English101

September 21, 2017

Thriving In A New Land

Visiting a foreign country for the first time can be quite overwhelming, especially when the country being visited has a culture that is different from the country of origin. One gets to learn a lot of new things that help give people an idea of what the country is all about. My mother landed at the John F. Kennedy Airport at the beginning of December 2012, something that made us both very happy having discussed the visit over and over again. She was here finally, after a year of not seeing her, with sight being replaced by talking over the phone every day and skyping every once in a while. A year is a long time, especially for the baby boy of the family who is expected to always be on the mother’s side. Excitement could easily be seen on my face I took a cab to ensure that I got to pick her up, with a flush of joy and expectation taking over.

I have always known my mother to be an amicable person. As I arrived at the receiving lounge, I would see her saying hello to every new face that went with her, or she passed. A cheerful spirit she is! Knowing some of the people in Manhattan, smiles was their drive. Therefore, greetings could be something that would keep them pacing even faster. Others, however, were kind enough to wave back or gently nod while dragging out a smile. I held on to her for a hug to what anyone would call an eternity. It had been too long. She could not believe her eyes at the sight of a foreign country covered in snow and not just snow that she had seen in the movies. We hopped into one of the cabs and headed to my apartment, which was my first individually-rented residence to move into. I mean what more could i ask for if not own independence and a means of growing peacefully while learning from individual mistakes?

As opposed to Saudi Arabia, the United States felt tenser regarding interaction with some strangers as compared to the former. People were friendlier back home and more thoughtful. This is as a result of community-based living that goes on in Saudi Arabia while the United States believes so much in independence, which is both a good thing and a bad thing. There is an increased interaction between people of different backgrounds in the Saudi Arabia as opposed to the United States, which manages to have quite a number of its Saudi Arabian students. My mother was surprised by all the energy that she had felt so far given the differences between the countries. This gave her hope and encouragement to hold onto given the amount of anxiety she had regarding my stay in the United States. She was already used to the bit of anti-social atmosphere in existence in Saudi Arabia since we originate from a Muslim country where the culture is quite rigid on various matters, including interactions. There was a lot of freedom to experience, and she did not hesitate to share her thoughts on wanting to experience the beauty of the foreign country that welcomed her with open arms.

Introducing my mother to the apartment, she was surprised to find that I could take care of myself without much hustle seeing that I was the middle born in a family of five. School taught me that it was important to learn about how to take great care of ourselves before landing more responsibilities with the growth of family in the future given the already immense responsibilities that came with my studies based on the number of units we had each semester as well as how I had been brought up. We decided to catch up as I helped my mother prepare dinner since a mother’s cooking will always turn out better than anything anyone else makes. It is one of the things that will make me miss being back home in Saudi Arabia. I shared my experiences with her since I was still a fresh face in High School, the experiences before landing even if the conversations were shared every day but they were never the same as those shared in person, how I dealt with the challenges and problems that had presented themselves and how I had dealt with them.

She did too share how life back in Saudi Arabia was, the challenges she had to deal with on a daily basis, mostly because my father would travel a lot for work, but she managed since she did not have a child to fend for as well as the nice things she brought me as a memorabilia for when she left as well as gifts from family and friends back home. This was a happy moment, I had my mother with me for the week, and I got some gifts. After dinner, we made plans for the week which would entail seeing Manhattan at its best and in natural light. This included aggievile, the Kansas State University campus, going onto the bowling alley, the Kansas state art museum, walking on a snowy nights, and the country club, the public library as well as many other places that we would get to discover together along the way. Playing in the snow was one of the adventures we were going to experience.

I slept like a baby that night. Six o’clock, the next morning, caught mother up and ready to seize the day. A new country, a new city, a new day presented new opportunities and different places to explore. She got to have breakfast for the first time away from the house as we went by the school, as opposed to what she was used to back in Saudi Arabia since she would prepare it in the house before leaving to cater to various things. Despite all that has been said about Saudi Arabia among foreign group discussions, my mother was quick to share about the way the country is changing given the ability of women to do some of the things that were considered manly. It is a country that has much friendlier people as opposed to the United States with a culture that teaches hospitality as well as generosity to be shown to all and sundry without biases.

An experience and continuous adventure with my mother made the days worthwhile as well as enjoyable. The visits tightened the mother-child relationship that had strained a bit since my moving to the United States for my studies and now the beginning of another chapter of my life. Every evening we would gather our thoughts to see what we had gained at the end of the day from the experiences of the day. At the end of the week, we had a recap of what the adventurous week yielded for us especially since we were not going to see each other for a couple of weeks. The pictures taken during our eventful week would act as a reminder of the importance of our togetherness. I accompanied to the airport the following day, embraced and waved goodbye as I wished her a safe flight.

Work Cited

Alanazi, Muneera. Personal interview 9 Sep. 2017.

Saud,

You have some very nice scenes that “show” in the narrative, although I’d like to see more of these. Your mom sounds like a special person and your characterization of her is thoughtful and respectful – your admiration and love for her really shine through. Now, consider the notes I wrote about how you can bring more of those memories to life that you shared during your visit. Also note the length and confusion in some of the sentences and see how you can make those smoother and clearer for your reader.

One main thing is missing from your narrative: quotes! You need those anytime you interview someone so we get to hear their voice and feel their personality through their own words.

Take a look at all of the notes and Track Changes (in red) and let me know what questions you have. I’m happy to meet with you to discuss those!

Grade: B-