

**THE ARABIAN NIGHTS  
ENTERTAINMENTS.  
TRANSLATED FROM  
ARABIC. PART III, PP. 2-269**

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THE  
*Arabian Nights' Entertainments.*

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**PART III.**

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1880.

and amongst the rest concerning the loads of merchandise in the warehouse, asked her the meaning of what was written upon each bale. "My son," answered his mother, "your father used to travel sometimes into one province, and sometimes into another; and it was customary with him, before he set out, to write the name of the city he designed to repair to on every bale. He had provided all things to take a journey to Bagdad, and was upon the point of setting out when death——" She had not power to finish; the lively remembrance of the loss of her husband would not permit her to say more, and drew from her a shower of tears.

Ganem could not see his mother so sensibly affected, without being himself equally so. They continued some time silent; but at length he recovered himself, and as soon as he found his mother calm enough to listen to him, he directed his discourse to her, and said, "Since my father designed these goods for Bagdad, and is no longer in being, to put his design into execution, I will prepare myself to perform that journey; and I am of opinion it will be proper for me to hasten my departure, for fear those commodities should perish, or that we lose the opportunity of selling them to the best advantage."

Abou Ayoub's widow, who tenderly loved her son, was much surprised at this resolution, and replied, "My dear child, I cannot but commend you for designing to follow your father's example: but consider that you are too young, inexperienced, and unaccustomed to the fatigue of travelling. Besides, can you think of leaving me, and adding to that sorrow with which I am already oppressed? Is it not better to sell those goods to the merchants of Damascus, and take up with a moderate profit, than to expose yourself to the danger of perishing?"

It was in vain for her to oppose Ganem's resolution by the strongest arguments; they had no weight with him. An inclination to travel, and to accomplish himself by a thorough knowledge of the world, urged him to set out, and prevailed over all his mother's remonstrances, her entreaties, and even her tears. He went to the market where the slaves are sold, and bought

such as were able-bodied, hired a hundred camels, and having provided all other necessaries, he entered upon his journey with five or six merchants of Damascus, who were going to trade at Bagdad.

Those merchants, attended by all their slaves, and accompanied by several other travellers, made up such a considerable caravan, that they had nothing to fear from the Bedouin Arabs, who make it their only profession to range the country, and to attack and plunder the caravans when they are not strong enough to repulse them. They had no other difficulty to encounter, but the usual fatigues of a long journey, which were easily forgotten when they came in sight of the city of Bagdad, where they arrived in safety.

They alighted at the most magnificent and most frequented khan in the city; but Ganem, who chose to be lodged conveniently, and by himself, took no apartment there. He only left his goods there in a warehouse for their greater security, and hired a very fine house in the neighbourhood, richly furnished, having a garden which was very delightful, on account of the many water-works and shady groves that were in it.

Some days after this young merchant had been settled in his house, and perfectly recovered of the fatigue of his journey, he dressed himself genteelly, and repaired to the public place, where the merchants met to buy and sell. A slave followed him, carrying a parcel of fine stuffs and silks.

The merchants received Ganem very courteously, and their syndic, or chief, to whom he first made application, took and bought all his parcels, at the price set down in the ticket annexed to every piece of stuff. Ganem continued his trade so successfully, that he sold all the goods he exposed daily.

He had but one bale left, which he had caused to be carried from the warehouse to his own house, and then went to the public rendezvous, where he found all the shops shut. This seemed somewhat extraordinary to him; and having asked the cause of it, was told that one of the first merchants whom he knew was dead, and that all his brother traders were gone to his funeral.

Ganem inquired for the mosque where the prayer was to be made, and whence the body was to be conducted to the grave ; and having been told, sent back his slave with the goods, and walked towards the mosque. He got thither before the prayers were ended, which were said in a hall hung with black satin. The corpse was taken up, and followed by the kindred, the merchants, and Ganem, to the place of burial, which was at a great distance without the city. It was a stone structure in form of a dome, purposely built to receive the bodies of all the family of the deceased ; and being very small, they had pitched tents all about it, that all the company might be sheltered during the ceremony. The monument was opened, and the corpse laid into it, after which it was shut up again. Then the imam, and other ministers of the mosque, sat down in a ring on carpets, in the largest tent, and said the rest of the prayers. They also read the chapter of the Koran appointed for the burial of the dead. The kindred and merchants sat round, in the same manner, behind the ministers.

It was near night before all was ended : Ganem, who had not expected such a long ceremony, began to be uneasy, and the more so, when he saw meat served up in memory of the deceased, according to the custom of Bagdad. He was also told that the tents had not been set up only against the heat of the sun, but also against the evening dew, because they should not return to the city before the next morning. Those words perplexed Ganem : "I am a stranger," said he to himself, "and have the reputation of being a rich merchant ; thieves may take the opportunity of my absence, and go rob my house. My slaves may be tempted by so favourable an opportunity ; they may run away with all the gold I have received for my goods, and whither shall I go to look for them ?" Full of these thoughts, he ate a few mouthfuls hastily, and dexterously slipped away from the company.

He made all possible haste ; but, as it often happens that the more a man puts on, the less he advances, he mistook his way, and went astray in the dark, so that it was near midnight when he came to the city gate ;



which, to add to his misfortune, was shut. That disappointment was a fresh affliction to him, and he was obliged to look for some convenient place to pass the rest of the night in, and wait till the gate was opened. He went into a burial-place, so spacious that it reached from the city to the very place he was come from. He advanced to some high walls, which enclosed a small field, being the peculiar burial-place of a family, and in which there was a palm-tree. There was an infinite number of other particular burial-places, the doors whereof they did not take care to fasten. Ganem, finding that the burial-place where the palm-tree grew was open, went into it, and shut the door after him. He lay down on the grass, and did all he could to sleep; but the uneasiness at being absent from home would not permit him. He got up, and after having passed before the door several times, he opened it, without knowing why, and immediately perceived at a distance a light, which seemed to come towards him. He was startled at that sight, put to the door, which had nothing to secure it but a latch, and got up as fast as he could to the top of the palm-tree; looking upon that as the safest retreat under his present apprehensions.

No sooner was he got up than, by the help of the light which had frightened him, he plainly perceived three men, whom by their habit he knew to be slaves, come into the burial-place. One of them went foremost with a lanthorn, and the two others followed him, being loaded with a chest, between five and six feet long, which they carried on their shoulders. They set it down, and then one of the three slaves said to his comrades, "Brothers, if you will be advised by me, we will leave the chest here, and return to the city." "No, no," replied another, "that is not executing our mistress's orders; we may have cause to repent not doing as we were commanded. Let us bury the chest, since we are so enjoined to do." The two other slaves complied. They began to break ground with the tools they had brought for that purpose. When they had made a deep trench, they put the chest into it, and covered it with the earth they had taken out; then departed, and returned home.

Ganem, who from the top of the palm-tree had heard every word the slaves had spoken, could not tell what to think of that adventure. He concluded that the chest must contain something of value, and that the person to whom it belonged had some particular reasons for causing it to be buried in that cemetery. He resolved immediately to satisfy his curiosity, came down from the palm-tree, the departure of the slaves having dissipated his fear, and fell to work upon the pit, plying his hands and feet so well, that in a short time he uncovered the chest, but found it secured with a great padlock. This new obstacle to the satisfying of his curiosity was no small mortification to him, yet he was not discouraged; but the day beginning then to appear, he saw several great pebbles about the burial-place. He picked out one, with which he easily knocked off the padlock, and then with much impatience opened the chest. Ganem was strangely surprised, when, instead of finding money in it, he discovered a young lady of incomparable beauty. Her fresh and rosy complexion, and her gentle regular breathing, satisfied him she was alive; but he could not conceive why, if she were only asleep, she had not waked at the noise he made in forcing off the padlock. Her habit was so costly, with bracelets and pendants of diamonds, and a necklace of true pearl, so large, that he made not the least doubt of her being one of the principal ladies about the court. At the sight of so beautiful an object, not only compassion and natural inclination to relieve persons in danger, but something more powerful, which Ganem could not then account for, prevailed on him to afford that young beauty all the assistance in his power.

He first shut the gate of the burial-place, which the slaves had left open; then returning, took the lady in his arms out of the chest, and laid her on the soft earth he had thrown off the said chest. As soon as the lady was laid down, and exposed to the air, she sneezed, and by the motion in turning her head, there came from her mouth a liquor, with which her stomach seemed to have been loaded; then opening and rubbing her eyes, she, with such a voice as charmed Ganem, whom she did not see, cried out, "*Zohorob Bostan, Schagrom*

Margian, Casabos Souccar, Nouron Nihar, Naginatos Sohi, Nouzetos Zaman, why do you not answer? Where are you?" These were the names of six female slaves that used to wait on her, and signified, Flower of the Garden, Branch of Coral, Sugar Cane, Light of the Day, Morning Star, and Delight of the Season. She called them, and wondered that nobody answered; but at length looking about, and perceiving she was in a burial-place, she was seized with fear. "What!" cried she, much louder than before, "are the dead raised? Is the day of judgment come? What a wonderful change is this from evening to morning!"

Ganem did not think fit to leave the lady any longer in her perplexity, but presented himself before her with all possible respect, and in the most courteous manner, "Madam," said he, "I am not able to express my joy for having happened to be here to do you the service I have done, and to offer you all the assistance you may stand in need of under your present circumstances."

In order to persuade the lady to repose a confidence in him, he, in the first place, told her who he was, and what accident had brought him into that place. Next he acquainted her with the coming of the three slaves, and how they had buried the chest. The lady, who had covered her face with her veil as soon as Ganem appeared, was extremely sensible of the obligations she owed him. "I return thanks to God," said she, "for having sent so worthy a person as you are to deliver me from death, but since you have begun so charitable a work, I conjure you not to leave it imperfect. Let me beg of you to go into the city, and provide a muleteer, to come with his mule, and carry me to your house in this chest; for should I go with you on foot, my dress being different from that of the city ladies, some one might take notice of it, and follow me, which it highly concerns me to prevent. When I shall be in your house, I will give you an account of myself; and in the meantime be assured that you have not obliged an ungrateful person."

Before the young merchant left the lady, he drew the chest out of the pit, which he filled up with earth,