

GIAFAR: A TRAGEDY

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Giafar: A Tragedy by Andreas Bard

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ANDREAS BARD

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A TRAGEDY**



Copyrighted April 26, 1907

By Andreas Bard

Cheung Bulletin, 1911, 1912, 1913, Washington

John Gammie

Homo sum et nullum hu-
manum a me repudio
-TERENCE

Foreword



The tragedy of "GIAFAR" is not a creature of the imagination. It is based upon a strictly historical plot. The cruelty which Haroun Al Raschid displayed toward his Grand Vizier and the beautiful Abassa are perhaps the only stain upon the character of the otherwise noble-minded Khalif of Bagdad.

Stage adaptation has not been primarily considered in the writing of the play. It has been the aim of the writer to present, upon an Oriental background of years ago, the unaging problem of the conflict between soul and sense in the evolution of Love.

Dramatis Personae



HAROUN AL RASCHID, Khalif of Bagdad.

GIAFAR, Grand Vizier.

ABASSA, the Khalif's Sister.

HASFANA, Abassa's Companion.

OMAR, Chief of Saracen Army.

YAHIA, Giafar's Father.

FADHEL, Giafar's Brother.

OBEIDAH }
KHALED } Counsellors to the Khalif.

ABU NUWAS, a Court Poet.

ZULEIKA, an Old Sooth-Sayer of the Harem.



Slaves, Eunuchs, Guards, Officers of State,
Women of the Harem.

SCENE: Bagdad. TIME: Beginning of the
Ninth Century.

Act I.



SCENE—Magnificent apartments of Abassa, richly decorated with tapestry. A fountain in the center. The female train of the harem reclining on embroidered cushions on both sides of a high couch on which Abassa is seated; Hasfana at her feet holding a zither; on the other side of the couch, Zuleika. Two eunuchs stationed at the entrance of the apartment. The scene is illuminated by the crimson lights of the sunset which through a columned opening in the rear reveals the towers of Bagdad.

ABASSA.

I'm tired, Hasfana, with these gilded
follies!
Our roses, hardly plucked, begin to
wither;
Our jewels cease to charm, and e'en the
music
Of waters, falling in melodious rhythm,
At last grows dull. My heart, the des-
ert pilgrim,
Finds its oasis fading as mirage.
And as the cooling breeze that woos at
twilight
The burning plains, will die, ere stars
appear,
There's naught that lasts.

HASFANA.

Save love, my fair Abassa!

ABASSA.

Love's but a pleasing phrase, its meaning vague.
Once, when young Omar dared to raise
my veil,
And sent his fiery glance into my soul,
There was a flash, soon lost amid the
clouds.

HASFANA.

Why then took'st pain to keep the fatal
secret
From Haroun's knowledge?

ABASSA.

Little would I gain
By making skulls to season dreams
withal.

HASFANA.

Alas, I tremble for the life of Omar.
Should Haroun know the truth. The
mighty Khalif
Is kind and generous; but where
Abassa
Is lightly treated, he shows claws and
teeth.

ABASSA.

Thou would'st not fear for Omar, were
he not
Close allied to thy heart.

HASFANA.

Oh, mock me not!
Thou art the sun of beauty, all the stars
Must pay thee homage, but the humble
light
That flickers in my heart burns out un-
noticed.

ABASSA.

I pity thee, yet, though unloved, thou
lovest,
Two deep emotions never known to me,
And therefore envied.

HASFANA.

Here's a song, Abassa,
That fits thy life. Two verses only:
Listen.

(Singing to the accompaniment of the zither.)

The flowers, so fragrant and so fair,
Soon with their bloom must part;
To perfumes turned, enrich the air
Where thou, Beloved, art.

The dreamers who behold thy charms,
In love for thee have blushed,
And fain would linger in thy arms—
To honor thee, are crushed.

ABASSA.

Think'st thou of Abdul?