

The story of the fisherman and the demon



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I really enjoyed reading this selection. I liked the way the stories snowballed off one another. While I may never read the rest of the stories, I would assume that Shahrazad was successful in keeping the King at bay with her stories and sparing herself each night until she passed away.

When I first began reading, I thought the message the author was trying to convey was that everyone encounters adversity but that you should take solace in the fact that someone is probably suffering a greater misfortune than you are. But then my thoughts shifted to the portrayal of women in the selection. Our first story began with how Shahzaman's wife cheated on him.

Then we see his brother's wife and slaves also committing adulterous acts. Later, we come to learn that "when a woman desires something, nothing can stop her" as stated by the woman who was trapped in the glass chest (Puchner 2012 561). In hearing this, the men used their power to kill off women, after sleeping with them of course, before they could inflict any more harm onto the kings.

Moving along to the other stories, The Tale of the Ox and the Donkey also spoke ill of women. The wife was insistent that her husband tell her what made him laugh, even if it meant his death. The husband, not wanting to lose his wife, intended to do so without putting up a fight but then learned to beat her to get her to behave. In this way, he used his power over her to put her in her place. Also, the Donkey ends up regretting helping the Ox because he had to pick up the slack and ends up lying to the Ox for his own benefit. I felt the exchange between the animals spoke towards humanity and how one tends to betray the other for their personal gain.

In the Story of the Merchant and the Demon, we can see the idea of an eye for an eye since the Demon wants to kill the Merchant because he killed his son, but we never get any further proof of this. After giving him a year to settle his affairs, the Merchant returns to the orchard and ends up being saved by 3 strangers. In this story, the 3 strangers don't ask for anything in return from the Merchant but just did it out of the goodness of their heart. I think this story served as a reminder that there are still righteous people out there.

The Story of the Fisherman and the Demon is paralleled by The Tale of King Yunan and the Sage Duban to serve as a warning of the ill that can come from turning against someone that has helped you. So, before the Demon can do the Fisherman wrong, he is told the other story to prove how, if he is forgiven " God will grant [him] forgiveness [but] destroy [him], and God will inflict on [him] one who will destroy [him]" (Puchner 2012 580). The second story ends up describing the latter where both parties end up dead so, the Demon heeded this advice, and repaid the Fisherman as he too had been helped.

In The Tale of the Enchanted King, it is no surprise again that the woman is sleeping around and, ends up being a witch who brings harm onto her spell-bound husband, while still caring for her lover. This story ends with good prevailing. Thanks to the King, who asked for nothing in return, the husband, and the townspeople, who had done nothing wrong, were free at last.

I would conclude that the stories spoke towards the themes of the believed ill nature of women, the use and abuse of power, good versus evil, and man

helping man. I would say that the author conveyed these different messages effectively.