

ENGLISH – PERSEPOLIS CREATIVE SAC

Write the transcript of the conversation between Marji's parents after they leave her at the airport.

T: Have we done the right thing, Ebi?

E: No parent wants to let their child go Taji, we had no choice. It is "better for (her) to leave than live under an Islamic regime"

T: Yes, but did we do the right thing by allowing her to think so freely?

E: What are you saying?

T: They say ignorance is bliss, no? Perhaps if we kept her sheltered, she would be complicit within this terrible system. Perhaps then, she wouldn't be so outspoken, she wouldn't have been expelled, and we could still have our baby girl.

Taji cries silently but deeply while an officer looks their way.

E: Honey, you don't believe this. I know you. You're just upset. It's okay honey, we will get through this. We are just lucky that are daughter won't ever have to step in as a soldier at the ripe age on thirteen like these poor boys here today.

Taji faints as Ebi catches her, lifts her and walks towards the exit.

Officer: Hey! What is this? What is your relationship to this woman?!

Ebi lowers his head and speaks softly.

E: Sorry, Sir. This is my wife.

Officer: Your wife! And what is your business carrying her like this! In public?!

Taji begins to regain consciousness. She blinks slowly, glazing over at the officer.

E: Today marks the day of our daughter's departure overseas. As parents, we are in great grief for her absence from our lives at this very moment.

Officer: Overseas? Ah, so you are sending your so-called beloved daughter off into tyranny that is the West!

The officer progressively raises his voice, becoming more and more aggressive.

Officer: People like you is what's wrong with this country! Here in Iran we are trying to maintain the purity of Islam! And you! Here you are supporting the evil and decadence that we are trying to abandon! Communists! You betray our countr-

The officer notices Taji waking up, glances over her and changes his train of thought.

Officer: ...Women! Fix your veil!

T: "Women?" Show some respect please.

Officer's eyes widen.

Officer: Respect? You? "I fuck women like you and throw them in garbage!"

E: (whispers) Taji stop talking. Let me handle this.

E: Officer, please excuse my wife for her outburst. She is distressed. I don't think it will be necessary to make that call now. I promise this won't happen again. I'll make sure of it. Thank you, Sir. We won't bother you again.

Ebi slides the officer folded notes of money as a bribe. He holds Taji's arm and hurries along leaving the distressed officer in the background.

Both Ebi and Taji get into their Cadillac and remain in silence before Ebi ignites the engine and drives towards home.

E: And you wonder where Marji gets her outspoken nature from.

T: That boy used to be a window cleaner. Now he a so-called guardian of the revolution thinking he can disrespect those twice his age. I am old enough to be his mother! Would you rather have me remain in silence?

E: I don't intend to be a bystander myself but sometimes that is the best thing to do. Especially in these times, Taji. I know you know this. I'm not saying you should not speak your mind, but you must be careful darling. I can't afford to lose you, too.

Taji sobs and loosens her veil.

T: Ebi. Oh, Ebi! Have we done the right thing, Ebi? We have just let our daughter go! We let her leave us! She is so little, so young. My little butterfly! What have we done?!

E: I know, honey. We did what was best. She will be safer there than here.

T: Should we have let her play out her fantasies? Was it right for us to give her money to buy cassettes from the black market? Should we have shown her our small acts of rebellion when we threw those secret parties? Are we too "avant garde?". Did we confuse her? Did we do the right thing Ebi? Did we? Is this all our fault?

E: Honey...

Taji cuts Ebi off, still distressed and speaking her mind out of concern.

T: We made her too aware of the absurdities of this country! The complexities and contradictions of the place she calls home confronted her far too early! Is this our fault? It's all our fault! We should have sheltered her more!

E: Honey. It is not our fault. It is the fault of these fundamentalists. Knowledge and self-awareness is revered. The personal is political. Your grandfather taught you that, remember? Now let's remember his words – "when a big wave comes, lower your head and let it pass".

T: You're right.

E: The rules and regulations of this place have forced people like us to make such drastic decisions. But remember, Taji, we are lucky. Marji is lucky. Most would not have been able to get their children out of this country. Remember how hard it was for Mrs Nesrin's son?

T: You're right, Ebi. You're right.

Taji calms down.

T: Do you think she will be alright? At the age of fourteen, across the world, far away from her parents?

E: She is wise enough to live and grow on her own for now. We have raised her well, Taji. She has a strong sense of her individuality, thanks to her mother and grandmother. You both taught her not to forget where she comes from. This will give her strength as she walks into a new world.

Taji nods silently from acknowledgement and Ebi looks forward, as a tear rolls down his face. They ride the rest of the trip in silence until they get home.

Taji enters Marji's room, rips her veil off and sits on her bed, absorbing the energy that once existed in that very room.

Ebi walks in, sits next to her and cradles her in his arms. Taji sobs.

E: Shhh my love.

T: Tell me everything will be okay, Ebi.

Ebi reaches over to a table and holds the bread swan in his hand.

E: "Everything will be alright"

The acknowledgement of Anoosh's words create a silence between them. Both parents hold onto each other and stare upon the bread swan in silence

Statement of Explanation

The transcript of the conversation between Marjane's parents, Ebi Satrapi and Taji Satrapi after the departure of Marjane, explores the concerns and thoughts upon sending their daughter off to Vienna. As this is a gap in the original text, it creates interest to explore the assumed concerns, guilt and fears of Marjane's parents. As Marjane's parents often kept their concerns hidden from their daughter, the transcript allows the readers to gain a first hand experience of their perspective through the irritated yet frantic tone of voice Taji exhibits and the more tranquil and solicitous tone of voice Ebi expresses as the script progresses.

The piece takes place in three different settings. The first, within the Mehrabad Airport, is where Ebi is most concerned with Taji's outward disdain as he is well aware of how fundamentalist would react against people like them; the progressive.

The second setting is inside the Cadillac, a symbol of their higher class, and it is here where Marjane's parents are more relaxed yet reserved as this is where Taji "loosens her scarf" and Ebi cries in silence as "a tear rolls down his face".

The final setting is within the confines of their own home where they are able to do as they please and display affection to one another though the way in which Ebi "cradles (Taji) in his arms". The veil, a symbol of female oppression is also used by Taji as she "rips her veil" off her after she comes back home.

The themes incorporated within this piece are those that reflect the original text. The theme of an oppressive regime is displayed primarily through the officer, a fundamentalist who is against "supporting the evil and decadence that (Iran is) trying to abandon".

The officer who yells at Taji to "fix (her) veil" illustrates the female oppression through the symbol of the veil. However, the gender expectations of boys is also explored through the acknowledgement of their pressure to join the war "at the ripe age of thirteen".

The idea of class divisions is also displayed through the mention of Ms Nesrin's son who was not well educated enough to comprehend the propaganda the regime is portraying through the use of the keys of paradise. The officer who used to be "a window cleaner" only gains power once he becomes heavily religious however, their faith has nothing to do with their ideology as a simple bribe is enough to keep a young male's mouth shut.

The ideas of the personal versus the political is explored through Taji's words, whereby she expresses her doubts regarding the way the Satrapi's displayed silent acts of rebellion through "secret parties" and "black markets". This also emphasizes the importance of knowledge which conveys the significance of one's place in their political landscape.

The idea of growing up is explored through Ebi's perspective "we have raised her well". In the final moments the symbol of the bread swan is used to highlight Anoosh, an important figure in Marjane's life, who taught her to hold onto hope as "everything will be alright". While Marjane held onto the swan hoping Uncle Anoosh would be safe, Marjane's parents hold onto the art piece anticipating for her to be safe in the new world she is entering.