the

هدوء. كسر الصمت صوت الطبيب العالي وكأنه لم يمر عشرة دقائق من الصمت قائلاً: "بالحديث عن القتال، كنت أتسأل يا زينة، إذا، بإذن الله، وجدنا خادم الملاك الخائن وهزمناه، ماذا ستفعلين؟"

أحست زينة وكأن بهجتها اختفت في لحظة.

لماذا فتح هذا الموضوع الآن؟

بدا لها وكأنه يعرف ما ستكون الإجابة وهو يعارضها.

- كل ما يهم هو أن أقتل أيًا كان من فعلها. وغالبًا سأموت وأنا أفعلها. وهذا ما ينبغي أن يحدث. الاستشهاد لي والانتقام لجماعتي.

اختفت النبرة المرححة من صوته وقال: "الاستشهاد؟ هل تريد الموت يا زينة؟"

وقفت على رجليها وقالت: "لما أتمنى أن أعيش؟ كل من أعرف ميت! جماعتي ميتة! فقط أستطيع الدعاء أن يكون مصيري الانتقام لهم قبل الموت!"

حق الطبيب فيها وكانت نظراته حادة: "تذكري أن حتى المصير متفرق الطرق. رأى والدك لمست الملائكة عليك واختارك أن تكون حامية الجماعة حتى وإن كنت أنثى. لقد فهم الصحيفة التي تقول 'قدر كل رجل العديد من الأقدار، ولكن دائمًا هناك خيار'."

غرس الطبيب بترأخي شوكنه بأخر حبة فاصولياء في طبقه. - لنتوقف عن الحديث الآن. علينا أن نبدأ بتجهيز ما نسميه نحن سكان المدينة فراش النوم— وما يسميه البدو بـ 'رقع قدرة

Traitorous Angel. Is it so wrong that I should wish to spend my nights like this?"

The old man took another big swallow of wine and turned back to Raseed with a troublemaker's smile. "You're as bad, sometimes, as those Humble Students you respect so much! Perhaps you should join their stupid little sect! Scandalized by ale and dancing and such!" He poked a reproving finger at Raseed. "Remember what the Chapters say: 'God speaks through these Chapters, not through the mouths of priests. His scriptures are not written upon papyrus, parchment or vellum. They are marked in men's memories, stamped on men's hearts, engraved in men's souls.' Yet your Order and the Humble Students act as if the Chapters were written on their lips."

He took another drink. "Before their glory faded from Abassen, the ghul hunters' ways were unbending in some things. But at least they never claimed to be holy men. God is the Most Beneficent Host, boy! When you've forgotten that, you've forgotten why we fight!" His tirade over, the ghul hunter threw his hands up in exaggerated exasperation.

Fora while then there were only the sounds of eating and the old man's heavy breath. When the meal was done they sat there silently. Then the Doctor's too-loud voice shattered the

من الرمل، أوه، أعتذر يا فتاة فأنا أمزح فقط. ولكن بالطبع لن نعبيك بسبب نومك في منزل رجل ليس بزوجك ولا أبيك. وأنا لا أشك أن جارتني - السيدة المسنة التي أحضرت عشائونا - ستفرش فراشًا لك. فبالنسبة لفتاة مث-

زمجرت زينة وقاطعته قائلة: "أنا لست بفتاة يا أيها الطبيب. وأبي لم يخترنني لأكون حامية الجماعة إن لم أكن فعلاً حامية. ينام الحامي أينما يشاء وسيكون لطفاً منك أن تفرش لي الفراش هنا أسفل السلم، سيكون ذلك جيداً."

بجوارها، أصدر الدرويش صوت اختناق. تجاهلته زينة لأنها لم ترد أن تفقد أعصابها.

- ما أردت أن أعرف، هل نحن حقاً بأمان هنا يا طبيب؟ فأنا لا أريد أن استيقظ وأنا أشعر بأن قفصي الصدري قد فتح. ذلك الشخص صاحب قطع الغيلان الذين قاتلناهم - ما الذي سيمنعه من الهجوم الآن؟

تثاوب الطبيب وابتسم بمكر: "ليس من السهل أن يتسلل غول إلى داخل المدينة. وإلى جانب ذلك، منزلي محصن بالسكر لذا لا يوجد غول يستطيع أن يتجاوزهم."

دفع الرجل العجوز بطبقه بوقاحة إلى اتجاه رشيد وقام من المائدة. تحولت ملامحه الكسولة إلى جادة مجدداً.

- استمعي إلي. واحدة من بنو ليث البدوي ما زالت حية. عندما تموت، وقتها ينتهي نسل جماعتك. وحتى ذلك اليوم يا فتاة، جماعتك حية.

أشار بإصبعه الضخم عليها وترك الغرفة.

silence. “Speaking of fighting,” he said as if ten minutes had not passed, “I have been wondering something, Zamia. If, God willing, we find this damned-by-God servant of the Traitorous Angel and we defeat him, what will you do then?” Zamia felt the pleasant haze of the wine burn away in an instant. *Why does he bring this up now?* It sounded to her as if the ghul hunter already knew what her answer would be, and disapproved of it.

“All that matters is that I kill whoever or whatever has done this. Likely I will die doing so. This is as it should be. Martyrdom for me, vengeance for my band.”

The winey cheer was gone from his voice. “Martyrdom? Are you so eager to die, Zamia?”

She came to her feet and hissed at the old man.

“Why should I wish to live? Everyone I know is dead! My band is dead! I can only pray that my fate is to avenge them before I die myself!”

The Doctor stared at her, and his gaze was hard. “Remember that even fate has its forking roads. Your father saw the touch of the Angels upon you and chose you to be Protector of the Band, though you are female. He understood the Chapter that reads ‘Only so many fates for each man, but always a choice.’”

The Doctor poked idly at the single bean on his plate —the only bit of food that remained there. “But enough grim talk for now. We must

التفتت إلى مكان الدويش خائفة ولكنها متحمسة أن تبقى معه لوحدهما. ولكن لم يكن الشاب الصغير موجودًا. شيء ما بداخلها تعكر ولم يتعكر، بخيبة أمل وارتياح.

بعد لحظات، بينما كانت مستلقية على فراشها محاولة النوم داهمتها الأفكار. منظر أخيها بقلبه المنزوع وعينه الحمراءوين. يد والدها المتمسكة بالخنجر. صوت فحيح الغول. رائحة المدينة. ابتسامة رشيد الخفيفة.

ونصائح الطبيب. لقد قال **جماعتك حية**. وأدركت أنها بالفعل حسبت نفسها نص مينة. كانت تتصرف وكأن جماعة نادر بنو ليث البدوي اختفت من أرض الله. لم يفهم صائد الغيلان جماعتها كونه رجل مدينة ومحبته لهذا المبنى الذي يسميه الوطن. ولم يفهم ما فقدته. ولكن مع ذلك بدأت تفكر بسببه.

فكرت زينة بالوطن. لشخص رَحَال لم يكن مكانًا. تذكرت كلمات إحدى أشهر أغاني جماعتها.

بدأت بغناء الصبيان،

الوطن هو موقع والدي! أنا بدوي بحق!

ثم يغني الرجال دورهم

الوطن هو موقع أبنائي! أنا بدوي بحق!

ثم يغني الجميع:

الوطن هو موقع خيم جماعتي! أنا بدوي بحق!

كانت أغنية فخر تهدف إلى المباهاة بتفوق جماعتها على سكان القرى والمدن الضعفاء. والآن أصبحت سخريّة حزينة. لحق أبوها أمها لفراش الموت. ليس لديها أبناء ولا بنات. وانعزال

see to what we city folk call your sleeping arrangements— and what the Badawi call ‘some random patch of sandy dirt.’ Oh, I am sorry, girl, I only jest. But of course we would not shame you by having you sleep in the house of a man not your husband or father. I don’t doubt my neighbor—the old woman who brought our dinner—will set a pallet for you. For a young woman such as—”

Zamia growled. “I am not a girl, Doctor. My father did choose me for Protector of the Band, and that is what I am. The Protector sleeps where he must. If you would be so kind to set a pallet here at the foot of the stairs, that will be fine.”

Beside her, the dervish made a strangled noise. Zamia ignored him because she could not afford to lose control of herself. “What I want to know,” she asked, “is whether we are truly safe here, Doctor. I do not wish to wake to the feeling of my ribcage being cracked open. The one whose ghul pack we fought— what is to stop him from striking us here?”

The Doctor yawned and smiled patronizingly. “Sneaking ghuls about within a city is no easy matter, child. And besides, my home is charmed so that no ghul can cross its threshold.” The old man shoved his dirty plate rudely in Raseed’s direction and got up from the table. His lazy expression grew urgent

جماعتها يعني أن لا جماعة أخرى ستكفلها. فكيف لها أن تعرف ما الوطن من جديد؟

حاجتها إلى الانتقام أتعبتها للغاية، ولكن بدأ جسدها الاحساس بأنه يذوب من التعب. لا يمكنها أن تفعل شيئاً الليلة. لا شيء فقط البكاء على ما فقدته. ولذا تأكدت أن حلفائها الجدد لن يسمعاها، وكانت متعبة أكثر من أي وقت مضى ولأول مرة منذ سنين بكت زينة بنت بنو ليث البدوي بهدوء حتى نامت.

again. "Listen to me. *One* of the Banu Laith Badawi still lives. When *she* dies, then *your* band is dead. Until that day, girl, your band lives." He waggled a big finger at her and left the room.

She turned to where the dervish had sat, afraid but excited to be alone with him. But when she turned, the little man was gone. Something inside her twisted and untwisted in disappointment and relief.

A little while later, a great storm of things flew through Zamia's mind as she lay on her pallet seeking sleep. The sight of her brother with his heart torn out and his eyes shining red. Her father's hand, clutching a dagger. The sound of ghuls hissing. The smells of this strange city. Raseed's brief smiles.

And the Doctor's admonitions. *Your band lives*, he had said. She had already counted herself half dead, she realized. She'd been acting as if the band of Nadir Banu Laith Badawi were gone from God's great earth forever. The ghul hunter, with his city man's love of this one building he called home, did not understand her people. He did not understand what she had lost. But he had started her thinking nonetheless.

Home, Zamia thought. For the nomadic Badawi, it was not a place. The strains of one of her people's most important songs forced its

way into her head. It would start with the boys singing,

Home is where my father is! I am a true Badawi!

Then the men would take their turn, singing

Home is where my sons are! I am a true Badawi!

Then all would sing together:

Home is where my band's tents are! I am a true Badawi!

The song was a boastful one, intended to flaunt her people's superiority to the soft villagers and city folk. But now it took on a mournful irony. Her father had joined her mother in death. She had no sons or daughters. The isolation of her band meant that no other band would take her in. How could she ever know a home again?

The burning need for revenge had pushed her far. But her body felt as if it would melt from exhaustion. There was nothing more she could do tonight. Nothing that is, but mourn all she had lost. And so, sure that she was out of the hearing range of her new-found allies, and more tired than she'd ever been, Zamia Banu Laith Badawi, for the first time in years, very quietly cried herself to sleep.