

## THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

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“Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”

In days of yore and in times and tides long gone before, there dwelt in a certain town of Persia two brothers, one named Kasim and the other Ali Baba, who at their father's demise had divided the little wealth he had left to them with equitable division, and had lost no time in wasting and spending it all. The elder, however, presently took to himself a wife, the daughter of an opulent merchant, so that when his father-in-law fared to the mercy of Almighty the Lord, he became owner of a large shop filled with rare goods and costly wares and of a storehouse stocked with precious stuffs, likewise of much gold that was buried in the ground. Thus was he known throughout the city as a substantial man. But the woman whom Ali Baba had married was poor and needy. They lived, therefore, in a mean hovel, and Ali Baba eked out a scanty livelihood by the sale of fuel which he daily collected in the jungle and carried about the town to the bazaar upon his three asses. Now it chanced one day that Ali Baba had cut dead branches and dry fuel sufficient for his need, and had placed the load upon his beasts, when suddenly he espied a dust cloud spiring high in air to his right and moving rapidly toward him, and when he closely considered it, he descried a troop of horsemen riding on a main and about to

reach him. At this sight he was sore alarmed, and fearing lest perchance they were a band of bandits who would slay him and drive off his donkeys, in his affright he began to run. But forasmuch as they were near-hand and he could not escape from out the forest, he drove his animals laden with the fuel into a byway of the bushes and swarmed up a thick trunk of a huge tree to hide himself therein. And he sat upon a branch whence he could descry everything beneath him whilst none below could catch a glimpse of him above, and that tree grew close beside a rock which towered high abovehead. The horsemen, young, active, and doughty riders, came close up to the rock face and all dismounted, whereat Ali Baba took good note of them, and soon he was fully persuaded by their mien and demeanor that they were a troop of highwaymen who, having fallen upon a caravan, had despoiled it and carried off the spoil and brought their booty to this place with intent of concealing it safely in some cache. Moreover, he observed that they were forty in number. Ali Baba saw the robbers, as soon as they came under the tree, each unbridle his horse and hobble it. Then all took off their saddlebags, which proved to be full of gold and silver. The man who seemed to be the captain presently pushed forward, load on shoulder, through thorns and thickets, till he came up to a certain spot, where he uttered these strange words: "Open, Sesame!" And forthwith appeared a wide doorway in the face of the rock. The robbers went in, and last of all their chief, and then the portal shut of itself. Long while they stayed within the cave whilst Ali Baba was constrained to abide perched upon the tree, reflecting that if he came down, peradventure the band might issue forth that very moment and seize him and slay him. At last he had determined to mount one of the horses and driving on his asses, to return townward, when suddenly the portal flew open. The robber chief was first to issue forth, then, standing at the entrance, he saw and counted his men as

they came out, and lastly he spake the magical words, "Shut, Sesame!" whereat the door closed of itself. When all had passed muster and review, each slung on his saddlebags and bridled his own horse, and as soon as ready they rode off, led by the leader, in the direction whence they came. Ali Baba remained still perched on the tree and watched their departure, nor would he descend until what time they were clean gone out of sight, lest perchance one of them return and look around and descry him. Then he thought within himself: "I too will try the virtue of those magical words and see if at my bidding the door will open and close." So he called out aloud, "Open, Sesame!" And no sooner had he spoken than straightway the portal flew open and he entered within. He saw a large cavern and a vaulted, in height equaling the stature of a full-grown man, and it was hewn in the live stone and, lighted up with light that came through air holes and bull's-eyes in the upper surface of the rock which formed the roof. He had expected to find naught save outer gloom in this robbers' den, and he was surprised to see the whole room filled with bales of all manner stuffs, and heaped up from sole to ceiling with camelloads of silks and brocades and embroidered cloths and mounds on mounds of varicolored carpetings. Besides which, he espied coins golden and silvern without measure or account, some piled upon the ground and others bound in leathern bags and sacks. Seeing these goods and moneys in such abundance, Ali Bab determined in his mind that not during a few years only but for many generations thieves must have stored their gains and spoils in this place. When he stood within the cave, its door had closed upon him, yet he was not dismayed, since he had kept in memory the magical words, and he took no heed of the precious stuffs around him, but applied himself only and wholly to the sacks of ashrafis. Of these he carried out as many as he judged sufficient burthen for the beasts, then he loaded them upon his animals, and covered his plunder

with sticks and fuel, so none might discern the bags but might think that he was carrying home his usual ware. Lastly he called out, "Shut, Sesame!" and forthwith the door closed, for the spell so wrought that whensoever any entered the cave, its portal shut of itself behind him, and as he issued therefrom, the same would neither open nor close again till he had pronounced the words "Shut, Sesame!" Presently, having laden his asses, Ali Baba urged them before him with all speed to the city and reaching home, he drove them into the yard, and, shutting close the outer door, took down first the sticks and fuel and after the bags of gold, which he carried in to his wife. She felt them, and finding them full of coin, suspected that Ali Baba had been robbing, and fell to berating and blaming him for that he should do so ill a thing. Quoth Ali Baba to his wife, "Indeed I am no robber, and rather do thou rejoice with me at our good fortune." Hereupon he told her of his adventure, and began to pour the gold from the bags in heaps before her, and her sight was dazzled by the sheen and her heart delighted at his recital and adventures. Then she began counting the gold, whereat quoth Ali Baba: "O silly woman, how long wilt thou continue turning over the coin? Now let me dig a hole wherein to hide this treasure, that none may know its secret." Quoth she: "Right is thy rede! Still would I weigh the moneys and have some inkling of their amount," and he replied, "As thou pleasest, but see thou tell no man." So she went off in haste to Kasim's home to borrow weights and scales wherewith she might balance the ashrafis and make some reckoning of their value. And when she could not find Kasim, she said to his wife, "Lend me, I pray thee, thy scales for a moment." Replied her sister-in-law, "Hast thou need of the bigger balance or the smaller?" and the other rejoined, "I need not the large scales, give me the little," and her sister-in-law cried, "Stay here a moment whilst I look about and find thy want." With this pretext Kasim's wife went aside and secretly smeared wax

and suet over the pan of the balance, that she might know what thing it was Ali Baba's wife would weigh, for she made sure that whatso it be, some bit thereof would stick to the wax and fat. So the woman took this opportunity to satisfy her curiosity, and Ali Baba's wife, suspecting naught thereof, carried home the scales and began to weigh the gold, whilst Ali Baba ceased not digging. And when the money was weighed, they twain stowed it into the hole, which they carefully filled up with earth. Then the good wife took back the scales to her kinswoman, all unknowing that an ashrafi had adhered to the cup of the scales. But when Kasim's wife espied the gold coin, she fumed with envy and wrath, saying to herself: "So ho! They borrowed my balance to weigh out ashrafis?" And she marveled greatly whence so poor a man as Ali Baba had gotten such store of wealth that he should be obliged to weigh it with a pair of scales. Now after long pondering the matter, when her husband returned home at eventide, she said to him: "O man, thou deemest thyself a wight of wealth and substance, but lo! thy brother Ali Baba is an emir by the side of thee, and richer far than thou art. He hath such heaps of gold that he must needs weigh his moneys with scales, whilst thou, forsooth, art satisfied to count thy coin." "Whence knowest thou this?" asked Kasim. And in answer his wife related all anent the pair of scales, and how she found an ashrafi stuck to them, and shewed him the gold coin, which bore the mark and superscription of some ancient king. No sleep had Kasim all that night by reason of his envy and jealousy and covetise, and next morning he rose betimes and going to Ali Baba, said: "O my brother, to all appearance thou art poor and needy, but in effect thou hast a store of wealth so abundant that perforce thou must weigh thy gold with scales." Quoth Ali Baba: "What is this thou sayest? I understand thee not. Make clear thy purport." And quoth Kasim, with ready rage: "Feign not that thou art ignorant of what I say, and think not to

deceive me." Then, showing him the ashrafi, he cried: "Thousands of gold coins such as these thou hast put by, and meanwhile my wife found this one stuck to the cup of the scales." Then Ali Baba understood how both Kasim and his wife knew that he had store of ashrafis, and said in his mind that it would not avail him to keep the matter hidden, but would rather cause ill will and mischief, and thus he was induced to tell his brother every whit concerning the bandits and also of the treasure trove in the cave. When he had heard the story, Kasim exclaimed: "I would fain learn of thee the certainty of the place where thou foundest the moneys, also the magical words whereby the door opened and closed. And I forewarn thee, an thou tell me not the whole truth, I will give notice of those ashrafis to the wah, then shalt thou forfeit all thy wealth and be disgraced and thrown into gaol." Thereupon Ali Baba told him his tale, not forgetting the magical words, and Kasim, who kept careful heed of all these matters, next day set out, driving ten mules he had hired, and readily found the place which Ali Baba had described to him. And when he came to the aforesaid rock and to the tree whereon Ali Baba had hidden himself, and he had made sure of the door he cried in great joy, "Open, Sesame!" The portal yawned wide at once and Kasim went within and saw the piles of jewels and treasures lying ranged all around, and as soon as he stood amongst them the door shut after him, as wont to do. He walked about in ecstasy marveling at the treasures, and when weary of admiration, he gathered together bags of ashrafis, a sufficient load for his ten mules, and placed them by the entrance in readiness to be carried outside and set upon the beasts. But by the will of the Lord Almighty he had clean forgotten the cabalistic words, and cried out, "Open, Barley!" Whereat the door refused to move. Astonished and confused beyond measure, he named the names of all manner of grains save sesame, which had slipped from his memory as though he had never heard the

word, whereat in his dire distress he heeded not the ashrafis that lay heaped at the entrance, and paced to and fro, backward and forward, within the cave, sorely puzzled and perplexed. The wealth whose sight had erewhile filled his heart with joy and gladness was now the cause of bitter grief and sadness. It came to pass that at noontide the robbers, returning by that way, saw from afar some mules standing beside the entrance, and much they marveled at what had brought the beasts to that place, for inasmuch as Kasim by mischance had faded to tether or hobble them, they had strayed about the jungle and were browsing hither and thither. However, the thieves paid scant regard to the estrays, nor cared they to secure them, but only wondered by what means they had wandered so far from the town. Then, reaching the cave, the captain and his troop dismounted, and going up to the door, repeated the formula, and at once it flew open. Now Kasim had heard from within the cave the horse hoofs drawing nigh and yet nigher, and he fell down to the ground in a fit of fear, never doubting that it was the clatter of the banditti who would slaughter him without fail. Howbeit, he presently took heart of grace, and at the moment when the door flew open he rushed out hoping to make good his escape. But the unhappy ran full tilt against the captain, who stood in front of the band, and felled him to the ground, whereupon a robber standing near his chief at once bared his brand and with one cut clave Kasim clean in twain. Thereupon the robbers rushed into the cavern, and put back as they were before the bags of ashrafis which Kasim had heaped up at the doorway ready for taking away, nor recked they aught of those which Ali Baba had removed, so dazed and amazed were they to discover by what means the strange man had effected an entrance. All knew that it was not possible for any to drop through the skylights, so tall and steep was the rock's face, withal slippery of ascent, and also that none could enter by the portal unless he knew the magical words

whereby to open it. However, they presently quartered the dead body of Kasim and hung it to the door within the cavern, two parts to the right jamb and as many to the left, that the sight might be a warning of approaching doom for all who dared enter the cave. Then, coming out, they closed the hoard door and rode away upon their wonted work. Now when night fell and Kasim came not home, his wife waxed uneasy in mind, and running round to Ali Baba, said: "O my brother, Kasim hath not returned. Thou knowest whither he went, and sore I fear me some misfortune hath betided him." Ali Baba also divined that a mishap had happened to prevent his return. Not the less, however, he strove to comfort his sister-in-law with words of cheer, and said: "O wife of my brother, Kasim haply exerciseth discretion and, avoiding the city, cometh by a roundabout road and will he here anon. This I do believe is the reason why he tarrieth." Thereupon, comforted in spirit, Kasim's wife fared homeward and sat awaiting her husband's return, but when half the night was spent and still he came not, she was as one distraught. She feared to cry aloud for her grief, lest haply the neighbors, hearing her, should come and learn the secret, so she wept in silence and upbraiding herself, fell to thinking: "Wherefore did I disclose this secret to him and beget envy and jealousy of Ali Baba? This be the fruit thereof, and hence the disaster that hath come down upon me." She spent the rest of the night in bitter tears, and early on the morrow hied in hottest hurry to Ali Baba and prayed that he would go forth in quest of his brother. So he strove to console her, and straightway set out with his asses for the forest. Presently, reaching the rock, he wondered to see stains of blood freshly shed, and not finding his brother or the ten mules, he forefelt a calamity from so evil a sign. He then went to the door and saying, "Open, Sesame!" he pushed in and saw the dead body of Kasim, two parts hanging to the right and the rest to the left of the entrance. Albeit he was



affrighted beyond measure of affright, he wrapped the quarters in two cloths and laid them upon one of his asses, hiding them carefully with sticks and fuel that none might see them. Then he placed the bags of gold upon the two other animals and likewise covered them most carefully, and when all was made ready he closed the cave door with the magical words, and set him forth wending homeward with all ward and watchfulness. The asses with the load of ashrafis he made over to his wife, and bade her bury the bags with diligence, but he told her not the condition in which he had come upon his brother Kasim. Then he went with the other ass—to wit, the beast whereon was laid the corpse—to the widow's house and knocked gently at the door. Now Kasim had a slave girl shrewd and sharp-witted, Morgiana called. She as softly undid the bolt and admitted Ali Baba and the ass into the courtyard of the house, when he let down the body from the beast's back and said: "O Morgiana, haste thee and make thee ready to perform the rites for the burial of thy lord. I now go to tell the tidings to thy mistress, and I will quickly return to help thee in this matter." At that instant Kasim's widow, seeing her brother-in-law, exclaimed: "O Ali Baba, what news bringest thou of my spouse? Alas! I see grief tokens written upon thy countenance. Say quickly what hath happened." Then he recounted to her how it had fared with her husband and how he had been slain by the robbers and in what wise he had brought home the dead body. Ali Baba pursued: "O my lady, what was to happen hath happened, but it behooveth us to keep this matter secret, for that our lives depend upon privacy." She wept with sore weeping and made answer: "It hath fared with my husband according to the fiat of Fate, and now for thy safety's sake I give thee my word to keep the affair concealed." He replied: "Naught can avail when the Lord hath decreed. Rest thee in patience until the days of thy widowhood be accomplisht, after which time I will take thee to wife, and thou shalt live

in comfort and happiness. And fear not lest my first spouse vex thee or show aught of jealousy, for that she is kindly and tender of heart." The widow, lamenting her loss noisily, cried, "Be it as e'en thou please." Then Ali Baba farewelled her, weeping and wailing for her husband, and joining Morgiana, took counsel with her how to manage the burial of his brother. So, after much consultation and many warnings, he left the slave girl and departed home driving his ass before him. As soon as Ali Baba had fared forth Morgiana went quickly to a druggist's shop, and that she might the better dissemble with him and not make known the matter, she asked of him a drug often administered to men when diseased with dangerous distemper. He gave it saying: "Who is there in thy house that lieth so in as to require this medicine?" and said she: "My master Kasim is sick well nigh unto death. For many days he hath nor spoken nor tasted aught of food, so that almost we despair of his life." Next day Morgiana went again and asked the druggist for more of medicine and essences such as are adhibited to the sick when at door of death, that the moribund may haply rally before the last breath. The man gave the potion and she, taking it, sighed aloud and wept, saying: "I fear me he may not have strength to drink this draught. Methinks all will be over with him ere I return to the house." Meanwhile Ali Baba was anxiously awaiting to hear sounds of wailing and lamentation in Kasim's home, that he might at such signal hasten thither and take part in the ceremonies of the funeral. Early on the second day Morgiana went with veiled face to one Baba Mustafa, a tailor well shotten in years whose craft was to make shrouds and cerecloths, and as soon as she saw him open his shop she gave him a gold piece and said, "Do thou bind a bandage over thine eyes and come along with me." Mustafa made as though he would not go, whereat Morgiana placed a second gold coin in his palm and entreated him to accompany her. The tailor presently

consented for greed of gain, so, tying a kerchief tightly over his eyes, she led him by the hand to the house wherein lay the dead body of her master. Then, taking off the bandage in the darkened room, she bade him sew together the quarters of the corpse, limb to its limb, and casting a cloth upon the body, said to the tailor: "Make haste and sew a shroud according to the size of this dead man, and I will give thee therefor yet another ducat." Baba Mustafa quickly made the cerecloth of fitting length and breadth, and Morgiana paid him the promised ashrafi, then, once more bandaging his eyes, led him back to the place whence she had brought him. After this she returned hurriedly home and with the help of Ali Baba washed the body in warm water and donning the shroud, laid the corpse upon a clean place ready for burial. This done, Morgiana went to the mosque and gave notice to an imam that a funeral was awaiting the mourners in a certain household, and prayed that he would come to read the prayers for the dead, and the imam went back with her. Then four neighbors took up the bier and bore it on their shoulders and fared forth with the imam and others who were wont to give assistance at such obsequies. After the funeral prayers were ended four other men carried off the coffin, and Morgiana walked before it bare of head, striking her breast and weeping and wailing with exceeding loud lament, whilst Ali Baba and the neighbors came behind. In such order they entered the cemetery and buried him, then, leaving him to Munkar and Nakir—the Questioners of the Dead—all wended their ways. Presently the women of the quarter, according to the custom of the city, gathered together in the house of mourning and sat an hour with Kasim's widow comforting and condoling, presently leaving her somewhat resigned and cheered. Ali Baba stayed forty days at home in ceremonial lamentation for the loss of his brother, so none within the town save himself and his wife (Kasim's widow) and Morgiana knew aught the secret. And when the forty

days of mourning were ended Ali Baba removed to his own quarters all the property belonging to the deceased and openly married the widow. Then he appointed his nephew, his brother's eldest son, who had lived a long time with a wealthy merchant and was perfect of knowledge in all matters of trade, such as selling and buying, to take charge of the defunct's shop and to carry on the business. It so chanced one day when the robbers, as was their wont, came to the treasure cave that they marveled exceedingly to find nor sign nor trace of Kasim's body, whilst they observed that much of gold had been carried off. Quoth the captain: "Now it behooveth us to make inquiry in this matter, else shall we suffer much of loss, and this our treasure, which we and our forefathers have amassed during the course of many years, will little by little be wasted and spoiled." Hereto all assented and with single mind agreed that he whom they had slain had knowledge of the magical words whereby the door was made to open; moreover, that someone besides him had cognizance of the spell and had carried off the body, and also much of gold. Wherefore they needs must make diligent research and find out who the man ever might be. They then took counsel and determined that one amongst them, who should be sagacious and deft of wit, must don the dress of some merchant from foreign parts, then, repairing to the city, he must go about from quarter to quarter and from street to street and learn if any townsman had lately died, and if so where he went to dwell, that with this clue they might be enabled to find the wight they sought. Hereat said one of the robbers: "Grant me leave that I fare and find out such tidings in the town and bring thee word anon, and if I fail of my purpose I hold my life in forfeit." Accordingly that bandit, after disguising himself by dress, pushed at night into the town, and next morning early he repaired to the market square and saw that none of the shops had yet been opened save only that of Baba Mustafa, the tailor, who,

thread and needle in hand, sat upon his working stool. The thief bade him good day and said: "'Tis yet dark. How canst thou see to sew?" Said the tailor: "I perceive thou art a stranger. Despite my years, my eyesight is so keen that only yesterday I sewed together a dead body whilst sitting in a room quite darkened." Quoth the bandit thereupon to himself, "I shall get somewhat of my want from this snip," and to secure a further clue he asked: "Meseemeth thou wouldst jest with me, and thou meanest that a cerecloth for a corpse was stitched by thee and that thy business is to sew shrouds." Answered the tailor: "It mattereth not to thee. Question me no more questions." Thereupon the robber placed an ashrafi in his hand and continued: "I desire not to discover aught thou hidest, albeit my breast, like every honest man's, is the grave of secrets, and this only would I learn of thee— in what house didst thou do that job? Canst thou direct me thither, or thyself conduct me thereto?" The tailor took the gold with greed and cried: "I have not seen with my own eyes the way to that house. A certain bondswoman led me to a place which I know right well, and there she bandaged my eyes and guided me to some tenement and lastly carried me into a darkened room where lay the dead body dismembered. Then she unbound the kerchief and bade me sew together first the corpse and then the shroud, which having done, she again blindfolded me and led me back to the stead whence she had brought me and left me there. Thou seest then I am not able to tell thee where thou shalt find the house." Quoth the robber: "Albeit thou knowest not the dwelling whereof thou speakest, still canst thou take me to the place where thou wast blindfolded. Then I will bind a kerchief over thine eyes and lead thee as thou wast led. On this wise perchance thou mayest hit upon the site. An thou wilt do this favor by me, see, here another golden ducat is thine." Thereupon the bandit slipped a second ashrafi into the tailor's palm, and Baba Mustafa thrust it with the first into his pocket.

Then, leaving his shop as it was, he walked to the place where Morgiana had tied the kerchief around his eyes, and with him went the robber, who, after binding on the bandage, led him by the hand. Baba Mustafa, who was clever and keen-witted, presently striking the street whereby he had fared with the handmaid, walked on counting step by step, then, halting suddenly, he said, "Thus far I came with her," and the twain stopped in front of Kasim's house, wherein now dwelt his brother Ali Baba. The robber then made marks with white chalk upon the door, to the end that he might readily find it at some future time, and removing the bandage from the tailor's eyes, said: "O Baba Mustafa, I thank thee for this favor, and Almighty the Lord guerdon thee for thy goodness. Tell me now, I pray thee, who dwelleth in yonder house?" Quoth he: "In very sooth I wot not, for I have little knowledge concerning this quarter of the city." And the bandit, understanding that he could find no further clue from the tailor, dismissed him to his shop with abundant thanks, and hastened back to the tryst place in the jungle where the band awaited his coming. Not long after, it so fortuneed that Morgiana, going out upon some errand, marveled exceedingly at seeing the chalk marks showing white in the door. She stood awhile deep in thought, and presently divined that some enemy had made the signs that he might recognize the house and play some sleight upon her lord. She therefore chalked the doors of all her neighbors in like manner and kept the matter secret, never entrusting it or to master or to mistress. Meanwhile the robber told his comrades his tale of adventure and how he had found the clue, so the captain and with him all the band went one after other by different ways till they entered the city, and he who had placed the mark on Ali Baba's door accompanied the chief to point out the place. He conducted him straightway to the house and shewing the sign exclaimed, "Here dwelleth he of whom we are in search!"

But when the captain looked around him, he saw that all the dwellings bore chalk marks after like fashion, and he wondered, saying: "By what manner of means knowest thou which house of all these houses that bear similar signs is that whereof thou spokest?" Hereat the robber guide was confounded beyond measure of confusion, and could make no answer. Then with an oath he cried: "I did assuredly set a sign upon a door, but I know not whence came all the marks upon the other entrances, nor can I say for a surety which it was I chalked." Thereupon the captain returned to the market place and said to his men: "We have toiled and labored in vain, nor have we found the house we went forth to seek. Return we now to the forest, our rendezvous. I also will fare thither." Then all trooped off and assembled together within the treasure cave, and when the robbers had all met, the captain judged him worthy of punishment who had spoken falsely and had led them through the city to no purpose. So he imprisoned him in presence of them all, and then said he: "To him amongst you will I show special favor who shall go to town and bring me intelligence whereby we may lay hands upon the plunderer of our property." Hereat another of the company came forward and said, "I am ready to go and inquire into the case, and 'tis I who will bring thee to thy wish." The captain, after giving him presents and promises, dispatched him upon his errand, and by the decree of Destiny, which none may gainsay, this second robber went first to the house of Baba Mustafa the tailor, as had done the thief who had foregone him. In like manner he also persuaded the snip with gifts of golden coin that he be led hood-winked, and thus too he was guided to Ali Baba's door. Here, noting the work of his predecessor, he affixed to the jamb a mark with red chalk, the better to distinguish it from the others, whereon still showed the white. Then hied he back in stealth to his company. But Morgiana on her part also descried the red sign on the entrance, and with subtle

forethought marked all the others after the same fashion, nor told she any what she had done. Meanwhile the bandit rejoined his band and vauntingly said: "O our captain, I have found the house and thereon put a mark whereby I shall distinguish it clearly from all its neighbors." But, as aforetime, when the troop repaired thither, they saw each and every house marked with signs of red chalk. So they returned disappointed and the captain, waxing displeased exceedingly and distraught, clapped also this spy into gaol. Then said the chief to himself: "Two men have failed in their endeavor and have met their rightful meed of punishment, and I trow that none other of my band will essay to follow up their research. So I myself will go and find the house of this wight." Accordingly he fared along, aided by the tador Baba Mustafa, who had gained much gain of golden pieces in this matter, he hit upon the house of Ali Baba. And here he made no outward show or sign, but marked it on the tablet of his heart and impressed the picture upon the page of his memory. Then, returning to the jungle, he said to his men: "I have full cognizance of the place and have limned it clearly in my mind, so now there will be no difficulty in finding it. Go forth straightway and buy me and bring hither nineteen mules, together with one large leathern jar of mustard oil and seven and thirty vessels of the same kind clean empty. Without me and the two locked up in gaol ye number thirty-seven souls, so I will stow you away armed and accoutered each within his jar and will load two upon each mule, and upon the nineteenth mule there shall be a man in an empty jar on one side and on the other the jar full of oil. I for my part, in guise of an oil merchant, will drive the mules into the town, arriving at the house by night, and will ask permission of its master to tarry there until morning. After this we shall seek occasion during the dark hours to rise up and fall upon him and slay him." Furthermore, the captain spake, saying: "When we have made an end of him we shall recover the gold and



treasure whereof he robbed us and bring it back upon the mules." This counsel pleased the robbers, who went forthwith and purchased mules and huge leathern jars, and did as the captain had bidden them. And after a delay of three days, shortly before nightfall they arose, and oversmearing all the jars with oil of mustard, each hid him inside an empty vessel. The chief then disguised himself in trader's gear and placed the jars upon the nineteen mules; to wit, the thirty-seven vessels, in each of which lay a robber armed and accoutered, and the one that was full of oil. This done, he drove the beasts before him, and presently he reached Ali Baba's place at nightfall, when it chanced that the housemaster was strolling after supper to and fro in front of his home. The captain saluted him with the salaam and said: "I come from such-and-such a village with oil, and oftentimes have I been here a-selling oil, but now to my grief I have arrived too late and I am sore troubled and perplexed as to where I shall spend the night. An thou have pity on me, I pray thee grant that I tarry here in thy courtyard and ease the mules by taking down the jars and giving the beasts somewhat of fodder." Albeit Ali Baba had heard the captain's voice when perched upon the tree and had seen him enter the cave, yet by reason of the disguise he knew him not for the leader of the thieves, and granted his request with hearty welcome and gave him full license to halt there for the night. He then pointed out an empty shed wherein to tether the mules, and bade one of the slave boys go fetch grain and water. He also gave orders to the slave girl Morgiana, saying: "A guest hath come hither and tarrieth here tonight. Do thou busy thyself with all speed about his supper and make ready the guest bed for him." Presently, when the captain had let down all the jars and had fed and watered his mules, Ali Baba received him with all courtesy and kindness, and summoning Morgiana, said in his presence: "See thou fail not in service of this our stranger, nor suffer him to lack for aught. Tomorrow early I

would fare to the hammam and bathe, so do thou give my slave boy Abdullah a suit of clean white clothes which I may put on after washing. Moreover, make thee ready a somewhat of broth overnight, that I may drink it after my return home." Replied she, "I will have all in readiness as thou hast bidden." So Ali Baba retired to his rest, and the captain, having supped, repaired to the shed and saw that all the mules had their food and drink for the night, and finding utter privacy, whispered to his men who were in ambush: "This night at midnight, when ye hear my voice, do you quickly open with your sharp knives the leathern jars from top to bottom, and issue forth without delay." Then, passing through the kitchen, he reached the chamber wherein a bed had been dispread for him, Morgiana showing the way with a lamp. Quoth she, "An thou need aught beside, I pray thee command this thy slave, who is ever ready to obey thy say!" He made answer, "Naught else need I." Then, putting out the light, he lay down on the bed to sleep awhile ere the time came to rouse his men and finish off the work. Meanwhile Morgiana did as her master had bidden her. She first took out a suit of clean white clothes and made it over to Abdullah, who had not yet gone to rest. Then she placed the pigskin upon the hearth to boil the broth and blew the fire till it burnt briskly. After a short delay she needs must see an the broth be boiling, but by that time all the lamps had gone out and she found that the oil was spent and that nowhere could she get a light. The slave boy Abdullah observed that she was troubled and perplexed hereat, and quoth he to her: "Why make so much ado? In yonder shed are many jars of oil. Go now and take as much soever as thou listest." Morgiana gave thanks to him for his suggestion, and Abdullah, who was lying at his ease in the hall, went off to sleep so that he might wake betimes and serve Ali Baba in the bath. So the handmaiden rose, and with oil can in hand walked to the shed where stood the leathern jars all ranged in rows. Now as she drew

nigh unto one of the vessels, the thief who was hidden therein, hearing the tread of footsteps, bethought him that it was of his captain, whose summons he awaited, so he whispered, "Is it now time for us to sally forth?" Morgiana started back affrighted at the sound of human accents, but inasmuch as she was bold and ready of wit, she replied, "The time is not yet come," and said to herself: "These jars are not full of oil, and herein I perceive a manner of mystery. Haply the oil merchant hatcheth some treacherous plot against my lord, so the Lord, the Compassionating, the Compassionate, protect us from his snares!" Wherefore she answered in a voice made like to the captain's, "Not yet, the time is not come." Then she went to the next jar and returned the same reply to him who was within, and soon to all the vessels, one by one. Then said she in herself: "Laud to the Lord! My master took this fellow in believing him to be an oil merchant, but lo! he hath admitted a band of robbers, who only await the signal to fall upon him and plunder the place and do him die." Then passed she on to the furthest jar and, finding it brimming with oil, filled her can. and returning to the kitchen, trimmed the lamp and lit the wicks. Then, bringing forth a large caldron, she set it upon the fire, and filling it with oil from out the jar, heaped wood upon the hearth and fanned it to a fierce flame, the readier to boil its contents. When this was done, she bailed it out in potfuls and poured it seething hot into the leathern vessels, one by one, while the thieves, unable to escape, were scalded to death and every jar contained a corpse. Thus did this slave girl by her subtle wit make a clean end of all, noiselessly and unknown even to the dwellers in the house. Now when she had satisfied herself that each and every of the men had been slain, she went back to the kitchen and, shutting to the door, sat brewing Ali Baba's broth. Scarce had an hour passed before the captain woke from sleep and, opening wide his window, saw that all was dark and silent. So he

clapped his hands as a signal for his men to come forth, but not a sound was heard in return. After a while he clapped again and called aloud, but got no answer, and when he cried out a third time without reply, he was perplexed and went out to the shed wherein stood the jars. He thought to himself: "Perchance all are fallen asleep, whenas the time for action is now at hand, so I must e'en awaken them without stay or delay." Then, approaching the nearest jar, he was startled by a smell of oil and seething flesh, and touching it outside, he felt it reeking hot. Then, going to the others one by one, he found all in like condition. Hereat he knew for a surety the fate which had betided his band and, fearing for his own safety, he clomb onto the wall, and thence dropping into a garden, made his escape in high dudgeon and sore disappointment. Morgiana awaited awhile to see the Captain return from the shed but he came not, whereat she knew that he had scaled the wall and had taken to flight, for that the street door was double-locked. And the thieves being all disposed of on this wise, Morgiana laid her down to sleep in perfect solace and ease of mind. When two hours of darkness yet remained, Ali Baba awoke and went to the hammam, knowing naught of the night adventure, for the gallant slave girl had not aroused him, nor indeed had she deemed such action expedient, because had she sought an opportunity of reporting to him her plan, she might haply have lost her chance and spoiled the project. The sun was high over the horizon when Ali Baba walked back from the baths, and he marveled exceedingly to see the jars still standing under the shed, and said: "How cometh it that he, the oil merchant, my guest, hath not carried to the market his mules and jars of oil?" She answered: "the Lord Almighty vouchsafe to thee sixscore years and ten of safety! I will tell thee in privacy of this merchant." So Ali Baba went apart with his slave girl, who, taking him without the house, first locked the court door, then, showing him a jar, she said,

“Prithee look into this and see if within there be oil or aught else.” Thereupon, peering inside it, he perceived a man, at which sight he cried aloud and fain would have fled in his fright. Quoth Morgiana: “Fear him not. This man hath no longer the force to work thee harm, he lieth dead and stone-dead.” Hearing such words of comfort and reassurance, Ali Baba asked: “O Morgiana, what evils have we escaped, and by what means hath this wretch become the quarry of Fate?” She answered: “Alhamdolillah— praise be to Almighty the Lord!— I will inform thee fully of the case. But hush thee, speak not aloud, lest haply the neighbors learn the secret and it end in our confusion. Look now into all the jars, one by one from first to last.” So Ali Baba examined them severally and found in each a man fully armed and accoutered, and all lay scalded to death. Hereat, speechless for sheer amazement, he stared at the jars, but presently, recovering himself, he asked, “And where is he, the oil merchant?” Answered she: “Of him also I will inform thee. The villain was no trader, but a traitorous assassin whose honeyed words would have ensnared thee to thy doom. And now I will tell thee what he was and what hath happened, but meanwhile thou art fresh from the hammam and thou shouldst first drink somewhat of this broth for thy stomach’s and thy health’s sake.” So Ali Baba went within and Morgiana served up the mess, after which quoth her master: “I fain would hear this wondrous story. Prithee tell it to me, and set my heart at ease.” Hereat the handmaid fell to relating whatso had betided in these words: “O my master, when thou badest me boil the broth and retiredst to rest, thy slave in obedience to thy command took out a suit of clean white clothes and gave it to the boy Abdullah, then kindled the fire and set on the broth. As soon as it was ready I had need to light a lamp so that I might see to skim it, but all the oil was spent, and, learning this, I told my want to the slave boy Abdullah, who advised me to draw somewhat

from the jars which stood under the shed. Accordingly I took a can and went to the first vessel, when suddenly I heard a voice within whisper with all caution, 'Is it now time for us to sally forth?' I was amazed thereat, and judged that the pretended merchant had laid some plot to slay thee, so I replied, 'The time is not yet come.' Then I went to the second jar and heard another voice, to which I made the like answer, and so on with all of them. I now was certified that these men awaited only some signal from their chief, whom thou didst take to guest within thy walls supposing him to be a merchant in oil, and that after thou receivedst him hospitably the miscreant had brought these men to murder thee and to plunder thy good and spoil thy house." But I gave him no opportunity to will his wish. The last jar I found full of od, and taking somewhat therefrom, I lit the lamp. Then, putting a large caldron upon the fire, I filled it up with oil which I brought from the jar and made a fierce blaze under it, and when the contents were seething hot, I took out sundry cansful with intent to scald them all to death, and going to each jar in due order, I poured within them, one by one, boiling oil. On this wise having destroyed them utterly, I returned to the kitchen, and having extinguished the lamps, stood by the window watching what might happen, and how that false merchant would act next. Not long after I had taken my station, the robber captain awoke and oftentimes signaled to his thieves. Then, getting no reply, he came downstairs and went out to the jars, and finding that all his men were slain, he fled through the darkness, I know not whither. So when he had clean disappeared I was assured that, the door being double-locked, he had scaled the wall and dropped into the garden and made his escape. Then with my heart at rest I slept." And Morgiana, after telling her story to her master, presently added: "This is the whole truth I have related to thee. For some days indeed have I had inkling of such matter, but withheld it from thee, deeming it inexpedient to

risk the chance of its meeting the neighbors' ears. Now, however, there is no help but to tell thee thereof. One day as I came to the house door I espied thereon a white chalk mark, and on the next day a red sign beside the white. I knew not the intent wherewith the marks were made, nevertheless I set others upon the entrances of sundry neighbors, judging that some enemy had done this deed, whereby to encompass my master's destruction. Therefore I made the marks on all the other doors in such perfect conformity with those I found that it would be hard to distinguish amongst them. Judge now and see if these signs and all this villainy be not the work of the bandits of the forest, who marked our house that on such wise they might know it again. Of these forty thieves there yet remain two others concerning whose case I know naught, so beware of them, but chiefly of the third remaining robber, their captain, who fled hence alive. Take good heed and be thou cautious of him, for shouldst thou fall into his hands, he will in no wise spare thee, but will surely murder thee. I will do all that lieth in me to save from hurt and harm thy life and property, nor shall thy slave be found wanting in any service to my lord." Hearing these words, Ali Baba rejoiced with exceeding joyance and said to her: "I am well pleased with thee for this thy conduct, and say me what wouldst thou have me do in thy behalf. I shall not fail to remember thy brave deed so long as breath in me remaineth." Quoth she: "It behooveth us before all things forthright to bury these bodies in the ground, that so the secret be not known to anyone." Hereupon Ali Baba took with him his slave boy Abdullah into the garden and there under a tree they dug for the corpses of the thieves a deep pit in size proportionate to its contents, and they dragged the bodies (having carried off their weapons) to the fosse and threw them in. Then, covering up the remains of the seven and thirty robbers, they made the ground appear level and clean as it wont to be. They also hid the leathern jars and

the gear and arms, and presently Ali Baba sent the mules by ones and twos to the bazaar and sold them all with the able aid of his slave boy Abdullah. Thus the matter was hushed up, nor did it reach the ears of any. However, Ali Baba ceased not to be ill at ease, lest haply the captain or the surviving two robbers should wreak their vengeance on his head. He kept himself private with all caution, and took heed that none learn a word of what had happened and of the wealth which he had carried off from the bandits' cave. Meanwhile the captain of the thieves, having escaped with his life, fled to the forest in hot wrath and sore irk of mind, and his senses were scattered and the color of his visage vanished like ascending smoke. Then he thought the matter over again and again, and at last he firmly resolved that he needs must take the life of Ali Baba, else he would lose all the treasure which his enemy, by knowledge of the magical words, would take away and turn to his own use.

Furthermore, he determined that he would undertake the business singlehanded; and that after getting rid of Ali Baba, he would gather together another band of banditti and would pursue his career of brigandage, as indeed his forebears had done for many generations. So he lay down to rest that night, and rising early in the morning, donned a dress of suitable appearance, then, going to the city, alighted at a caravanserai, thinking to himself: "Doubtless the murder of so many men hath reached the wali's ears, and Ali Baba hath been seized and brought to justice, and his house is leveled and his good is confiscated. The townfolk must surely have heard tidings of these matters." So he straightway asked of the keeper of the khan, "What strange things have happened in the city during the last few days?" And the other told him all that he had seen and heard, but the captain could not learn a whit of that which most concerned him. Hereby he understood that Ali Baba was ware and wise, and that he had not only carried away such store of treasure, but he had also destroyed so many



lives and withal had come off scatheless. Furthermore, that he himself must needs have all his wits alert not to fall into the hands of his foe and perish. With this resolve the captain hired a shop in the bazaar, whither he bore whole bales of the finest stuffs and goodly merchandise from his forest treasure house, and presently he took his seat within the store and fell to doing merchant's business. By chance his place fronted the booth of the defunct Kasim, where his son, Ali Baba's nephew, now traded, and the captain, who called himself Khwajah Hasan, soon formed acquaintance and friendship with the shopkeepers around about him and treated all with profuse civilities. But he was especially gracious and cordial to the son of Kasim, a handsome youth and a well-dressed, and oftentimes he would sit and chat with him for a long while. A few days after, it chanced that Ali Baba, as he was sometimes wont to do, came to see his nephew, whom he found sitting in his shop. The captain saw and recognized him at sight, and one morning he asked the young man, saying, "Prithee tell me, who is he that ever and anon cometh to thee at thy place of sale?" Whereto the youth made answer, "He is my uncle, the brother of my father." Whereupon the captain showed him yet greater favor and affection, the better to deceive him for his own devices, and gave him presents and made him sit at meat with him and fed him with the daintiest of dishes. Presently Ali Baba's nephew bethought him it was only right and proper that he also should invite the merchant to supper, but whereas his own house was small, and he was straitened for room and could not make a show of splendor, as did Khwajah Hasan, he took counsel with his uncle on the matter. Ali Baba replied to his nephew: "Thou sayest well. It behooveth thee to entreat thy friend in fairest fashion even as he hath entreated thee. On the morrow, which is Friday, shut thy shop, as do all merchants of repute. Then, after the early meal, take Khwajah Hasan to smell the air, and as thou walkest lead him hither

unawares. Meanwhile I will give orders that Morgiana shall make ready for his coming the best of viands and all necessaries for a feast. Trouble not thyself on any wise, but leave the matter in my hands." Accordingly on the next day — to wit, Friday— the nephew of Ali Baba took Khwajah Hasan to walk about the garden, and as they were returning he led him by the street wherein his uncle dwelt. When they came to the house, the youth stopped at the door and knocking, said: "O my lord, this is my second home. My uncle hath heard much of thee and of thy goodness meward, and desireth with exceeding desire to see thee, so shouldst thou consent to enter and visit him, I shall be truly glad and thankful to thee." Albeit Khwajah Hasan rejoiced in heart that he had thus found means whereby he might have access to his enemy's house and household, and although he hoped soon to attain his end by treachery, yet he hesitated to enter in and stood to make his excuses and walk away. But when the door was opened by the slave porter, Ali Baba's nephew seized his companion's hand and after abundant persuasion led him in, whereat he entered with great show of cheerfulness as though much pleased and honored. The housemaster received him with all favor and worship and asked him of his welfare, and said to him: "O my lord, I am obliged and thankful to thee for that thou hast shewn favor to the son of my brother, and I perceive that thou regardest him with an affection even fonder than my own." Khwajah Hasan replied with pleasant words and said: "Thy nephew vastly taketh my fancy and in him I am well pleased, for that although young in years yet he hath been endued by the Lord with much of wisdom." Thus they twain conversed with friendly conversation, and presently the guest rose to depart and said: "O my lord, thy slave must now farewell thee, but on some future day— The Lord-willing— he will again wait upon thee." Ali Baba, however, would not let him leave, and asked: "Whither wendest thou, O my friend? I

would invite thee to my table, and I pray thee sit at meat with us and after hie thee home in peace. Perchance the dishes are not as delicate as those whereof thou art wont to eat, still deign grant me this request, I pray thee, and refresh thyself with my victual." Quoth Khwajah Hasan: "O lord, I am beholden to thee for thy gracious invitation, and with pleasure would I sit at meat with thee, but for a special reason must I needs excuse myself. Suffer me therefore to depart, for I may not tarry longer, nor accept thy gracious offer." Hereto the host made reply: "I pray thee, O my lord, tell me what may be the reason so urgent and weighty." And Khwajah Hasan answered: "The cause is this. I must not, by order of the physician who cured me lately of my complaint, eat aught of food prepared with salt." Quoth Ali Baba: "An this be all, deprive me not, I pray thee, of the honor thy company will confer upon me. As the meats are not yet cooked, I will forbid the kitchener to make use of any salt. Tarry here awhile, and I will return anon to thee." So saying, Ali Baba went in to Morgiana and bade her not put salt into any one of the dishes, and she, while busied with her cooking, fell to marveling greatly at such order and asked her master, "Who is he that eateth meat wherein is no salt?" He answered: "What to thee mattereth it who he may be? Only do thou my bidding." She rejoined: "'Tis well. All shall be as thou wishest." But in mind she wondered at the man who made such strange request, and desired much to look upon him. Wherefore, when all the meats were ready for serving up, she helped the slave boy Abdullah to spread the table and set on the meal, and no sooner did she see Khwajah Hasan than she knew who he was, albeit he had disguised himself in the dress of a stranger merchant. Furthermore, when she eyed him attentively, she espied a dagger hidden under his robe. "So ho!" quoth she to herself. "This is the cause why the villain eateth not of salt, for that he seeketh an opportunity to slay my master, whose mortal enemy he is. Howbeit I

will be beforehand with him and dispatch him ere he find a chance to harm my lord." Now when Ali Baba and Khwajah Hasan had eaten their sufficiency, the slave boy Abdullah brought Morgiana word to serve the dessert, and she cleared the table and set on fruit fresh and dried in salvers, then she placed by the side of Ali Baba a small tripod for three cups with a flagon of wine, and lastly she went off with the slave boy Abdullah into another room, as though she would herself eat supper. Then Khwajah Hasan— that is, the captain of the robbers— perceiving that the coast was clear, exulted mightily, saying to himself: "The time hath come for me to take full vengeance. With one thrust of my dagger I will dispatch this fellow, then escape across the garden and wend my ways. His nephew will not adventure to stay my hand, for an he do but move a finger or toe with that intent, another stab will settle his earthly account. Still must I wait awhile until the slave boy and the cookmaid shall have eaten and lain down to rest them in the kitchen." Morgiana, however, watched him wistfully and divining his purpose, said in her mind: "I must not allow this villain advantage over my lord, but by some means I must make void his project and at once put an end to the life of him." Accordingly the trusty slave girl changed her dress with all haste and donned such clothes as dancers wear. She veiled her face with a costly kerchief, around her head she bound a fine turban, and about her middle she tied a waistcloth worked with gold and silver, wherein she stuck a dagger whose hilt was rich in filigree and jewelry. Thus disguised, she said to the slave boy Abdullah: "Take now thy tambourine, that we may play and sing and dance in honor of our master's guest." So he did her bidding and the twain went into the room, the lad playing and the lass following. Then, making a low congee, they asked leave to perform and disport and play, and Ali Baba gave permission, saying, "Dance now and do your best that this our guest may be mirthful and merry." Quoth

Khwajah Hasan, "O my lord, thou dost indeed provide much pleasant entertainment." Then the slave boy Abdullah, standing by, began to strike the tambourine whilst Morgiana rose up and showed her perfect art and pleased them vastly with graceful steps and sportive motion. And suddenly, drawing the poniard from her belt, she brandished it and paced from side to side, a spectacle which pleased them most of all. At times also she stood before them, now clapping the sharp-edged dagger under armpit and then setting it against her breast. Lastly she took the tambourine from the slave boy Abdullah, and still holding the poniard in her right, she went round for largess as is the custom amongst merrymakers. First she stood before Ali Baba, who threw a gold coin into the tambourine, and his nephew likewise put in an ashrafi. Then Khwajah Hasan, seeing her about to approach him, fell to pulling out his purse, when she heartened her heart, and quick as the blinding levin she plunged the dagger into his vitals, and forthwith the miscreant fell back stone-dead. Ali Baba was dismayed, and cried in his wrath: "O unhappy, what is this deed thou hast done to bring about my ruin?" But she replied: "Nay, O my lord, rather to save thee and not to cause thee harm have I slain this man. Loosen his garments and see what thou wilt discover thereunder." So Ali Baba searched the dead man's dress and found concealed therein a dagger. Then said Morgiana: "This wretch was thy deadly enemy. Consider him well. He is none other than the oil merchant, the captain of the band of robbers. Whenas he came hither with intent to take thy life, he would not eat thy salt, and when thou toldest me that he wished not any in the meat, I suspected him, and at first sight I was assured that he would surely do thee die. Almighty the Lord he praised, 'tis even as I thought." Then Ali Baba lavished upon her thanks and expressions of gratitude, saying, "Lo, these two times hast thou saved me from his hand," and falling upon her neck, he cried: "See,

thou art free, and as reward for this thy fealty I have wedded thee to my nephew." Then, turning to the youth, he said: "Do as I bid thee and thou shalt prosper. I would that thou marry Morgiana, who is a model of duty and loyalty. Thou seest now yon Khwajah Hasan sought thy friendship only that he might find opportunity to take my life, but this maiden with her good sense and her wisdom hath slain him and saved us." Ali Baba's nephew straightway consented to marry Morgiana. After which the three, raising the dead body, bore it forth with all heed and vigilance and privily buried it in the garden, and for many years no one know aught thereof. In due time Ali Baba married his brother's son to Morgiana with great pomp, and spread a bride feast in most sumptuous fashion for his friends and neighbors, and made merry with them and enjoyed singing and all manner of dancing and amusements. He prospered in every undertaking and Time smiled upon him and a new source of wealth was opened to him. For fear of the thieves he had not once visited the jungle cave wherein lay the treasure since the day he had carried forth the corpse of his brother Kasim. But some time after, he mounted his hackney one morning and journeyed thither, with all care and caution, till finding no signs of man or horse, and reassured in his mind, he ventured to draw near the door. Then, alighting from his beast, he tied it up to a tree, and going to the entrance, pronounced the words which he had not forgotten, "Open, Sesame!" Hereat, as was its wont, the door flew open, and entering thereby he saw the goods and hoard of gold and silver untouched and lying as he had left them. So he felt assured that not one of all the thieves remained alive, and that save himself there was not a soul who knew the secret of the place. At once he bound in his saddlecloth a load of ashrafis such as his horse could bear and brought it home, and in after days he showed the hoard to his sons and sons' sons and taught them how the door could be caused to open and shut. Thus Ali Baba and his

household lived all their lives in wealth and joyance in that city where erst he had been a pauper, and by the blessing of that secret treasure he rose to high degree and dignities.

