**AUDIO SCRIPT (500-600 words)**

<Your Title>: The Story of the Maqamat of Alexandria - <title>:

Author: Hannah Johnson

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Like many stories in the al-Hariri’s Arabic masterpiece, the 9th Makamat follows the hero and narrator al-Harith on his travels. Al-Harith has travelled to Alexandria and has made a point to meet and befriend the qadi, or judge of the local court. The wealth and power of the judge are shown through the elaborate robes he wears and throne he is seated on.

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One day in the Alexandrian court, young woman drags her older and ill-looking husband before the qadi. The woman is furious! Her old, sickly husband is without a trade, she claims, and he will not work to provide for her and her son. She gesticulates angrily at the qadi, while her destitute husband grovels at the judge’s feet. The old man’s excuse is that learning and acquiring knowledge is his profession, and no one wants to buy such a trade therefore he is without luck. To assert the truth of this statement the old man proclaims, “I swear to him by whose Ka’beh the companies journey.” This means he swears on Mecca and the pilgrimage, which is not usually a claim taken lightly. The qadi takes pity on the old man’s predicament and sees some truth in the argument, so he generously and gives the old man some money.

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. Watching the scene from the qadi’s side, however, Al-Harith has a feeling that this is a farce. While the woman was occupying the qadi’s attention, al-Harith recognized her old husband as the con man, Abu Zayd. He warns the qadi of his misgivings, who then sends someone to follow and see what has become of the old man and the young lady. The attendant reports back that the old man, Abu Zayd, could be seen dancing and singing with glee over his good fortune, not ill at all. He appeared elated to have conned the qadi and made off with a profit. Rather than reacting with anger, the judge finds the whole scam to be hilarious, laughs so hard he loses his hat! The judge wishes to see Abu Zayd again, but the con man and his wife are gone, having successfully ripped-off the qadi of Alexandria.

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This illustration is interesting in its use of time to summarize the story. Many of the behaviours of the characters involved appear not in chronological order, but simultaneously. The livid wife can be seen giving the qadi a piece of her mind. The latter can be interpreted as scolding the woman back, as he sides with the husband. Abu Zayd appears kissing the hand of the judge, in a show of gratitude for the monetary support the qadi has shown him.

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. Our hero, al-Harith, is poised beside the judge, painted small like the observer he is. Al-Harith’s gaze is focussed on Abu Zayd, with a thoughtful expression, perhaps the moment he is recognizing his old acquaintance. This storyline of Abu Zayd performing a charade, only to be recognised by al-Harith, yet still get away with his con is repeated consistently throughout the Maqamat.

Script:

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