

## THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

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[continues]

“The Second Kalandar’s Tale”

Know, O my lady, that I was not born one-eyed, and mine is a strange story. And it were graven with needle graver on the eye corners, it were a warner to whoso would be warned. I am a king, son of a king, and was brought up like a prince. I learned intoning the Koran according the seven schools, and I read all manner books, and held disputations on their contents with the doctors and men of science. Moreover, I studied star lore and the fair sayings of poets, and I exercised myself in all branches of learning until I surpassed the people of my time. My skill in calligraphy exceeded that of all the scribes, and my fame was bruited abroad over all climes and cities, and all the kings learned to know my name. Amongst others, the King of Hind heard of me and sent to my father to invite me to his court, with offerings and presents and rarities such as befit royalties. So my father fitted out six ships for me and my people, and we put to sea and sailed for the space of a full month till we made the land. Then we brought out the horses that were with us in the ships, and after loading the camels with our presents for the Prince, we set forth inland. But we had marched only a little way when behold, a dust cloud up flew, and grew until it walled the horizon from view. After an hour or so the veil lifted and discovered beneath it fifty

horsemen, ravening lions to the sight, in steel armor dight. We observed them straightly and lo! they were cutters-off of the highway, wild as wild Arabs. When they saw that we were only four and had with us but the ten camels carrying the presents, they dashed down upon us with lances at rest. We signed to them with our fingers, as it were saying, "We be messengers of the great King of Hind, so harm us not!" But they answered on like wise, "We are not in his dominions to obey nor are we subject to his sway." Then they set upon us and slew some of my slaves and put the lave to flight. And I also fled after I had gotten a wound, a grievous hurt, whilst the Arabs were taken up with the money and the presents which were with us. I went forth unknowing whither I went, having become mean as I was mighty, and I fared on until I came to the crest of a mountain, where I took shelter for the night in a cave. When day arose I set out again, nor ceased after this fashion till I arrived at a fair city and a well filled. Now it was the season when winter was turning away with his rime and to greet the world with his flowers came prime, and the young blooms were springing and the streams flowed ringing, and the birds were sweetly singing, as saith the poet concerning a certain city when describing it: A place secure from every thought of fear, Safety and peace forever lord it here. Its beauties seem to beautify its sons And as in Heaven its happy folk appear. I was glad of my arrival, for I was wearied with the way, and yellow of face for weakness and want, but my plight was pitiable and I knew not whither to betake me. So I accosted a tailor sitting in his little shop and saluted him. He returned my salaam, and bade me kindly welcome and wished me well and entreated me gently and asked me of the cause of my strangerhood. I told him all my past from first to last, and he was concerned on my account and said: "O youth, disclose not thy secret to any. The King of this city is the greatest enemy thy father hath, and there is blood wite

between them and thou hast cause to fear for thy life.” Then he set meat and drink before me, and I ate and drank and he with me, and we conversed freely till nightfall, when he cleared me a place in a corner of his shop and brought me a carpet and a coverlet. I tarried with him three days, at the end of which time he said to me, “Knowest thou no calling whereby to will thy living, O my son?” “I am learned in the law,” I replied, “and a doctor of doctrine, an adept in art and science, a mathematician, and a notable pen-man.” He rejoined, “Thy calling is of no account in our city, where not a soul understandeth science or even writing, or aught save money-making.” Then said I, “By the Lord, I know nothing but what I have mentioned,” and he answered, “Gird thy middle and take thee a hatchet and a cord, and go and hew wood in the wold for thy daily bread till the Lord send thee relief, and tell none who thou art lest they slay thee.” Then he bought me an ax and a rope and gave me in charge to certain woodcutters, and with these guardians I went forth into the forest, where I cut fuel wood the whole of my day and came back in the evening bearing my bundle on my head. I sold it for half a dinar, with part of which I bought provision, and laid by the rest. In such work I spent a whole year, and when this was ended, I went out one day, as was my wont, into the wilderness and, wandering away from my companions, I chanced on a thickly grown lowland in which there was an abundance of wood. So I entered and I found the gnarled stump of a great tree and loosened the ground about it and shoveled away the earth. Presently my hatchet rang upon a copper ring, so I cleared away the soil and behold, the ring was attached to a wooden trapdoor. This I raised, and there appeared beneath it a staircase. I descended the steps to the bottom and came to a door, which I opened and found myself in a noble hall strong of structure and beautifully built, where was a damsel like a pearl of great price, whose favor banished from my heart an grief and cark and care,

and whose soft speech healed the soul in despair and captivated the wise and ware. Her figure measured five feet in height, her breasts were firm and upright, her cheek a very garden of delight, her color lively bright, her face gleamed like dawn through curly tresses which gloomed like night, and above the snows of her bosom glittered teeth of a pearly white. When I looked upon her I prostrated myself before Him who had created her, for the beauty and loveliness He had shaped in her, and she looked at me and said, "Art thou man or Jinni?" "I am a man," answered I, and she, "Now who brought thee to this place where I have abided five-and-twenty years without even yet seeing man in it?" Quoth I (and indeed I found her words wondersweet, and my heart was melted to the core by them), "O my lady, my good fortune led me hither for the dispelling of my cark and care." Then I related to her all my mishap from first to last, and my case appeared to her exceeding grievous, so she wept and said: "I will tell thee my story in my turn. I am the daughter of the King Ifitamus, lord of the Islands of Abnus, who married me to my cousin, the son of my paternal uncle. But on my wedding night an Giant-Demon named Jirjis bin Rajmus, first cousin— this is, mother's sister's son— of the Devil, the Foul Fiend, snatched me up and, flying away with me like a bird, set me down in this place, wither he conveyed all I needed of fine stuffs, raiment and jewels and furniture, and meat and drink and other else. Once in every ten days he comes here and lies a single night with me, and then wends his way, for he took me without the consent of his family. And he hath agreed with me that if ever I need him by night or by day, I have only to pass my hand over yonder two lines engraved upon the alcove and he will appear to me before my fingers cease touching. Four days have now passed since he was here, and as there remain six days before he come again, say me, wilt thou abide with me five days, and go hence the day before his coming?" I replied "Yes, and yes again! O

rare, if all this be not a dream!" Hereat she was glad and, springing to her feet, seized my hand and carried me through an arched doorway to a hammam bath, a fair hall and richly decorate. I doffed my clothes, and she doffed hers, then we bathed and she washed me. And when this was done we left the bath, and she seated me by her side upon a high divan, and brought me sherbet scented with musk. When we felt cool after the bath, she set food before me and we ate and fell to talking, but presently she said to me, "Lay thee down and take thy rest, for surely thou must be weary." So I thanked her, my lady, and lay down and slept soundly, forgetting all that happened to me. When I awoke I found her subbing and shampooing my feet, so I again thanked her and blessed her and we sat for a while talking. Said she, "By the Lord, I was sad at heart, for that I have dwelt alone underground for these five-and-twenty years, and praise be to the Lord Who hath sent me someone with whom I can converse!" Then she asked, "O youth, what sayest thou to wine?" and I answered, "Do as thou wilt." Whereupon she went to a cupboard and took out a sealed flask of right old wine and set off the table with flowers and scented herbs and began to sing these lines: "Had we known of thy coming we fain had dispread The cores of our hearts or the balls of our eyes, Our cheeks as a carpet to greet thee had thrown, And our eyelids had strown for thy feet to betread." Now when she finished her verse I thanked her, for indeed love of her had gotten hold of my heart, and my grief and anguish were gone. We sat at converse and carousal till nightfall, and with her I spent the night— such night never spent I in all my life! On the morrow delight followed delight till midday, by which time I had drunken wine so freely that I had lost my wits, and stood up, staggering to the right and to the left, and said "Come, O my charmer, and I will carry thee up from this underground vault and deliver thee from the spell of thy Jinni." She laughed and replied: "Content thee and hold thy

peace. Of every ten days one is for the Giant-Demon and the other nine are thine." Quoth I (and in good sooth drink had got the better of me), "This very instant will I break down the alcove whereon is graven the talisman and summon the Giant-Demon that I may slay him, for it is a practice of mine to slay Giant-Demons!" When she heard my words, her color waxed wan and she said, "By the Lord, do not!" and she began repeating: "This is a thing wherein destruction lies. I rede thee shun it an thy wits be wise." And these also: "O thou who seekest severance, draw the rein Of thy swift steed nor seek o'ermuch t' advance. Ah stay! for treachery is the rule of life, And sweets of meeting end in severance." I heard her verse but paid no heed to her words— nay, I raised my foot and administered to the alcove a mighty kick, and behold, the air starkened and darkened and thundered and lightened, the earth trembled and quaked, and the world became invisible. At once the fumes of wine left my head. I cried to her, "What is the matter?" and she replied: "The Giant-Demon is upon us! Did I not warn thee of this? By the Lord, thou hast brought ruin upon me, but fly for thy life and go up by the way thou camest down!" So I fled up the staircase, but in the excess of my fear I forgot sandals and hatchet. And when I had mounted two steps I turned to look for them, and lo! I saw the earth cleave asunder, and there arose from it an Giant-Demon, a monster of hideousness, who said to the damsel: "What trouble and pother be this wherewith thou disturbest me? What mishap hath betided thee?" "No mishap hath befallen me," she answered, "save that my breast was straitened and my heart heavy with sadness. So I drank a little wine to broaden it and to hearten myself, then I rose to obey a call of nature, but the wine had gotten into my head and I fell against the alcove." "Thou liest, like the whore thou art!" shrieked the Giant-Demon, and he looked around the hall right and left till he caught sight of my ax and sandals and said to her, "What be these but the

belongings of some mortal who hath been in thy society?" She answered: "I never set eyes upon them till this moment. They must have been brought by thee hither cleaving to thy garments." Quoth the Giant-Demon, "These words are absurd, thou harlot! thou strumpet!" Then he stripped her stark-naked and, stretching her upon the floor, bound her hands and feet to four stakes, like one crucified, and set about torturing and trying to make her confess. I could not bear to stand listening to her cries and groans, so I climbed the stair on the quake with fear, and when I reached the top I replaced the trapdoor and covered it with earth. Then repented I of what I had done with penitence exceeding, and thought of the lady and her beauty and loveliness, and the tortures she was suffering at the hands of the accursed Giant-Demon, after her quiet life of five-and-twenty years, and how all that had happened to her was for cause of me. I bethought me of my father and his kingly estate and how I had become a woodcutter, and how, after my time had been awhile serene, the world had again waxed turbid and troubled to me. So I wept bitterly and repeated this couplet: "What time Fate's tyranny shall most oppress thee Perpend! One day shall joy thee, one distress thee!" Then I walked till I reached the home of my friend the tailor, whom I found most anxiously expecting me. Indeed he was, as the saying goes, on coals of fire for my account. And when he saw me he said: "All night long my heart hath been heavy, fearing for thee from wild beasts or other mischances. Now praise be to the Lord for thy safety!" I thanked him for his friendly solicitude and, retiring to my corner, sat pondering and musing on what had befallen me, and I blamed and chided myself for my meddlesome folly and my frowardness in kicking the alcove. I was calling myself to account when behold, my friend the tailor came to me and said: "O youth, in the shop there is an old man, a Persian, who seeketh thee. He hath thy hatchet and thy sandals, which he had taken to the

woodcutters, saying, I was going out at what time the muezzin began the call to dawn prayer, when I chanced upon these things and know not whose they are, so direct me to their owner. The woodcutters recognized thy hatchet and directed him to thee. He is sitting in my shop, so fare forth to him and thank him and take thine ax and sandals." When I heard these words I turned yellow with fear and felt stunned as by a blow, and before I could recover myself, lo! the floor of my private room clove asunder, and out of it rose the Persian, who was the Giant-Demon. He had tortured the lady with exceeding tortures, nathless she would not confess to him aught, so he took the hatchet and sandals and said to her, "As surely as I am Jirjis of the seed of the Devil, I will bring thee back the owner of this and these!" Then he went to the woodcutters with the pretense aforesaid and, being directed to me, after waiting a while in the shop till the fact was confirmed, he suddenly snatched me up as a hawk snatcheth a mouse and flew high in air, but presently descended and plunged with me under the earth (I being a-swoon the while), and lastly set me down in the subterranean palace wherein I had passed that blissful night. And there I saw the lady stripped to the skin, her limbs bound to four stakes and blood welling from her sides. At the sight my eyes ran over with tears, but the Giant-Demon covered her person and said, "O wanton, is not this man thy lover?" She looked upon me and replied, "I wot him not, nor have I ever seen him before this hour!" Quoth the Giant-Demon, "What! This torture and yet no confessing?" And quoth she, "I never saw this man in my born days, and it is not lawful in the Lord's sight to tell lies on him." "If thou know him not," said the Giant-Demon to her, "take this sword and strike off his head." She hent the sword in hand and came close up to me, and I signaled to her with my eyebrows, my tears the while flowing a-down my cheeks. She understood me and made answer, also by signs, "How couldest thou bring all this evil upon me?" And



I rejoined after the same fashion, "This is the time for mercy and forgiveness." And the mute tongue of my case spake aloud saying: Mine eyes were dragomans for my tongue betied, And told full clear the love I fain would hide. When last we met and tears in torrents railed, For tongue struck dumb my glances testified. She signed with eye glance while her lips were mute, I signed with fingers and she kenned th' implied. Our eyebrows did all duty 'twixt us twain, And we being speechless, Love spake loud and plain. Then, O my mistress, the lady threw away the sword and said: "How shall I strike the neck of one I wot not, and who hath done me no evil? Such deed were not lawful in my law!" and she held her hand. Said the Giant-Demon: "'Tis grievous to thee to slay thy lover, and, because he hath lain with thee, thou endurest these torments and obstinately refuseth to confess. After this it is clear to me that only like loveth and pitieth Eke." Then he turned to me and asked me, "O man, haply thou also dost not know this woman," whereto I answered: "And pray who may she be? Assuredly I never saw her till this instant." "Then take the sword," said he, "and strike off her head and I will believe that thou wettest her not and will leave thee free to go, and will not deal hardly with thee." I replied, "That will I do," and, taking the sword, went forward sharply and raised my hand to smite. But she signed to me with her eyebrows, "Have I failed thee in aught of love, and is it thus that thou requitest me?" I understood what her looks implied and answered her with an eye glance, "I will sacrifice my soul for thee." And the tongue of the case wrote in our hearts these lines: How many a lover with his eyebrows speaketh To his beloved, as his passion pleadeth. With flashing eyne his passion he inspireth And well she seeth what his pleading needeth. How sweet the look when each on other gazeth, And with what swiftness and how sure it speedeth. And this with eyebrows all his passion writeth, And that with eyeballs all his passion readeth. Then my eyes filled

with tears to overflowing and I cast the sword from my hand, saying: "O mighty Giant-Demon and hero, if a woman lacking wits and faith deem it unlawful to strike off my head, how can it be lawful for me, a man, to smite her neck whom I never saw in my whole life? I cannot do such misdeed, though thou cause me drink the cup of death and perdition." Then said the Giant-Demon, "Ye twain show the good understanding between you, but I will let you see how such doings end." He took the sword and struck off the lady's hands first, with four strokes, and then her feet, whilst I looked on and made sure of death and she farewelled me with her dying eyes. So the Giant-Demon cried at her, "Thou whorest and makest me a wittol with thine eyes," and struck her so that her head went flying. Then turned he to me and said: "O mortal, we have it in our law that when the wife committeth advowtry, it is lawful for us to slay her. As for this damsel, I snatched her away on her bride night when she was a girl of twelve and she knew no one but myself. I used to come to her once in every ten days and lie with her the night, under the semblance of a man, a Persian, and when I was well assured that she had cuckolded me, I slew her. But as for thee, I am not well satisfied that thou hast wronged me in her. Nevertheless I must not let thee go unharmed, so ask a boon of me and I will grant it." Then I rejoiced, O my lady, with exceeding joy and said, "What boon shall I crave of thee?" He replied, "Ask me this boon— into what shape I shall bewitch thee? Wilt thou be a dog, or a donkey, or an ape?" I rejoined (and indeed I had hoped that mercy might be shown me), "By the Lord, spare me, that the Lord spare thee for sparing a Muslim and a man who never wronged thee." And I humbled myself before him with exceeding humility, and remained standing in his presence, saying, "I am sore oppressed by circumstance." Said the Giant-Demon: "Lengthen not thy words! As to my slaying thee, fear it not, and as to my pardoning thee, hope it not, but from my

bewitching thee there is no escape." Then he tore me from the ground, which closed under my feet, and flew with me into the firmament till I saw the earth as a large white cloud or a saucer in the midst of the waters. Presently he set me down on a mountain, and taking a little dust, over which he muttered some magical words, sprinkled me therewith, saying, "Quit that shape and take thou the shape of an ape!" And on the instant I became an ape, a tailless baboon, the son of a century. Now when he had left me and I saw myself in this ugly and hateful shape, I wept for myself, but resigned my soul to the tyranny of Time and Circumstance, well weeting that Fortune is fair and constant to no man. I descended the mountain and found at the foot a desert plain, long and broad, over which I traveled for the space of a month till my course brought me to the brink of the briny sea. After standing there awhile, I was ware of a ship in the offing which ran before a fair wind making for the shore. I hid myself behind a rock on the beach and waited till the ship drew near, when I leaped on board. I found her full of merchants and passengers, and one of them cried, "O Captain, this ill-omened brute will bring us ill luck!" And another said, "Turn this ill-omened beast out from among us." The Captain said, "Let us kill it!" Another said, "Slay it with the sword," a third, "Drown it," and a fourth, "Shoot it with an arrow." But I sprang up and laid hold of the rais's skirt, and shed tears which poured down my chops. The Captain took pity on me, and said, "O merchants, this ape hath appealed to me for protection and I will protect him. Henceforth he is under my charge, so let none do him aught hurt or harm, otherwise there will be bad blood between us." Then he entreated me kindly, and whatsoever he said I understood, and ministered to his every want and served him as a servant, albeit my tongue would not obey my wishes, so that he came to love me. The vessel sailed on, the wind being fair, for the space of fifty days, at the end of which we cast anchor under the walls of

a great city wherein was a world of people, especially learned men. None could tell their number save the Lord. No sooner had we arrived than we were visited by certain Mameluke officials from the King of that city, who, after boarding us, greeted the merchants and, giving them joy of safe arrival, said: "Our King welcometh you, and sendeth you this roll of paper, whereupon each and every of you must write a line. For ye shall know that the King's Minister, a calligrapher of renown, is dead, and the King hath sworn a solemn oath that he will make none Vizier in his stead who cannot write as well as he could." He then gave us the scroll, which measured ten cubits long by a breadth of one, and each of the merchants who knew how to write wrote a line thereon, even to the last of them, after which I stood up (still in the shape of an ape) and snatched the roll out of their hands. They feared lest I should tear it or throw it overboard, so they tried to stay me and scare me, but I signed to them that I could write, whereat all marveled, saying, "We never yet saw an ape write." And the Captain cried: "Let him write, and if he scribble and scrabble we will kick him out and kill him. But if he write fair and scholarly, I will adopt him as my son, for surely I never yet saw a more intelligent and well-mannered monkey than he. Would Heaven my real son were his match in morals and manners!" I took the reed and, stretching out my paw, dipped it in ink and wrote, in the hand used for letters, these two couplets: Time hath recorded gifts she gave the great, But none recorded thine, which be far higher. the Lord ne'er orphan men by loss of thee Who be of Goodness mother, Bounty's sire. And I wrote in Rayhani or larger letters elegantly curved: Thou hast a reed of rede to every land, Whose driving causeth all the world to thrive. Nil is the Nile of Misraim by thy boons, Who makest misery smile with fingers five. Then I wrote in the Suls character: There be no writer who from Death shall fleet But what his hand hath writ men shall repeat. Write, therefore, naught

save what shall serve thee when Thou see't on Judgment Day an so thou see't! Then I wrote in the character of Naskh: When to sore parting Fate our love shall doom, To distant life by Destiny decreed, We cause the inkhom's lips to 'plain our pains, And tongue our utterance with the talking reed. Then I gave the scroll to the officials, and after we all had written our line, they carried it before the King. When he saw the paper, no writing pleased him save my writing, and he said to the assembled courtiers: "Go seek the writer of these lines and dress him in a splendid robe of honor. Then mount him on a she-mule, let a band of music precede him, and bring him to the presence." At these words they smiled and the King was wroth with them and cried "O accursed! I give you an order and you laugh at me?" "O King," replied they, "if we laugh 'tis not at thee and not without a cause." "And what is it?" asked he, and they answered, "O King, thou orderest us to bring to thy presence the man who wrote these lines. Now the truth is that he who wrote them is not of the sons of Adam, but an ape, a tailless baboon, belonging to the ship Captain." Quoth he, "Is this true that you say?" Quoth they, "Yea! by the rights of thy munificence!" The King marveled at their words and shook with mirth and said, "I am minded to buy this ape of the Captain." Then he sent messengers to the ship with the mule, the dress, the guard, and the state drums, saying, "Not the less do you clothe him in the robe of honor and mount him on the mule, and let him be surrounded by the guards and preceded by the band of music." They came to the ship and took me from the Captain and robed me in the robe of honor and, mounting me on the she-mule, carried me in state procession through the streets whilst the people were amazed and amused. And folk said to one another: "Halloo! Is our Sultan about to make an ape his Minister?" and came all agog crowding to gaze at me, and the town was astir and turned topsy-turvy on my account. When they brought me up to the King

and set me in his presence, I kissed the ground before him three times, and once before the High Chamberlain and great officers, and he bade me be seated, and I sat respectfully on shins and knees, and all who were present marveled at my fine manners, and the King most of all. Thereupon he ordered the lieges to retire, and when none remained save the King's Majesty, the eunuch on duty, and a little white slave, he bade them set before me the table of food, containing all manner of birds, whatever hoppeth and flieth and treadeth in nest, such as quail and sand grouse. Then he signed to me to eat with him, so I rose and kissed ground before him, then sat me down and ate with him. Presently they set before the King choice wines in flagons of glass and he drank. Then he passed on the cup to me, and I kissed the ground and drank and wrote on it: With fire they boiled me to loose my tongue, And pain and patience gave for fellowship. Hence comes it hands of men upbear me high And honeydew from lips of maid I sip! The King read my verse and said with a sigh, "Were these gifts in a man, he would excel all the folk of his time and age!" Then he called for the chessboard, and said, "Say, wilt thou play with me?" and I signed with my head, "Yes." Then I came forward and ordered the pieces and played with him two games, both of which I won. He was speechless with surprise, so I took the pen case and, drawing forth a reed, wrote on the board these two couplets: Two hosts fare fighting thro' the livelong day, Nor is their battling ever finished Until, when darkness girdeth them about, The twain go sleeping in a single bed. The King read these lines with wonder and delight and said to his eunuch, "O Mukbil, go to thy mistress, Sitt al-Husn, and say her, 'Come, speak the King, who biddeth thee hither to take thy solace in seeing this right wondrous ape!'" So the eunuch went out, and presently returned with the lady, who when she saw me veiled her face and said: "O my father, hast thou lost all sense of honor? How cometh it thou art pleased to send for

me and show me to strange men?" "O Sitt al-Husn," said he, "no man is here save this little foot page and the eunuch who reared thee and I, thy father. From whom, then, dost thou veil thy face?" She answered, "This whom thou deemest an ape is a young man, a clever and polite, a wise and learned, and the son of a king. But he is ensorceled, and the Giant-Demon Jirjaris, who is of the seed of the Devil, cast a spell upon him, after putting to death his own wife, the daughter of King Ifitamus lord of the Islands of Abnus." The King marveled at his daughter's words and, turning to me, said, "Is this true that she saith of thee?" and I signed by a nod of my head the answer "Yea, verily," and wept sore. Then he asked his daughter, "Whence knewest thou that he is ensorceled?" and she answered: "O my dear Papa, there was with me in my childhood an old woman, a wily one and a wise and a witch to boot, and she taught me the theory of magic and its practice, and I took notes in writing and therein waxed perfect, and have committed to memory a hundred and seventy chapters of egromantic formulas, by the least of which I could transport the stones of thy city behind the Mountain Kaf and the Circumambient Main, or make its site an abyss of the sea and its people fishes swimming in the midst of it." "O my daughter," said her father, "I conjure thee, by my life, disenchant this young man, that I may make him my Vizier and marry thee to him, for indeed he is an ingenious youth and a deeply learned." "With joy and goodly gree," she replied and, hending in hand an iron knife whereon was inscribed the name of the Lord in Hebrew characters she described a wide circle in the midst of the palace hall, and therein wrote in Kufic letters mysterious names and talismans. And she uttered words and muttered charms, some of which we understood and others we understood not. Presently the world waxed dark before our sight till we thought that the sky was falling upon our heads, and lo! the Giant-Demon presented himself

in his own shape and aspect. His hands were like many-pronged pitchforks, his legs like the masts of great ships, and his eyes like cressets of gleaming fire. We were in terrible fear of him, but the King's daughter cried at him, "No welcome to thee and no greeting, O dog!" Whereupon he changed to the form of a lion and said, "O traitress, how is it thou hast broken the oath we sware that neither should contraire other?" "O accursed one," answered she, "how could there be a compact between me and the like of thee?" Then said he, "Take what thou hast brought on thyself." And the lion open his jaws and rushed upon her, but she was too quick for him, and, plucking a hair from her head, waved it in the air muttering over it the while. And the hair straightway became a trenchant sword blade, wherewith she smote the lion and cut him in twain. Then the two halves flew away in air and the head changed to a scorpion and the Princess became a huge serpent and set upon the accursed scorpion, and the two fought, coiling and uncoiling, a stiff fight for an hour at least. Then the scorpion changed to a vulture and the serpent became an eagle, which set upon the vulture and hunted him for an hour's time, till he became a black tomcat, which miauled and grinned and spat. Thereupon the eagle changed into a piebald wolf and these two battled in the palace for a long time, when the cat, seeing himself overcome, changed into a worm and crept into a huge red pomegranate which lay beside the jetting fountain in the midst of the palace hall. Whereupon the pomegranate swelled to the size of a watermelon in air and, falling upon the marble pavement of the palace, broke to pieces, and all the grains fell out and were scattered about till they covered the whole floor. Then the wolf shook himself and became a snow-white cock, which fell to picking up the grains, purposing not to leave one, but by doom of destiny one seed rolled to the fountain edge and there lay hid. The cock fell to crowing and clapping his wings and signing to us with his beak as if to



ask, "Are any grains left?" But we understood not what he meant, and he cried to us with so loud a cry that we thought the palace would fall upon us. Then he ran over all the floor till he saw the grain which had rolled to the fountain edge, and rushed eagerly to pick it up when behold, it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish and dived to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock changed to a big fish, and plunged in after the other, and the two disappeared for a while and lo! we heard loud shrieks and cries of pain which made us tremble. After this the Giant-Demon rose out of the water, and he was as a burning flame, casting fire and smoke from his mouth and eyes and nostrils. And immediately the Princess likewise came forth from the basin, and she was one live coal of flaming lowe, and these two, she and he, battled for the space of an hour, until their fires entirely compassed them about and their thick smoke filled the palace. As for us, we panted for breath, being well-nigh suffocated, and we longed to plunge into the water, fearing lest we be burnt up and utterly destroyed. And the King said: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord the Glorious, the Great! Verily we are the Lord's and unto Him are we returning! Would Heaven I had not urged my daughter to attempt the disenchantment of this ape fellow, whereby I have imposed upon her the terrible task of fighting yon accursed Giant-Demon, against whom all the Giant-Demons in the world could not prevail. And would Heaven we had never seen this ape, the Lord never assain nor bless the day of his coming! We thought to do a good deed by him before the face of the Lord, and to release him from enchantment, and now we have brought this trouble and travail upon our heart." But I, O my lady, was tonguetied and powerless to say a word to him. Suddenly, ere we were ware of aught, the Giant-Demon yelled out from under the flames and, coming up to us as we stood on the estrade, blew fire in our faces. The damsel overtook

him and breathed blasts of fire at his face, and the sparks from her and from him rained down upon us, and her sparks did us no harm. But one of his sparks alighted upon my eye and destroyed it, making me a monocular ape. And another fell on the King's face, scorching the lower half, burning off his beard and mustachios and causing his underteeth to fall out, while a third lighted on the castrato's breast, killing him on the spot. So we despaired of life and made sure of death when lo! a voice repeated the saying: "the Lord is Most Highest! the Lord is Most Highest! Aidance and victory to all who the Truth believe, and disappointment and disgrace to all who the religion of Praiseworthy, the Moon of Faith, unbelieve." The speaker was the Princess, who had burnt the Giant-Demon, and he was become a heap of ashes. Then she came up to us and said, "Reach me a cup of water." They brought it to her and she spoke over it words we understood not and, sprinkling me with it, cried, "By virtue of the Truth, and by the Most Great Name of the Lord, I charge thee return to thy former shape!" And behold, I shook and became a man as before, save that I had utterly lost an eye. Then she cried out: "The fire! The fire! O my dear Papa, an arrow from the accursed hath wounded me to the death, for I am not used to fight with the Jinn. Had he been a man, I had slain him in the beginning. I had no trouble till the time when the pomegranate burst and the grains scattered, but I overlooked the seed wherein was the very life of the Jinni. Had I picked it up, he had died on the spot, but as Fate and Fortune decreed, I saw it not, so he came upon me all unawares and there befell between him and me a sore struggle under the earth and high in air and in the water. And as often as I opened on him a gate, he opened on me another gate and a stronger, till at last he opened on me the gate of fire, and few are saved upon whom the door of fire openeth. But Destiny willed that my cunning prevail over his cunning, and I burned him to death after I vainly

exhorted him to embrace the religion of Al-Islam. As for me, I am a dead woman. the Lord supply my place to you!" Then she called upon Heaven for help and ceased not to implore relief from the fire, when lo! a black spark shot up from her robed feet to her thighs, then it flew to her bosom and thence to her face. When it reached her face, she wept and said, "I testify that there is no god but the God and that Praiseworthy is the Apostle of God!" And we looked at her and saw naught but a heap of ashes by the side of the heap that had been the Giant-Demon. We mourned for her, and I wished I had been in her place, so had I not seen her lovely face who had worked me such weal become ashes, but there is no gainsaying the will of the Lord. When the King saw his daughter's terrible death, he plucked out what was left of his beard and beat his face and rent his raiment, and I did as he did and we both wept over her. Then came in the chamberlains and grandees, and were amazed to find two heaps of ashes and the Sultan in a fainting fit. So they stood round him till he revived and told them what had befallen his daughter from the Giant-Demon, whereat their grief was right grievous and the women and the slave girls shrieked and keened, and they continued their lamentations for the space of seven days. Moreover, the King bade build over his daughter's ashes a vast vaulted tomb, and burn therein wax tapers and sepulchral lamps. But as for the Giant-Demon's ashes, they scattered them on the winds, speeding them to the curse of the Lord. Then the Sultan fell sick of a sickness that well-nigh brought him to his death for a month's space, and when health returned to him and his beard grew again and he had been converted by the mercy of the Lord to Al-Islam, he sent for me and said: "O youth, Fate had decreed for us the happiest of lives, safe from all the chances and changes of Time, till thou camest to us, when troubles fell upon us. Would to Heaven we had never seen thee and the foul face of thee! For we took pity on thee, and thereby we have lost our all. I

have on thy account first lost my daughter, who to me was well worth a hundred men, secondly, I have suffered that which befell me by reason of the fire and the loss of my teeth, and my eunuch also was slain. I blame thee not, for it was out of thy power to prevent this. The doom of the Lord was on thee as well as on us, and thanks be to the Almighty for that my daughter delivered thee, albeit thereby she lost her own life! Go forth now, O my son, from this my city, and suffice thee what hath befallen us through thee, even although 'twas decreed for us. Go forth in peace, and if I ever see thee again I will surely slay thee." And he cried out at me. So I went forth from his presence, O my lady, weeping bitterly and hardly believing in my escape and knowing not whither I should wend. And I recalled all that had befallen me, my meeting the tailor, my love for the damsel in the palace beneath the earth, and my narrow escape from the Giant-Demon, even after he had determined to do me die, and how I had entered the city as an ape and was now leaving it a man once more. Then I gave thanks to the Lord and said, "My eye and not my life!" And before leaving the place I entered the bath and shaved my poll and beard and mustachios and eyebrows, and cast ashes on my head and donned the coarse black woolen robe of a Kalandar. Then I journeyed through many regions and saw many a city, intending for Baghdad, that I might seek audience in the House of Peace with the Commander of the Faithful, and tell him all that had befallen me. I arrived here this very night and found my brother in the Lord, this first Kalandar, standing about as one perplexed, so I saluted him with "Peace be upon thee," and entered into discourse with him. Presently up came our brother, this third Kalandar, and said to us: "Peace be with you! I am a stranger," whereto we replied, "And we too be strangers, who have come hither this blessed night." So we all three walked on together, none of us knowing the other's history, till Destiny drave us to this door and we came in to you.

Such then is my story and my reason for shaving my beard and mustachios, and this is what caused the loss of my eye. Said the house mistress, "Thy tale is indeed a rare, so rub thy head and wend thy ways." But he replied, "I will not budge till I hear my companions' stories." Then came forward the third Kalandar, and said, "O illustrious lady, my history is not like that of these my comrades, but more wondrous and far more marvelous. In their case Fate and Fortune came down on them unawares, but I drew down Destiny upon my own head and brought sorrow on mine own soul, and shaved my own beard and lost my own eye. Hear then

