

*The Book of  
the Thousand Nights  
and One Night*

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**The Book of  
the Thousand Nights  
and One Night**

**RENDERED INTO ENGLISH FROM  
THE LITERAL AND COMPLETE  
FRENCH TRANSLATION OF  
DR. C. MARDRUS  
BY POWYS MATHERS**

**Volume II**

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## *The Tale of Lamar al-Zamiin and the Princess Budur, Moon of Moons*

*But when the hundred-and-seventieth night had come*

TITTLE NYAZAD, who could not contain her impatience, rose 1.4 from her carpet and said to Shahrazad:

'Sister, I pray you hasten to tell us the tale which you have promised; for its title alone has filled my heart with joy.'

Shahrazad smiled at her sister, saying: 'I wait the good pleasure of the King.'

King Shahryar, who that night had hurried over his usual embrace because of his anxiety to hear the story, said: 'O Shahrazad, you may begin the fairy tale which you have so agreeably announced.'

So Shahrazad told the following tale:

It is related, O auspicious King, that there was once, in the antiquity of time, a sultan called Shahrman, master of armies and great wealth, who ruled over the land of Khalidan. Although he was in all other things happy, and possessed seventy concubines and four wives, he suffered the grief of being childless; for he had already reached a great age, and the marrow had begun to dry within him without Allah having granted him an heir to the throne.

One day he confided his secret sorrow to his grand-wazir, saying: 'I can find no reason for this torturing sterility.' The wazir reflected for an hour before raising his head and answering: 'The problem is a delicate one, soluble by none save Allah. I can only think of one remedy. Before you enter the women's quarter to-night, fulfil the duties of faith with unusual care, make your ablutions fervently, and pray to Allah with a submissive heart, so that your union may become fertile through His blessing.'

'Master of wise words,' cried Shahrman, 'your remedy is an excellent one.' He gave the wazir a robe of honour; and that evening chose the youngest of his women, a virgin with remarkable hips, and lay with her after having meticulously performed his rites before the Creator. Thus it was that the woman conceived and bore a man-child in nine months to a day, amid the rejoicings of the people and the sound of fife, clarinet and cymbal.

The child was so beautiful that his father marvelled and called his name Kamar al-Zaman, moon of the time.

## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

As a child he was the most beautiful of created things; as a youth it was easy to be seen that beauty had scattered all the flowers of the garden upon his fifteen years; as he grew older his perfection increased in degree, remaining the same in kind, so that his eyes had all the magic of the eyes of the angels Hark and Marat and the seduction of the eyes of Taghut; and his cheeks were more pleasant to the regard than Spring anemones. His waist was more pliant than a bamboo, finer than a silken thread; but you would have taken his croup for a mountain of moving sand; nightingales sang when they beheld it.

You must not be astonished, then, that his waist sometimes complained of the weight which went below it, and made mouths in its weariness at his behind.

Nevertheless his cheeks remained as fresh as the corol of roses, as pleasant as the evening breeze; so that all the poets of the time tried to paint his beauty. Here is one out of a thousand of the songs they sang:

Across his cheek with trailing flowers  
The rose has written: 'He is ours.'

And the people cry: 'Ah, ah!'

Crisped on his forehead nobly pale,  
In each black tress the scorpion's tail  
Has written: 'If my venom fail . .

And the people cry: 'Ah, ah!'

God wrote a new moon in the sky,  
His silver nail paring; but I  
(Who wait the full moon anxiously)

And the people cry: 'Ah, ah!'

King Shahriman loved his son and could not bear to be separated from him. Fearing that he might dissipate his strength and beauty in excess, he wished to marry him during his lifetime and to rejoice in his posterity. One day, when this idea weighed on his mind, he opened his heart to his grand-wazir, who replied: 'Marriage reduces the humours of the body, and therefore your idea is excellent.' The King sent for his son, who came and, after wishing his father peace with all respect, stood silently before him with lowered eyes, each as a submissive son should always do.

At this point Shahrazid saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

## TALE OF ICAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDCR

*But when the hundred-and-seventy-first night had come*

SHE SAID:

Shahriman said to him: 'My son, I wish to see you married during my lifetime, that I may rejoice in you and gladden my heart in your wedding.' Kamar al-Zaman changed colour and answered: 'My father, I have no inclination towards marriage and my heart feels no delight in women. Apart from the distaste I have for them, I have read so much in the books of the wise concerning the wickedness and perfidy of that sex that I would rather die than allow a woman to approach me. Our best poets have said on the subject:

She has overthrown  
A thousand forts of steel and stone  
Calling 'My own!'

Her eyes are black decoys,  
Her hairs are hunting-nets for boys;  
But she names them joys.

And again:

You ask me about women, I reply:  
'Look at this wagging lip, this sunken eye,  
The early white upon this scanty hair,  
The rot of this strong body which was I.'

And again:

Woman: that is to say  
A body which the birds of prey  
Disdain to take away.

Woman: the word implies  
A thing which lies  
With you at night, about you at sunrise.

Therefore, dear father, even at the risk of grieving you, I would not hesitate to kill myself if you wished to force me into marriage.'

Though King Shahriman grieved at this answer and the light changed to darkness before his face, he so loved his son that he answered: 'I do not wish to force you, Kamar al-Zaman, if the project is disagreeable to you. You are still young, and will have time to

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reflect and to consider how happy I would be to see you married and the father of children.'

For a whole year he spoke no more of marriage to Kamar al-Zaman; but loved him as before and coaxed him with presents.

At the end of the year he called his son to him, and said: 'Have you reflected on the recommendation which I made to you and the joy which your marriage would give me? Kamar al-Zarnan bowed before his father, saying: 'How could I have forgotten your words or have entertained the least thought of disobedience, seeing that Allah Himself commands my respect and submission in all that concerns my father? I have thought upon marriage for a whole year; and my reflections, fortified by the books of both ages which I have read, have convinced me that women are immoral, foolish and disgusting, and that death were better than to have anything to do with them.'

King Shahrیمان understood that it would be harmful to constrain the obedience of his dear son; so he sorrowfully called his grand-wazir and said to him: 'What fools fathers are when they desire children, for a son is a deception and a grief incarnate. Kamar al-Zaman is more set than ever against marriage; what must I do now?'

The wazir reflected a long time before answering: 'O King of the age, have patience for another year and then, instead of talking to your son in secret, assemble all your amirs and wazirs, your nobles and the officers of your palace, and in their full assembly declare your intention of marrying Kamar al-Zaman without delay. I warrant that in front of so many honourable people he will prove himself obedient enough.'

At this point Shahrāzād saw the approach of mornīng and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-seventy-second night had come*  
SHE SAID:

<sup>a</sup> The King witnessed his joy at this suggestion by giving his wazir a fair robe of honour. He waited for another year and then called his son before an assembly of all the chief people of the kingdom. The boy came in; was not the hall lighted? What beauty-spot upon his chin! What perfume, ya Allah, as he passed among the people! He kissed the earth three times between his father's hands and stood

## *TALE OF ICAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDOR*

attentive. 'My child,' said the King, 'I have brought you hither into the presence of all these honourable gentlemen to tell you that I am about to marry you to some princess worthy of your blood, and to rejoice in your posterity before I die.'

Kamar al-Zaman was stricken with a sort of lunacy which made him give so disrespectful an answer to his father that all who were present lowered their eyes in shame; and the King himself, not being able to pass over so public an insolence, cried in a terrible voice: 'You shall see what happens to impudent and disobedient sons!' He ordered his guards to bind the boy's arms behind him and to shut him in an old ruined tower which was near the palace. This was done, and one of the guards stayed at the door of the prison to watch over the prince and attend to him if he needed anything.

Kamar al-Zarnin said sadly to himself: 'Perhaps it would have been better to obey my father and consent to this marriage. At least I should have escaped being shut up in an old tower. It only proves that women are the cause of all misfortunes.'

King Shahrیمان retired to his own apartments, mourning for the imprisonment of his dear son; he wept because he had already forgotten the boy's insolence and his heart was filled with fury against the wazir who had suggested the idea of the assembly. He sent for him and said: 'You are to blame! If it had not been for you I should never have been betrayed into a position where I had to be harsh to my son. Speak now, if you have any excuse or suggestion to make; because I cannot bear that my son, my heart's desire, should undergo such punishment.' My King,' answered the wazir, 'leave the boy shut up for fifteen days, and I guarantee that he will come out a most obedient son.' Are you sure?' asked the King, and the wazir answered: 'I am sure.' Shahrیمان sighed and lay down on his bed, where he passed a sleepless night, for you must know that his only son was the greatest joy in his life; he was accustomed to sleep with the lad at his side, making a pillow for him with his arm and watching over his slumbers. Therefore that night he turned from side to side without closing his eyes.

An excellent bed had been spread for the prince in the place of his confinement; when night fell, the slave at the door entered with <sup>a</sup> lighted torch, which he placed at the foot of the couch and retired. Then Kamar al-Zaman made his ablutions, recited certain chapters of the Koran, and undressed himself till he was clothed in nothing

### THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

but a light shirt. He passed a piece of blue silk round his brow and thus became as beautiful as the moon upon her fourteenth night. He lay down upon the bed and, although he was sorrowful at having displeased his father, soon fell into a sound sleep.

He did not know (how could he even have dreamed?) what was going to happen to him that night in an old tower haunted by Jinn of the earth and air.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-seventy-sixth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The tower in which Kamar al-Zaman was shut dated back to the time of the ancient Romans and had been abandoned for a great many years. At the back of it was a well in which lived a young Ifritah of the seed of Iblis, whose name was Maimunah. She was the daughter of Dimiryit, King of the subterranean Jinn; a Believer, famed throughout all the unknown spaces for her power and her virtue.

Towards midnight Maimunah left the well to take the air as was her custom, and flew up towards the higher levels of the sky that she might the more easily start thence for whatsoever place she desired to visit. As she went by the top of the tower, she was astonished to see a light in a place which had been so long neglected. She said to herself: 'There must be some reason for this light; I will go and see.' Swerving in her flight, she entered the tower and passed over the sleeping body of the guard into Kamar al-Zaman's chamber. Words cannot describe her joyful surprise on seeing the youth stretched out half-naked upon the couch. She paused on tip-toe, lowered her wings which were inconvenient in so narrow a space, and gently approached the bed. She lifted the covering from the boy's face and was thunderstruck at his excess of beauty. For a full hour she held her breath, lest she should wake him before she had had time to learn his perfections by heart. In all her ages of existence she had never seen cheeks so delicately touched with red, eyelids with such long cool shadows, or such assembly of lights as there was upon

*As the dyed Nights Ware this occupied only a few lines in the "Arabian Nights" and the narrative should not at unnecessarily interrupted. Maimunah.*

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that perfumed body. She might have made use of the words of the poet:

Dark grow the eyes of folly in my head,  
The white flowers in my garden turn to red;  
I cry to the respectable and wise:  
'Then try to find some rapture in its stead.'

Maimunah's eyes filled with tears; she praised Allah, crying: 'Blessed be the Creator of such perfection!' Then she thought to herself: 'How can the mother and father of this boy bear to be separated from him, or be so cruel as to shut him in this tower? Do they not know the wicked practices of the ruin-haunting Jinn? As Allah lives, if they have no concern for their child, I will take him under my protection and guard him from any Jinni who would abuse his loveliness.' After this oath, she bent over Kamar al-Zaman and kissed him very gently on the lips, the eyelids, and the cheeks; then covered him again without waking him, and flew through the highest window.

She reached the middle region of the air and was refreshing herself with calm flight as she thought of the sleeping youth, when she heard a furious beating of wings. Turning towards the sound, she recognised the Ifrit Dahnash, a lewd Jinni who did not believe in the supremacy of Sulaiman ibn Mad. He was the son of Shamhiirish, swiftest flier of the Jinn.

Maimunah was afraid this base Dahnash might see the light in the tower and perpetrate some nameless thing, so she swooped down upon him like a sparrow-hawk and was about to dash him to the ground, when he made a sign of surrender, crying: 'O Maimunah, O daughter of the King, I conjure you, by the name of the Sacred Seal of Sulaiman, not to harm me. I promise on my part that I will do nothing shocking.' Be it so,' answered Maimunah, 'I will spare you, if you tell me whence you come so late and what you are thinking of doing. Only speak the truth, O Dahnash, or I will tear out your wing feathers, scorch your skin, and break your bones. A lie will not help you, Dahnash.' Then said the Ifrit: 'O mistress, you have met me at the right moment for hearing something very strange. But first promise me that I may go in peace after I have satisfied your curiosity, and that you will give me a safe-conduct serviceable against my foes of earth, air, and sea, O powerful daughter of Dimiryat:

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Maimunah made answer: 'I promise upon the engraven stone in the ring of Sulaiman ibn Daiid (prayer and peace be upon both of them!). Now speak!'

The lint Dahnash slackened his speed and ranged himself alongside Maimunah. Then he told her this adventure:

`Glorious Maimunah, I have just come from the last back of the furthest beyond, a land behind the confines of China, where rules Ghayyur the Great. He has below his powers many remarkable towers, from each of which lowers a company of soldiers each greater than an army of ours; his women are fairer than flowers after showers; and even my flight, which devours a thousand leagues in as many hours, has never before beheld anything to be compared with his only daughter, the lady Budiir.

`My tongue would become furry before it could paint you the whole beauty of this princess; if you will listen, I will try to give you the pale shadow of the truth of certain details.

'I will tell you of her hair, of her cheeks, of her mouth, of her breasts, of her belly, of her croup, of her middle, of her thighs, and of her feet.

'In the name of Allah!

`Her hair is dark as the separation of friends; she let it fall in three rivers to her feet, and I thought I looked upon three nights at the same time.

'Her face is as white as the day when lost friends meet again. The moon shone on it; or, maybe, it shone upon the moon.

'Her cheeks are an anemone, parted into two petals; her nose is a sword; there is purple wine running cool below the crystal of her skin.

`Her lips are coloured agate, eloquent with a water which cures all thirst.

'Blessed be Allah, who made her breasts twin fruit of ivory, each fitted for the grasp of a lover's hand.

`Her belly has dimples of shadow, as cunning!  
Arabic characters in the life work of a Copied as are the  
ptie scribe.

'Her croup; oh, oh, I shiver and I recollect It is so heavy that it makes her sit down when she would rise, and lie down. A poet has said: and rise when she would

Her sumptuous bottom calls for a less frail  
Waist than is common,

Whereas her waist is frailer:

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Therefore when she would rise and take regale

Among her women

Her slim white ankles fail her ..

There is a thing I cannot keep in gaol,

Being but human,

Of which my drawers are gaoler.

'Such is her croup; her thighs are two branches of marble marry-  
ing in the air. I wonder that her feet, though beautiful, can bear such  
beauty.

As for the middle and fundament: tongue can but say that one is  
All, and the other Absolute; gesture is dumb before them.

'Such is the lady Budar, daughter of Ghayyur, O my princess.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and  
discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-seventy-ninth night had come*

**SHE SAID:**

I must tell you that King Ghayyur so loves his daughter that his  
only pleasure in life is to find some new amusement for her. Recently,  
when he had exhausted other kinds of joys, he had a series of seven  
miraculous palaces built for her, each of a different material. The  
first is entirely of crystal, the second of diaphanous alabaster, the  
third of porcelain, the fourth of stone mosaic, the fifth of silver, the  
sixth of gold, and the seventh of diamonds. Each is wonderfully  
furnished according to the style of its building, so that a day therein  
may be a dream; and is completed with gardens and waterfalls.

`In order to please his daughter, the King caused her to live but a  
single year in each palace, that she should never grow tired and that  
pleasure should succeed to pleasure.

`I saw the child among the beauty of her palaces: do you wonder  
that I have lost my head?

`All the kings about have sought this magnificently-behinded  
maiden in marriage; but, when her father has told her of these pro-  
posals, she has answered: "I am queen and mistress of myself. How  
shall my body, which can hardly bear the touch of silks, tolerate the  
rough approaches of a man?" So the King, who would rather die  
than discontent his daughter, has been obliged to send her suitors  
away. Once, when a young king, more powerful and handsome than



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the rest, sent gifts and proposed for the hand of Budar, she broke out in reproaches against her father, crying: "I see but one way to rid myself of these continuous tortures: to take this sword and plunge it in my body, that it comes out at my back." She even set about committing this violence upon herself, so that the King rolled the whites of his eyes in fear and confided his child to the keeping of ten wise old women, including her own nurse: and since then one at least of them has never left her, even sleeping at the door of her chamber.

'That is the state of affairs at present, Mistress Maimunah. I go every night to open my heart with the contemplation of her beauties, nor is temptation lacking to mount her and rejoice in her unparalleled behind; but I refrain, thinking shame to attempt such loveliness. I content myself most discreetly while she sleeps; I kiss her between the eyes very gently, though I am burning to press my lips strongly upon her. I do not do so, because I distrust myself; I would rather abstain altogether than find that I had harmed her.

'Come with me, Maimunah, and see this parson I warrant that her perfections will amaze you!'

Thus spoke the Ifrit Dahnash, son of swift Shamharish.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of dawn discreetly lent.

*But when the hundred and-eightieth night had come*  
SHE SAID:

Young Maimunah heard his words without replying; when he had finished, she burst into a mocking laugh her wing, and sprang in his face, saying: 'Your remarks about this young pisser are all very disgusting. I ask myself how you dare to speak of her in the same breath as the handsome youth I love.' Wiping his face, the Ifrit answered: 'Dear mistress, I was absolutely ignorant of the existence of your young friend; and, although I ask

your pardon, I will have to see him with my own eyes before I can believe that he rivals the beauty of my princess." "Will you be quiet, evil one?" cried Maimunah. 'My friend is so handsome that, if you saw him even in one of your dreams, you would fall into an epilepsy and bubble like a camel.' 'But who and where is he?' asked Dahnash, and the Ifritah answered: 'O beast, he is in the same trouble as your

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princess, and is shut in the old tower behind which I live; but, if you think you are going to see him without me, disabuse yourself, because I know how wicked you are and would not even trust you to stand guard over the bottom of a holy man. I will show him to you myself, as I want your opinion; but I warn you that if you dare to lie and defy the truth of your own vision, I will tear out your eyes and make you the most miserable of Afarit. At the same time, I shall expect you to pay a large forfeit if my friend is fairer than your princess, and shall be prepared to do the same myself if the positions are reversed.' I accept!' cried Dahnash. 'Come with me to see the lady Budar.' 'But,' Maimunah objected, 'it will be quicker to go to the tower which is just below our feet, and afterwards we can compare.' So the two dropped down until they came to the top of the tower, and then entered the chamber of Kamar al-Zarnan by the window.

'Do not move, and above all behave yourself,' said Maimunah to Dahnash, as she went up to the sleeping boy and removed his covering. Then she turned her head and continued: 'Look, O evil one, and be careful not to fall on the floor in your emotion.' Dahnash turned his head and then jerked it away in stupefaction; he looked a second time long and long. 'Mistress Maimunah,' he said at last, shaking his head, 'I find that it was excusable in you to think your friend incomparable, for I have never seen so many perfections in a boy, and I think I may claim to know something about them; and yet I tell you this, the mould which made him was not broken until it had cast a female copy also, Princess Budar, daughter of Ghayyik.'

Hearing these words, Maimunah threw herself upon Dahnash and gave him so violent a blow with her wing about the head that one of his horns was broken. 'Vilest of Ararit,' she cried, 'I command you to go at once to the palace of this Budur and bring her back with you; I will not put myself out for the silly little thing. When you return, we can compare the two; go quickly or I will cut your flesh into strips and throw them to the hyenas and the crows.' Dahnash picked up his horn and made off, grumbling and scratching his bottom. He plunged through the air like a javelin and returned in an hour with his burden.

The sleeping princess lay upon the shoulders of Dahnash, clothed solely in her chemise; and her body glimmered whitely beneath it. Worked in gold thread and many coloured silks on the wide sleeves of this chemise, were to be read these verses in interlacing character:

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Three things alone  
Prevent her black eyes saying yes:  
Fear of the unknown and horror of the known  
And her own loveliness.

'I think that you have been amusing yourself with this young girl by the way,' said Maimunah to Dahnash, 'it should not take an hour for a good Ifrit to go and come between Khalidan and China. But be that as it may, hasten to place the little one by the side of my friend that we may make our examination.' So Dahnash, with infinite precaution, laid the princess on the bed and took off her chemise.

The child was as beautiful as Dahnash had painted her, and Maimunah was forced to admit that the two upon the couch might be twins, save in the matter of their middle parts. Each had the same moonlit face, the same slim waist, and the same rich rump; if the girl lacked the youth's central ornament, she made up for it with marvellous paps which confessed her sex.

Maimunah said to Dahnash: 'I admit that it was possible to hesitate between the two, but you must be a fool or blind not to know that, if there is equality between a male and a female the male bears off the prize.' But Dahnash answered: 'I know what I know, and I see what I see; nor will time make me deny the witness of my senses. Nevertheless I am ready to tell a lie if that would please you.'

Maimunah broke out into angry laughter and, recognising that she and the foolish Dahnash would never agree through a simple examination, she said: let us decide which of us is right by putting the matter to the arbitrament

of our inspiration. Let each of us prove our contention by saying beautiful verses in praise of our favourites.

or are you incapable of a subtlety which is usually only found among refined people?' 'I was about to propose the same thing myself,' replied Dahnash. 'My father, Shamhurish, taught me the rules of poetic construction and the art of rhythmical verses. You begin, charming Maimunah.'

The Ifritah bent over the lips of Kamar al-Zarna lightly; then, with her hand among his hair, she said and kissed them

This body is born of branches  
And the scent of jasmine:  
No woman has so

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Night threw a handful of stars  
Into black tarns:  
No woman was made so.

To drink the aromatic honey of his mouth,  
To feed my flesh on his, to feel his hair . . .  
No woman was made so.

Dahnash ecstatically applauded these lines, convulsing himself with emotion at their beauty; then he approached Budfir and, inspiring himself by kissing her breasts, sang:

The myrtles of Damascus smile and shine  
And lift my heart like wine,  
But you . . .

The roses of Baghdad are fed on dew  
And moonlight. Oh, but you,  
If you were mine...

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-eighty-second night had come*

SHE SAID:

When Maimunah heard this delicious little poem, she was surprised that so much talent could be concealed by so much ugliness; and, as she had a certain amount of judgment, although she was a woman, complimented Dahnash, who swelled with delight. Then she said: 'Although you have a delicate soul under your strange exterior, you must not think that you excel in verse or that Budar excels in beauty.' 'Is that so!' cried Dahnash. 'Yes, it is,' she answered. 'I do not believe you,' he replied, and she said: 'Take that!' and poked him in the eye with her wing. 'That is not proof!' he howled. 'Look at my arse!' she screamed. 'It is little enough,' he retorted.

Maimunah wished to throw herself upon Dahnash and do him some real injury, but in the twinkling of an eye he changed himself into a flea and hid below the two forms on the bed. The Ifritah was therefore obliged to swear a truce and Dahnash warily returned to his own form. 'Listen, good Dahnash,' said Maimunah, 'there is only one way to end our dispute, and that is to refer it to a third party.'

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Dahnash was willing; so Maimunah stamped upon the flooring, which opened and emitted an Unit of woeful ugliness. On his head were six horns, each four thousand four hundred and eighty cubits in length, and he had three forked tails which were not an inch shorter; he was hump-backed and lame, and his eyes were where his nose should have been; one of his arms was five thousand five hundred and fifty-five cubits long, and the other only half a cubit; his hands were greater than cauldrons, with claws like a lion's; he had hoofs which made him limp; and his zabb, which was forty times larger than that of an elephant, ran between his legs and rose triumphantly behind him. His name was Kashkash ibn Fakrash ibn Atrash, of the line of Abu Hanfash.

When the floor closed, Kashkash kissed the earth between Maimunah's hands and, standing humbly before her with crossed arms, said: 'Mistress Maimunah, daughter of our King, your slave awaits your bidding.' I wish you, good Kashkash,' she said, 'to judge between myself and the wicked Dahnash. The matter is such and such. Cast an impartial eye upon this bed and say whether the youth or the maiden is more beautiful.'

Kashkash regarded the two young people sleeping, calm and naked, on the bed; and was seized with such an emotion that he grasped his thing above his head with his left hand and, holding his triple tail with his right, danced about the chamber. At last he said to the other two: 'As Allah lives, they are equal in beauty and their difference is one of sex alone. I know only one way of settling your dispute.' 'What is that?' cried they; but he replied: 'First let me sing something in honour of this most disturbing girl.' There is not time,' said Maimunah, 'except perhaps for some song about the youth.' 'That would be a little irregular,' objected Kashkash. 'Sing what you like then,' retorted Maimunah, 'as long as the lines are short and well-balanced.' Thereupon Kashkash sang this obscure and complicated song:

The prudent lover slips,  
Dear lad, from out that kind  
Of love which asks for constancy.  
Behave like me:  
Drink sugar as it drips,  
But keep in mind  
That salt were sweeter on less easy lips.

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'I cannot be bothered to understand you,' said Maimunah, 'hasten to tell us how we may know the truth.' It is quite simple,' answered Kashkash, 'wake one after the other, while we three remain invisible, and the one who shows greater love and hotter passion for the other will prove himself or herself vanquished in the test, by confessing that the charms of the other are more powerful.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-eighty-third night had come*

SHE SAID:

Maimunah cried: 'O excellent ideal' and Dahnash, exclaiming: 'The idea is excellent!', changed himself again into a flea, and bit the handsome Kamar al-Zaman in the neck. The youth woke with a start and carried his hand to the place; but he found nothing, for Dahnash, after having avenged the affronts of Maimunah on the youth's white skin, had returned to his own invisible form.

What happened after this was certainly remarkable.

Kamar al-Zaman, who was still half asleep, dropped his hand from his neck and it came to rest on Buclur's naked thigh. The boy opened his eyes and then shut them again, for they were dazzled. He felt against him a body more tender than butter, and breathed another's breath sweeter than musk. In pleased surprise he raised his head and looked long at the unknown sleeper by his side.

Leaning on his elbow, all unmindful of his hatred, he detailed with charmed eyes the girl's perfections. First he compared her to a fair citadel topped by a dome, then to a pearl, then to a rose; he could not at first make a true comparison, as he was ignorant of the forms and graces of women; but soon he realised that his last analogy was the truest, his second the pleasantest, and his first ridiculous.

He leaned over the rose, inhaling the perfume of its delicious flesh, passing his nose over the whole of its surface. This he found so pleasant that he ventured his fingers over all the contours of the pearl and found that this touch set his body on fire, causing movement and beatings in various parts of his person. He felt a violent need to give rein to his nature; therefore, crying: 'Be it as Allah wills!', he made ready to couple with Budar.

Thinking it very astonishing that the girl should have on no

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chemise, he took her and felt her and turned her in every way. 'Ya Allah, Yi Allah, what a rare behind!' he exclaimed, and then, as he caressed her belly, 'It is a marvel of tenderness!' Her breasts tempted him, and he filled his hands with them, crying: 'As Allah lives I must wake her up; it is strange that she is not awake already.'

Now it was Dahnash who had plunged the girl into a deep slumber, in order that Kamar al-Zaman might go to work the more easily.

The boy set his lips to the lips of the princess and took a long kiss; but still she did not wake. He took a second and a third without result, and at last spoke to her, saying: 'Rise up, my heart, my eye! Awake, O liver of me, for I am Kamar al-Zamin.' But the young girl did not move. So the prince stretched himself upon her, saying: 'As Allah lives, I cannot wait; I must penetrate her while she is asleep.'

Maimunah, Dahnash and Kashkash were watching all this while; and the first was getting ready to say, in case the boy achieved his deed, that it did not count.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-eighty fourth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The girl was sleeping on her back, dressed only in her dishevelled hair; the prince clasped his arms about her, and would have been at it, when suddenly he shivered and disengaged himself, saying: 'Surely my father has placed this girl in my bed and now watches through some hole in the wall. To-morrow he will say: "Kamar al-Zaman, you pretend to abominate women; what then did you do to that girl last night? You delight to couple in secret; but refuse marriage in order to thwart me of my joy in your posterity." And I shall be considered a liar and trickster. Therefore to-night I will refrain, although I do not wish to; and to-morrow I shall ask my father to give me this fairest of all girls in marriage. He will be happy, and I shall be able to use this alluring form without repenting of it.'

With that, to Maimunah's great delight and to the powerful disappointment of Dahnash, who was already dancing for joy, Kamar al-Zaman kissed Budar upon the lips, slipped

a costly diamond ring

:6'

### *TALE OF ICAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDCR*

from one of his fingers on to one of hers, to show that he considered her his wife already, and then regretfully turned his back and went to sleep.

After this Maimunah changed herself into a flea, jumped on to Budilr's thigh, reached her navel, and then, going back four inches on her track, paused at the little hill which overlooks the valley of roses. Concentrating her jealousy and revenge in a single bite, she caused the young girl to spring up wide awake, carrying both her hands to the seat of her pain. The princess gave a cry of terror and astonishment when she saw a young man lying beside her, but her first glance changed into a second of admiration, her second into a third of joy, her third into a fourth of delirium.

In her first fright she thought: 'You are compromised for ever, for there is a young stranger in your bed. For this audacity, the eunuchs shall cast him from the window into the river! . . . and yet, perhaps this is some youth which my father has chosen for me: let me look at him before I have recourse to violence.' Thus it was that she took her second glance and was overcome by his beauty. 'O my heart, how pretty he is!' she whispered. Bending over his lips which smiled with sleep, she kissed him, saying to herself: 'As Allah lives I wish him for my husband. Why has my father delayed so long in giving him to me?' She took one of his hands within her own, and said quietly: 'Wake, wake, delightful friend; arise, sun of my soul; come kiss me, my dear; come kiss me, my life; awake, awake!'

But Kamar al-Zaman was kept in a deep sleep by Maimunah, and therefore did not move; so the beautiful princess thought that the fault lay with her, and that she had not put enough warmth into her appeal. Without caring whether any watched or no, she opened the silk chemise with which she had covered herself on waking and slipped herself all along the young man, clasping him in her arms, pressing her thighs to his, and whispering in his ear: 'Take me, take me; I will be sweet and obedient. See, here is the narcissus of my breasts, the garden of my belly is very tender. Lo, here is my navel, ready for the refinement of love. The first fruits of me are yours; the night shall not be long enough. We shall still be sweetly happy in the morning.'

At this point Shabrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

*But when the hundred-and-eighty-fifth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Then, as Kamar al-Zaman still slept, the princess thought that it was a trick of his; half laughing, she said: 'Come, come, dear friend, do not play with me like this. Is it so that my father has taught you to punish my pride? But now it is enough, because your beauty, O fawn, has turned me into a faithful slave of love.'

The prince still remained motionless, and the lady Budiari, more and more in love, exclaimed: 'Open your eyes, O master of beauty. I also am considered beautiful; all life about me lives in an admiration of my cold, serene perfection. You alone have lighted a fire within me; why will you not wake, adorable boy, why will you not wake? I feel that I am dying.'

With that she thrust her head beneath his arm and amorously nibbled his ear and in his neck; then she passed her hand between his legs and found his thighs so full that her fingers might not pass along their surface. By chance she met so new a thing while she was doing this, that she looked at it with wide eyes and perceived that it changed form every moment beneath the examination of her *hand*. At first she was frightened, but very soon she understood the use of the thing; for, even as desire is greater in women, so is their intelligence quicker to seize the correspondence between certain charming organs. She lay along him, taking it in her hands, and, while her lips sucked his, that happened which happened.

Afterwards, the lady Budar covered her sleeping lover with kisses until not a part of him was ignorant of her lips. Being calmer, she kissed the palms of his hands and, nursing him upon her breast so that their breaths mingled, fell into a smiling sleep.

The three Afarit had lost not a single gesture of all this; and Mairnunah was delighted to have proved to Dahnash that he had lost his wager. Nevertheless she was magnanimous, saying: 'I let you off your debt, O evil one. Also I grant you the safe conduct which you require about the airy ways. Do not abuse it always to behave well.'

Then, turning towards Kashkash, she said sweetly: 'I thank you for your advice, and name you chief of m

y messengers. My father, Dimiryat, shall confirm my choice. . . . Now both of you take this girl back to the palace of her father; for her development has been so

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swift before my eyes that I make her my friend and prophesy fair things for her in the future.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-eighty-sixth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The two Afarit approached the bed and, taking the girl upon their shoulders, flew with her to the palace of King Ghayyur and deposited her gently on her couch. Then they went off in different directions.

Maimunah, after kissing her young friend on the eyes, returned to her well.

In the morning Kamar al-Zaman awoke with his mind filled by the adventure of the night. He turned to right and left, seeking his bride, and, when he did not find her, said to himself: 'This is some trick of my father's to prove me, and hurry me on to marriage. Therefore I did well to wait for his consent like a good son, before accomplishing my desires.' He called to the slave at the door: 'Rouse up, you rascal!' and the fellow staggered in, half asleep, carrying the ewer and the basin for his master. The prince took them and went to the privy, where he did what he needed, and then performed careful ablution. Returning to his room, he prayed and ate a morsel, before sitting down to read a chapter of the Koran. When he had finished, he said to the slave in an indifferent voice: 'Whither have you taken the young girl, O Sawwab?' 'What young girl, my master?' asked the astonished slave, and Kamar al-Zaman raised his voice, crying: 'Give me a straight answer, you scamp! Where is the young girl who passed the night upon my bed?' As Allah lives I have seen no young girl,' exclaimed the slave. 'No one could have entered, for I was sleeping across the door.' Eunuch of misfortune,' cried the prince, 'do you also thwart me and heat the humours of my blood? I see that they have instructed you to lie; but I command you to speak the truth.' The slave lifted his arms to heaven, crying: 'Allah alone is great! I do not understand anything of what you <sup>are</sup> saying, my master.'

'Come here, you wretch!' shouted Kamar al-Zaman; and, when the eunuch approached, he threw him to the floor and heaped blows upon him till he broke wind. When the blackamore was half dead and answered the prince's questions with inarticulate cries, the

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latter fetched the stout hempen rope which was used for the well and, passing it under the slave's arms, let him down into the water.

It was winter, the water was unpleasant and the air cold; so the eunuch began to sneeze violently, howling for pardon. But the prince dipped him up and down several times, crying: 'You shall not come out until you tell me the truth.' Surely he will do what he says,' thought the eunuch, and called aloud: 'Pull me up, and I will tell you the truth, O Prince.' Kamar al-Zaman hoisted him to the surface, and he stood there shivering like a reed in the wind, with chattering teeth and bleeding nose. Feeling himself for the moment out of danger, he obtained leave of his persecutor to change his clothes and stanch the blood; but, instead of doing so, he ran to the palace and found the King.

At this moment Shahriman was saying to his wazir: 'I have passed a bad night, for my heart was heavy lest so tender a youth as my son might have come to harm in the old tower.' The wazir answered: 'I assure you that no harm has come to him; he is better where he is if you have any wish to tame his pride.'

Even as the wazir spoke, the eunuch fell at the King's feet, crying: 'O our master the Sultan, misfortune has come into your house! My young lord woke this morning in a state of madness. As a proof, he said such and such and did to me such and such. Now I swear by Allah that I never saw any young girl.'

When he heard this, King Shahriman supposed that his fears were realised and cried to his wazir: 'A curse be upon you, O wazir of dogs! It was you who suggested I should shut up my son, the light of my heart! Rise up now, see what has happened, and immediately bring me word.'

The wazir made all haste to the tower, asking questions of the eunuch by the way. His replies were so disquieting that the old man entered the room with boundless precaution; first his head, and then his body, bit by bit. You may picture his surprise when he saw <sup>Kamar</sup> al-Zarnan sitting calmly on his bed and re<sup>g</sup>ain the Kor<sup>ran</sup> with reverent attention.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of mornin<sup>g</sup> and discreetly tell silent.

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*But when the hundred-and-eighty-seventh night had come*

SHE SAID:

The wazir went up to the bed and sat down on the floor beside it, saying: 'This pitch-dark eunuch has put us all in a great fright. Would you believe that he ran to us like some scabby dog and frightened us all with news so indecent that I would not repeat it before you. I am still all of a tremble through his false reports.' 'Indeed,' replied Kamar al-Zaman, 'he cannot have been more of a nuisance to you than he was to me. I should be interested to hear what he said! 'Allah preserve your youth!' the wazir answered. 'Allah strengthen your understanding! Allah preserve you from heedless acts and from words which have no salt to them! This son of a bugger said that you had suddenly gone mad, that you spoke of a girl who had lain by you all the night, that you had beaten him and thrown him into the well. Oh, what insolence from a putrescent black man!'

Kamar al-Zaman smiled knowingly and answered: 'Have you not had enough of this joke, you dirty old man, or do you want to visit my new bammam at the bottom of the well? I warn you that, if you do not tell me at once where my father has hidden my divine, my rose-cheeked, my black-eyed mistress, I will treat you worse than I treated the eunuch.'

The wazir recoiled in fear, saying: 'May the name of Allah be upon you and about you! Why do you speak in this way, O Kamar al-Zaman? If it is some dream that you have had through indigestion, clear your mind of it, I pray; for these are not the remarks of a sane person.'

'Sinister old man,' cried the prince, 'did not see her with my ears, but with these two eyes; I did not touch or smell the roses of her body with my eyes, but with these fingers and this nose. So take that!' He butted the wazir in the belly with his head, so that the old man fell over; then, getting a good grip on his long white beard, he beat him until his own strength failed.

The unhappy wazir, feeling his beard giving way hair by hair and his soul slipping away from him bit by bit, thought to himself: 'Now I had better lie myself out of the hands of this young maniac.' Aloud he said: 'Master, I beg your pardon for having deceived you; only your father forbade me, on pain of being hanged instantly, to reveal the place where he has concealed the girl. If you will let me go

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I will run to him and beg him to release you from this place and marry you to the child: surely he will rejoice in doing so!

Komar al-Zaman let go, saying: 'Run now, and return immediately with my father's answer.' The wazir incontinently leapt from the room, double-locking the door behind him, and hurried, clothed as he was in indignation and torn garments, to the throne-room of the King.

Shahriman looked at him and said: 'I see you ill-treated and without your turban. Some terrible thing must have happened to you.'

'A more terrible thing has happened to your son,' answered the wazir, 'for he has gone quite mad, past peradventure.'

The King saw the light change to darkness before his eyes and said: 'Allah help me! In what way is my child mad?' The wazir told him, and the King at once flamed out into a great anger, crying: 'O pestilence among wazirs, this news shall cost you your head! If my son be as you say, I shall crucify you on the highest minaret in the city, to teach you what advice it is meet to give and what to leave ungiven.' With that he ran to the tower and entered the chamber of Kamar al-Zaman with the wazir at his heels.

The young prince rose in honour of his father and stood before him with folded arms, after having kissed his hands as a good son should. The King, delighted to see him so calm, threw an arm about his neck and kissed him between the eyes with tears of joy. Then he made the youth sit beside him on the bed and, turning with wrath to the wazir, exclaimed: 'Now you can see for yourself that you are the last of the very last of wazirs. How dared you tell me that my son was such and such, making my heart afraid and crushing my liver to fragments? Now you shall hear with your own ears the most sane replies of my dear son.' He looked at Kamar al-Zaman paternally and asked:

'My child, what day of the week is to-day?' 'It is Saturday,' answered the other. 'You hear that?' cried the King, with a terrible glance of triumph at the wazir; then he continued:

'And what day will to-morrow be— you tell me that, O Kamar al-Zaman?' 'Indeed, I can,' replied the prince, 'to-morrow will be Sunday; the next day Monday, the next Tuesday, the next Wednesday, the next Thursday, and the next Friday which is a holy day.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

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*But when the hundred-and-eighty-eighth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The delighted King cried: 'Heaven defend you from all evil, my son! Now tell me, in good Arabic, in what month we are?' The young man answered: 'This is Dhul-Kadah. It will be followed by Dhul-Hijjah, that by Muharram, that by Safar, that by Rabia the First, that by Rabia the Second, then come the two Jumadas, and afterwards Rajab, Shaaban, Ramadan and Shawwal.'

The King in his relief and joy spat at the wazir's face, saying: 'You are the only madman here, detestable old man.' The wazir shook his head and answered nothing, considering that this was not the end.

Then said the King to his son: 'My child, if you will believe it, this wazir and this pitch-black eunuch came and reported such and such of you, and that you had said a girl had been with you in the night. Tell them to their faces that they lie!'

'Father,' said Kamar al-Zaman with a bitter smile, 'I cannot enjoy this joke any more. I pray you spare me any further humiliation, for I feel the humours of my body changed with what you have already made me endure. I have determined to obey you, and I willingly consent to marry the lovely woman whom you sent to my bed last night. My blood boils with her still; I find her admirable.'

At these words of his son the King cried: 'May the name of Allah be upon you and about you, my child! May he preserve you from the evil of madness! What nightmare is this? Did you eat so heavily yesterday that the consequent dreams have played havoc with your wits? Return to your right senses, my son; I shall never go against your wishes again. Accursed alike be marriage and the hour of marriage, and any who dare in the future to talk of marriage!'

Kamar al-Zaman answered: 'Your words are before my eyes, O father. But first swear to me, I pray you, that you know nothing of the adventure of this night; for I can prove to you that it has left traces.' I swear by the truth of the sacred name of Allah, God of Moses and Abraham, who sent Muhammad among His creatures to be a promise to them of Peace! Amen!' cried the King, and Kamar al-Zaman repeated: 'Amen!' Then he said to his father:

'If someone came to you, saying: "Last night I woke and saw before me a form in act to wrestle with me till the blood came and, although I did not wish to fight with this figure, an unconscious

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movement of my sword took it in the middle of its naked belly, so that this morning my blade was still foaming and bloody," and proved his statement by showing you the bloodstained sword, what would you say, my father?' I would say,' answered the King, 'that the sword without the body of the victim was but half a proof.'

Then said Kamar al-Zamin: 'My father, when I woke this morning I found the lower part of my belly covered with blood. The basin is still in the privy which will prove this to you; and, as further witness, here is the girl's ring which I found upon my finger. My own has disappeared.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-ninety-first night had come*

SHE SAID:

The King hurried to the privy and, seeing that the basin of his son's ablution held a great quantity of blood, said to himself: 'I think that the victim of that duel must have been very healthy; it is a royal wound. I see the hand of my wazir in this.' He returned to his son and, taking the ring from him, turned it over and over for a long time, before he returned it to him and said: 'This is a proof which troubles me.' He remained silent for a whole hour, before he cried to the wazir: 'Old bawd, you have arranged this mystification!' But the wazir fell at his feet, swearing by the Holy Book and by the Faith that he knew nothing of the business; and the eunuch swore to his ignorance with the same oaths.

'Allah alone can solve this mystery,' cried the perplexed King to his son; but the other answered in a trembling voice: 'I beg you to hunt out this girl, for my soul cannot forget her. Have compassion upon me and find her, or I shall die.' The King wept and answered: 'O Kamar al-Zamin, only Allah is great, only He can know that which is not known. There is nothing left for us but to mourn together; you for a hopeless love, and I because I am powerless to cure your pain.'

The King led his son out of the tower by the hand and returned with him to the palace, where he refused to pay attention to the affairs of the kingdom. Instead he mourned by the bed on which Komar al-Zaman lay despairing for his lost and unknown mistress.

In order that he might remove himself further from the people

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and concerns of the court, and might occupy himself with nothing but the care of his dear son, he had a palace built in the midst of the sea, joined only to the mainland by a pier twenty cubits wide. There they lived together alone, far from all noise, dreaming of their misfortune. Kamar al-Zarnan found no consolation save in reading romances about love and reciting the verses of inspired poets. This was one out of a thousand:

Brave child, who wins  
Each skirmish in the battle of the roses,  
Your loot lies purple on your brow;  
And one supposes  
The captives of the garden now,  
The vanquished each and all,  
Lean down to kiss your feet, as small  
And sweet as sins.

O princess maid,  
The winds of evening get their sweet  
By kissing your two feet.  
We have lost many a summer breeze  
Which ventured underneath your light chemise  
And stayed.

O not large queen,  
The necklace of your naked throat has felt  
Wantonly jealous of your belt;  
The golden bracelets of your either wrist  
Are envious of your anklets, which have kissed  
And seen what they have seen.

The night was already far spent when the two Afarit placed the lady Budar on her bed, so that in three hours morning came, and she woke. She smiled and stretched herself in that delicious waking by a lover's side. While her eyes were still shut, she put forth her arms to him, and clasped the empty air. Then she became wide awake on the instant, and her heart and mind were so troubled by the disappearance of the youth that she uttered a great cry, which brought her nurse and the nine other old women running to her side. 'What is it, my mistress?' called the frightened nurse.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.



*But when the hundred-and-ninety-third night had come*

SHE SAID:

Budar cried out: 'You ask me as if you did not know, O cunning one! Tell me at once what has become of the sweet young man who lay in my arms all night; for I love him passionately.' The scandalised old woman thrust out her neck to hear better, and said: 'Allah preserve you from all improper matters, O princess! This is not your usual kind of conversation; if it be a joke, please tell me.' Budar half rose on her bed and answered in a threatening voice: 'Nurse of misfortune, I order you: tell me what has become of that youth to whom last night I gave my body, my heart, and my virginity.'

The nurse saw the world diminishing before her eyes; she beat her face and fell with the other nine old women to the ground. While these called out: 'O black morning! O prodigy! O loss! O tar!' the nurse said through her tears: 'In Allah's name, dear lady Budar, collect your wits, for such conversation is unworthy of you.' Will you be quiet, wicked old woman!' cried the princess. 'Tell me what you have done with my black-eyed lover. His brows were arched and turned up at the corners, he lay with me until the morning, and he had something below his navel which I have not.'

The nine old women raised their hands to heaven, crying: 'O confusion! Allah preserve our mistress from madness from snares and from the evil-eye! Her joke goes a little too far this morning!' And the nurse, beating her breast, said to the princess: 'If these naughty words came to the ears of the King, he would kill us all; we would never be able to escape his wrath.' 'I ask you for the last time,' answered Budar; with trembling lips, 'to tell me what you have done with the boy whose traces I still bear upon my body.'

The old woman shrieked: 'That one so young should have gone mad,' and the princess was so angry at these words that she unhooked a sword from the wall and threw herself upon the collection of dames. These at once fled from the apartment, jostling each other and bellowing, until they came into the presence of the King. The nurse, with tears in her eyes, told the monarch what had happened

Budar; and added: 'She would have killed us all if we had not fled.' 'This is a terrible thing!' cried Gliayyar. 'But are you really sure that she has lost what she says she has lost?' The nurse took the ring between her fingers, and said: 'I saw for myself. There was a great

deal of blood.' It is extraordinary,' said the King and, dressed as he was, with naked feet and his night-turban upon his head, ran to his daughter's apartment.

The King looked sternly at Budar, saying: 'Is it true, as these old fools say, that you lay with someone last night, and still bear traces of his passage? That you have lost what you have lost?' Indeed it is true, my father, and I am sure that it was your doing. You chose the young man well. He is so beautiful that I burn to know why he has been taken away from me. See, here is the ring which he gave me when he took mine.'

Then the King, who, as you will remember, already thought that his daughter was half mad, said to himself: 'Never was such complete lunacy!' and added: 'My child, I wish you to explain the reason for your undignified conduct.' At that Budar tore her chemise from top to toe and beat her cheeks amid a storm of sobs; therefore the King ordered the old women and the eunuchs to hold her hands, in case she should do herself an injury, and even, if she became worse, to chain her with an iron collar to the window.

Then, in his despair, Ghayyur returned to his own palace, cudgelling his brains to think of some cure for the daughter whom he loved with his whole heart, and whom he could not believe to be irremediably deranged.

He called together all the learned men of his kingdom, the doctors, astrologers, chemists, and those versed in the books of old, and said to them: 'My daughter, the lady Budar, is in such and such a state. Who cures her shall have her to wife, and inherit my throne after my death; but who goes to her and does not make her well, shall have his head cut off.'

These promises were proclaimed throughout the city and neighbouring states, so that many doctors, learned men, physicians, and chemists, came to the test; and very soon forty heads were arranged in a fair pattern along the front of the palace. 'This is not a good sign,' said the others, 'we consider the disease incurable.' Not another of them dared risk his head: surely that is an excellent way to treat doctors.

Now the Princess Budar had a foster brother, the son of her nurse, whose name was Marzawan. Although he was a good Believer, he had studied magic and sorcery, Hindu and Egyptian books, talismanic characters, and the art of stars; then, when he had no more to learn, he had travelled through far countries and conferred with the

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masters of secret sciences. At this point in the tale he had just returned to his own country.

The first thing he saw on entering the city were the forty heads fastened to the gate of the palace; and, when he asked what these might mean, the passers-by told him of the notable ignorance of the doctors, which had so justly been punished.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-ninety-fourth night had come*

SHE SAID:

When Marzawan had kissed his mother the nurse, he asked for news of Budiir, and was confirmed in what he had heard. Therefore he became sorrowful, for he loved the princess with a love which is unusual between brothers and sisters. After reflecting for an hour, he asked his mother if it were possible for her to introduce him into the presence of the princess, that he might see if her illness were curable. 'It is difficult, my son,' answered the old woman, 'but, since you wish it, hasten to dress yourself as a woman and follow me.' Without delay Marzawan disguised himself and followed his mother.

The eunuch on guard wished to prevent them entering Budar's apartment, but the old woman slipped a substantial present into his hand, saying: 'O chief of the palace, our dear princess, who is so sick, told me that she wished to see my daughter who was brought up with her. Therefore let us pass, O father of politeness.' So the eunuch, doubly gratified, told them not to stay too long, and they entered.

As soon as he saw the princess, Marzawan lifted the veil which covered his face and brought from under his garments an astrolabe, some magic books, and a candle. He was about to cast Buddr's horoscope before questioning her, when she threw her arms about his neck, saying: 'Do you also think I am mad my brother? If so you are mistaken. Reflect on these words of the poet:

They said: 'She is mad.  
I answered: 'Would that I had  
Followed the madman's rule  
Of looking on life from another angle  
To find it beauriful.'

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When he heard these lines, Marzawan understood that Buchar was in love and nothing more. 'A wise man only needs a sign,' he said. 'Tell me your story, and, if Allah wills, I may bring you health and consolation.' Buclur told him all the details of her love, adding tearfully: 'Such is my sad lot; I weep by night and day; my burning heart is hardly refreshed by love songs.'

Marzawan lowered his head and stayed for an hour in deep thought, before he said: 'As Allah lives, your tale is clear enough, though it is not easy to understand. I think that I can satisfy your desires, but you must be patient until you see me again. I swear that, when you look upon me next, I will be leading your lover by the hand.' With that he retired precipitately and, on the same day, left the city of King Ghayyur.

For a whole month Marzawan journeyed from city to city and from island to island, hearing nothing talked of but the strange tale of the lady Budar's indisposition. At last, however, he came to a great city by the sea, the name of which was Tarab, and there the people were not talking of Budiir, but of the surprising illness of a prince called Kamar al-Zaman, who was the son of the King of those countries. Marzawan found the details of this story so like those which he knew concerning Budiir, that he at once asked where the prince might be found. Being told that he could make Khalidan in six months by land and in one month by water, he chose the sea way and embarked on a boat which was just setting sail for the islands of King Shahrman.

A favourable breeze followed the boat until the last day of her voyage, when she was actually in sight of Khalidan; then a terrible storm smote the sea and, lifting the ship in air, broke her to pieces on a pointed rock. Marzawan was an expert swimmer, so that he alone was able to save himself by clinging to a mast which was left floating on the sea. The waves bore him to a tongue of land on which was built the mourning palace of Kamar al-Zaman and his father.

Fate willed that the wazir, who had just been reporting on the state of the kingdom to Shahrman, should be looking out of the seaward window. He saw the young man come to shore, and ordered his slaves to go to his assistance. These soon brought Marzawan to the wazir, who gave him a change of garments and made him drink a glass of sherbert to calm his spirits.

The wazir was delighted with the appearance of this handsome stranger; he questioned him and greatly approved of the wise

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answers he received. 'Surely,' he said to himself, 'this young man must know something of medicine?'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-ninety-sixth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The wazir said to Marzawan: 'Allah has led you here that you may cure a sick man, whose distemper greatly grieves his loving father and all of us. I refer to Prince Kamar al-Zaman, son of King Shahrman.'

'Destiny is on my side,' said Marzawan to himself, and added aloud: 'From what illness does the King's son suffer?' For my own part,' answered the wazir, 'I am persuaded that it is madness pure and simple; but his father believes rather in the evil-eye, and seems almost to give credit to the strange story which his son told him?'

Marzawan rejoiced as the wazir told him the tale of Kamar al-Zaman; for he was persuaded that the prince was none other than the young man who had left so sweet a memory within the bed of princess Budiir. He was careful, however, to say nothing of this to the wazir; but contented himself with remarking: 'I saw the young man, I could tell better what remedy should be applied to him. Under Allah's grace, I might even be able to cure him myself.'

Without a moment's delay the wazir introduced Marzawan into the presence of the prince, and the first thing which struck him was the extraordinary resemblance between Kamar al-Zaman and Budar. He could not prevent himself from exclaiming: 'Blessed be Allah Who has created two beauties so alike, giving them the same kind and the same perfection!'

Kamar al-Zaman, who was lying weakly upon his bed with half-shut eyes, started when he heard these words, and listened attentively while Marzawan improvised these verses, which should explain his coming to the young man, while leaving King Shahrman and the wazir in ignorance:

Because I wish to remember  
I will sing a certain song.  
They told me that I was wounded,  
But that the cup waited,  
And the lute waited for me.

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Why should the blue chemise  
Which has done nothing  
Lie so close,  
Or the insensate cup  
Be so long against those lips?

Do not be angry with me:  
Joseph broke fewer hearts,  
David was less melodious before Saul,  
Mary the mother of Christ  
Had not her tenderness.

Cures,  
Do not talk to me of cures!

When Kamar al-Zaman heard these verses, a soothing freshness descended upon his heart, and he signed to his father to seat the young man by his side and leave him alone with him. Delighted to see his son interested in something at last, Shahrman seated Marzawan by the bedside and left the chamber, winking to his wazir to follow him.

Marzawan whispered in the prince's ear:

'Allah has led me hither that I may serve as a link between you and the woman you love. Here is the proof of what I say.' He gave such details of the night which the two young people had passed together that there could be no room for doubt in the prince's mind. 'The girl's name is Budor,' he added. 'She is the daughter of King Ghayyar, and my own foster-sister.'

Kamar al-Zaman felt his strength come back to him; he rose from the bed and took Marzawan by the arm, saying: 'I will set out with you at once for the land of King Ghayyar.' 'It is rather far,' answered the young man. 'First get completely well, and then we will set out together, for you alone can cure the princess.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the hundred-and-ninety-ninth night had come*

SHE SAID

Led by curiosity, King Shahrman re-entered the hall at this moment, and the breath halted in his throat for joy when he saw the

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shining face of his son and heard him say: 'I wish to dress and go to the hammam.'

The King threw himself upon Marzawan's neck and kissed him, without thinking to ask how he had wrought this cure. He showered him with gifts and honours; he illuminated the whole city and distributed a prodigious quantity of robes of honour to his nobles; he opened all the prisons and let the captives free, so that the kingdom was filled with joy.

When Marzawan judged that the prince was strong enough, he took him aside, saying: 'The moment has come for departure; therefore make your preparations.' But,' answered the other, 'my father will never let me go, for he loves me too much. Ira Allah, what a misfortune! Surely I shall become ill again.' Marzawan consoled him, saying: 'I had foreseen that difficulty, and have invented a benevolent lie which will favour our escape. You must tell the King that you wish to hunt with me for a few days and breathe the good air into a breast too long narrowed by the sick-room. Surely he will not refuse.' Kamar al-Zamin went delightedly and asked permission from the King, who did not dare to refuse him, but stipulated that he should lie away from home only for one night. 'I would die of grief if you were absent any longer,' he said, and prepared two magnificent horses, with six relays, for his son and Marsawan. Also he loaded a dromedary with hunting gear and a camel with food and water-bags.

The King embraced the two young men with tears in his eyes, and saw them leave the city with their company. Once outside the walls, the youths pretended all day to be in search of game, in order to delude their grooms and huntsmen. That night they had the tents pitched and, after eating and drinking, fell into a sound sleep. At midnight Marzawan gently woke his friend, saying: 'Let us be gone while our people are asleep. Each mounted one of the relay horses and left the encampment without having been noticed.

They proceeded at a good pace till dawn and then Marzawan halted and begged the prince to dismount. Kamar al-Zaman did so and, when Marzawan asked him to take off his shirt and drawers, obeyed without question. 'Give them to me, and wait here a little,' said the young man, as he tucked the garments under his arm and set off towards a place where the road branched into four. He had brought an extra horse with him from the camp; when he reached the cross-roads, he led it a little way into the forest and cut its throat.

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Then, staining the shirt and drawers with the animal's blood, he threw them into the dust of the road and rejoined the prince. When Kamar al-Zarnan questioned him as to his plan, he answered: 'First let us break our fast.' They ate and drank, and then Marzawan explained: 'When two days pass without our returning and our huntsmen report that we left them in the middle of the night, the King will send men to seek us. These will find your clothing at the cross-roads, covered with blood and containing a little horse-flesh and two broken bones which I had the forethought to place within them. They will think that you have been devoured by some savage beast and that I have fled. I know that this supposition will be a terrible blow to your father; but think of his later joy when he hears that you are alive and married to the Princess Budor!' '0 Marzawan,' exclaimed the prince, 'it is an excellent plan, but how shall we pay the expenses of our journey?' 'Do not trouble yourself for that,' returned the other, 'for I have brought my most beautiful jewels with me, and the least of them is worth two hundred thousand dinars.'

They journeyed for many days and came at last to the city of King Ghayyur, which they entered at full gallop by the great gate of the caravans.

Kamar al-Zaman wished to go at once to the palace, but his companion bade him be patient and led him to a khan which was much used by rich strangers. They rested there for three days from the fatigues of their journey, and during that time Marzawan had a complete astrological outfit in gold and precious metals made for the prince. On the fourth day he conducted him to the hammam and, after they had both bathed, dressed him in the garments of an astrologer. Only then, and after giving him minute instructions, did he lead him to the palace and leave him at the door, in order to go himself to his mother, that she might advise the princess of his return.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundredth night had come*

SHE SAID

Kamar al-Zarnan came up to the door of the palace and proclaimed in a loud voice to the crowd in the square and to the sentinels and door-keepers:

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Remember me:  
I am the master of astrology,  
The chief of wizardry,  
The cord of blackest curtainry,  
The supreme key  
Of every treasury,  
The pen by whose calligraphy  
Black book and amulet come to be,  
The hand which subtly  
Spreads out the sands of prophecy  
And draws electuary  
From written charactry;  
Being talismanic energy  
My word is victory.  
I make the malady  
Turn aside and flee  
To the emunctory;  
I scorn contemptuously  
In my great artistry  
Either inflammatory,  
Or any vomitory,  
Or sternutatory,  
Prayers jaculatory,  
Or words of suppliance,  
Or modes propitiatory;  
Thus I can guarantee  
With certainty  
Immediate remedy.  
I am the chief of wizardry;  
Come speedily,  
I take not currency  
Nor any other fee,  
But work entirely  
For notoriety:  
Remember me!

The people, the guards, and the door-keepers were stupefied by such eloquence; especially as they thought that the race of doctors and magicians had ceased to be. They surrounded the young astrologer and, seeing the perfection of his beauty, were charmed and

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grieved at the same time; for they feared that he would suffer the same fate as those who had gone before him. They who were nearest to the velvet-covered car on which he stood, begged him to be gone, saying: 'By Allah, lord magician, do you not know the fate which awaits you here? The King is certain to command you to try your science on his daughter, and then your head will go to join those others.'

Kamar al-Zamin only answered by crying:

Remember me,  
I am the chief of wizardry;  
I scorn contemptuously  
In my great artistry  
Or tube injectory  
Or bag suspensory  
Or burning pungency.  
Therefore come speedily!

And those who were round became convinced of his knowledge and yet feared to see him fail before an incurable disease. They beat their hands together, crying: 'Woe for his youth!'

The King heard the tumult outside his window and, seeing a crowd surrounding an astrologer, sent his wazir to fetch the man into his presence. As soon as Kamar al-Zamin stood before the throne, he kissed the earth between the King's hands, and made him this compliment:

There are eight things  
Which make the wise  
Bow before kings:  
Knowledge and strength and power,  
To give at the apt hour,  
Good luck and victories,  
A bird's voice on bird's wings,  
A taste for subtleties.

King Ghayyur looked attentively at the astrologer, and shut his eyes for a moment at so much beauty. Then he commanded the youth to sit by his side and said to him: 'My child, you would look better without these medicinal garments. I would be very happy to give you my daughter to wife if you cured her; but I doubt if you will succeed, and do not wish to have to do with you that which

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I have sworn to each who should look upon her face and fail to make her well. Therefore tell me if you consent to the conditions.'

'O auspicious King,' answered Kamar al-Zaman, 'I have come from far away to prosper by my art and not to hide it in silence. I know what I risk, but I will not draw back.' Then said the King to his chief eunuch: 'Take him to the prisoner, since he insists.'

As the two went towards Budar's apartment, the eunuch, seeing his companion hurry, said to him: 'Unhappy boy, do you really think that you will become the son-in-law of the King?' I hope so, indeed,' answered the prince. am certain that I can cure the princess, without even seeing her, and spread the fame of my art abroad among all this people.'

'If you can do that,' answered the astonished eunuch, 'you will deserve everything which can be given to you.' Then said Kamar al-Zarnan: 'As I am anxious to see the princess who shall be my wife, let me go in quickly; I will cure her from behind a curtain in her room.'

The eunuch did as he was requested, and the prince, sitting on the floor behind the curtain, took paper and writing materials from his belt and wrote the following letter:

At this point Shahrazid saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-fourth night had come*

SHE SAID:

*'These lines are from the hand of Kamar al-Zamcin, son of the Sultan Shahrman, King in the lands of Mussulman over the Isles 'I /Galician.*

*'To Princess Budir, daughter of King Ghayyar, master of al-Buhar and of al-Kusar, showing his love for her.*

*'If I* would tell you of all the fire in my heart, there is no reed in the world hard enough for the expression. Yet if the ink failed, my blood would not fail; and it is the colour of flame, a fire which has burnt me ever since that magic night when you appeared to me in sleep.

'Under this cover is your ring. I send it as certainproof that this letter comes from that young man, whose heart your glances burnt as fire burns bran, who is as yellow as saffron because he

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cannot yet reach you for the whirlwind's ban. He cries to you  
*Aman* and signs himself as

*Kamar al-Zaman.*

'I lodge at the Great Khan.'

The prince folded this letter and, slipping the ring inside it, sealed it and handed it to the eunuch. The slave gave it at once to his mistress, saying: 'Madam, there is behind your curtain a certain young astrologer, so audacious that he pretends to be able to cure folk without seeing them. He has sent this paper to you.'

No sooner had the princess opened the paper than she recognised her ring and cried aloud; pushing aside the eunuch, she ran through the curtain and knew her lover. Then it might have been thought that she was really mad; she threw herself upon his neck, and they kissed like two doves which had been long away from each other.

The eunuch ran to tell the King what was happening, and said: 'That young astrologer is more learned than any of them; he has cured your daughter without even seeing her.' Is that true ?' cried the King, and the slave answered: 'My lord, I have seen it with my own eyes.'

Ghayyir ran to his daughter's room and, seeing that she was indeed cured, kissed her between the eyes because he loved her; then he embraced Kamar al-Zaman, asking whence he came. 'I come from the Isles of Khalidan,' replied the prince. 'I am the son of King Shahrman.' And straightway he told the whole story to the King.

'By Allah,' exclaimed Ghayyur, 'this tale is so marvellous that if it were written with a needle in the corner of an eye, yet would it teach prudence to the circumspect.' Straightway he ordered the cleverest scribes of the palace to write the story in the annals, that it might be handed down for future generations from century to century.

He called the kadi and his witnesses to write out the marriage contract of the lady Budar with Kamar al-Zaman. The city was decorated and illuminated for seven days and seven nights; the people ate, drank, and rejoiced; and the two lovers loved each other at ease in the midst of festivities, thanking Him who had created them for one another.

One night, after a feast at which all the chiefs of the Inner and Outer Isles had been present, Kamar al-Zaman made use, even more marvellously than was his wont, of the sumptuous perfections of his

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wife, and fell into a deep sleep. His father, King Shahriman, appeared in his dreams, saying: 'Is it thus that you abandon me, O Kamar al-Zamin? See, I am dying of grief.' The prince awakened with a start and, rousing his wife, fell into a storm of sighs. 'What is the matter, O eye of me?' asked Budiir anxiously. 'If you have a belly-ache, I will make you a decoction of aniseed and fennel; if you have a headache, I will put a vinegar compress on your forehead; if you have eaten too much this evening, I will put a hot loaf wrapped in linen upon your stomach and give you a mixture of rose-water with water of flowers.'

At this point Shalu-azad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-sixth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Kamar al-Zaman answered: 'To-morrow we must set out for my own country, where the King, my father, lies sick. He has appeared to me in a dream, and waits me weeping.' 'I hear and I obey!' answered Buda, and, although it was still full night, rose up to seek the King, who was in his harim.

At her order the eunuch at the door went in, and the King, on seeing him, cried: 'Surely you come to announce some disaster, pitch-face?' The princess wishes to speak to you,' replied the eunuch, and Ghayyur answered: 'Wait till I put on my turban.' When he had done so, he went out and said to his daughter: 'My child, what kind of pepper have you been eating that you should be about at this time of night?' Father,' answered the princess, 'I wish permission to start at dawn for the land of Khalidan, which is the kingdom of my husband's father.' I have no objection to make,' said Ghayyur, 'provided that you return at the end of a year.' The princess kissed her father's hands by way of thanks and called Kamar al-Zamin, who thanked him also.

By dawn the horses were harnessed, the dromedaries and camels loaded, and every other preparation made. The King recommended his daughter to her husband in his farewell and giving them numerous gifts in gold and diamonds, saw them a little upon their way. When the sun was well up, he made his last recommendation with tears in his eyes, and returned towards the cit while the young people continued their journey,

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The tears of Kamar al-Zarran and Buclur were soon dried by joyful expectation of seeing King Shahriman. They went forward for thirty days, and at last reached a pleasant meadow which tempted them to pitch their camp and rest for a few days. When her tent had been made ready in the shadow of a palm tree, the lady Buda; who was weary, ate a light repast and went to sleep.

When Kamar al-Zaman had given orders that the other tents should be pitched far off, so that he and his wife might benefit by the isolation, he also entered the tent and saw Budik lying in calm slumber. This sight recalled the first wonderful night which they had had together in the tower, for the young girl lay upon the carpets, with her head resting on a pillow of scarlet. She was dressed only in a chemise of apricot gauze and ample drawers of Mosul silk. From time to time the breeze lifted the filmy chemise to her navel, showing her belly, which was as white as snow, with dimples in delicate places, each large enough to hold an ounce of powdered nutmeg.

Kamar al-Zaman recalled these delicious lines of a certain poet:

Sleeper, the palm trees drink the breathless noon,  
A golden bee sucks at a fainting rose,  
Your lips smile in their sleep. Oh, do not move.

Sleeper, oh, do not move the gilded gauze  
Which lies about your gold, or you will scare  
The sun's gold fire which leaps within your crystal.

Sleeper, oh, do not move; your breasts in sleep,  
Allah, they dip and fall like waves at sea;  
Your breasts are snow, I breathe them like sea foam,  
I taste them like white salt. They dip and fall.

Sleeper, they dip and fall. The smiling stream  
Stifles its laugh, the gold bee on the leaf  
Dies of much love and rosy drunkenness,  
My eyes burn the red grapes upon your breast.

Sleeper, oh, let them burn, let my heart's flower.  
Fed on the rose and santal of your flesh,  
Burst like a poppy in this solitude,  
In this cool silence.

Kamar al-Zaman burnt with a desire for his wife which might not be slaked by all the cold water-springs of the world. He leaned

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over her and, undoing the silk cord of her drawers, stretched his hand towards the warm shadow of her thighs, where it encountered a small hard object. This he drew towards him and found to be a carnelian, held by a silken cord just above the valley of roses. In his astonishment he thought to himself: 'If this stone had not extraordinary virtue and were not very dear to Budiir, she would not keep it so carefully in the most precious part of her body. Surely it must be some talisman given her by her brother, Marzawan, to ward off the evil-eye and all miscarriage.'

Before going further with his caresses, he untied the silk cord and took the stone outside the tent to examine it. Just as he had discovered that the carnelian had four faces, engraved with talismanic characters and unknown symbols, a great bird swooped down from the sky and, more quickly than lightning, snatched it from his hand.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-seventh night had come*

SHE SAID:

Then the bird perched out of reach on the branch of a great tree and regarded the prince with silent mockery, holding the talisman in its beak.

At this disastrous accident, Kamar al-Zaman's mouth fell open, and he stood still for some moments without being able to move; for he thought of the grief which Budur would feel when she heard of the loss of so dear a treasure. When he was a little recovered from his consternation, he picked up a pebble and ran towards the tree on which the bird had perched; but, as soon as he came near enough to throw, the bird flew to <sup>a</sup> further tree; and then, as the prince still pursued, to a still further one. 'He must see the stone,' thought Kamar al-Zaman; 'I will throw it away to show that I wish him no hurt.' And he suited the action to the thought.

The bird, seeing the prince throw away the stone, hopped to the ground; but, when Kamar al-Zaman put forth his hand, it *fluttered* out of reach. The prince jumped forward and the bird jumped away; the bird jumped away and the prince jumped forward; and this went on for hours and hours, from valley to valley and from hill to hill, until nightfall. 'There is no help save in Allah!' cried the prince, as

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he halted out of breath and saw the bird halt also, just out of reach on the top of a little mound.

Kamar al-Zaman sweated more from despair than from fatigue, and was in half a mind to return to the tents; but he said to himself: 'My dear Budur might die of grief if I announced to her the loss of this talisman, whose powers, though unknown to me, may seem very precious to her. Also, if I return now that darkness has set in, I may lose my way or be attacked by savage beasts.' Not knowing what to decide, he stretched himself wearily on the ground. As he lay he watched the bird, whose eyes shone strangely in the night; each time he moved or tried to crawl nearer, it beat its wings and cried out to signify that it was also watching. At length, worn out with fatigue and emotion, the prince slept.

As soon as he woke he decided to catch the bird at all costs; and the pursuit of the day before began again with no greater success. On the second evening Kamar al-Zaman beat his breast, crying: 'I will follow as long as there is a breath in my body!' and, having eaten certain plants and herbs, he slept again with his face turned towards the bird, who watched him with luminous eyes throughout the night.

For ten days the pursuit continued and, on the morning of the eleventh, the bird led the prince to the gates of a city built by the sea. Here it paused and, laying down the carnelian, uttered three cries which sounded like 'Kamar al-Zaman.' Then it took up the talisman again in its beak and, rising in the air, flew out to sea. For some hours the prince lay raging upon the ground, broken by sobs; then he washed his face and hands in a stream, and lastly walked towards the city, thinking of Budur's grief and all the dark forebodings which she would entertain at the disappearance of himself and the carnelian. As he went, he murmured poems of separation and the pains of love, of which this was one out of a thousand:

Not to hear the fools who said:

'Ah, you loved too fair a being,'

Not to see the shaking head

Wag: 'She trusted to her seeing,'

I stopped my ears with the enchanted song:

'Though death come after . .

And hid my eyes with the verse: 'Life is long

And made for laughter.'



## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

Kamar al-Zamin entered through the gates of the city and walked about the streets, without receiving from a single one of the many inhabitants a kindly glance such as Mussulmans bestow on strangers. He walked straight ahead, and passed through the opposite gate which led to the suburban gardens.

Finding the gate open in a garden larger than the rest, he went in and was greeted by the gardener in Mussulman fashion. Kamar al-Zamin wished him peace and greedily drank in the Arabic which was addressed to him; after they had bowed to each other, the prince asked the gardener why all the people of the city looked so coldly and fiercely upon a stranger. The good old man replied:

'Glory be to Allah, my child, that you have come safely out of their hands. The people who live now in the city are invaders from the black lands of the West; they came up suddenly out of the sea one day and massacred all the Faithful. They worship strange and incomprehensible things, and speak an obscure and barbarous language; they eat evil-smelling, putrescent things, such as rotten cheese and game which they hang up; they never wash, for, at their birth, ugly men in black garments pour water on their heads, and this ablution, accompanied by strange gestures, frees them from all obligation of washing for the rest of their lives. That they might not be tempted by water, they at once destroyed the hammams and public fountains, building in their place shops where harlots sell a yellow liquid with foam on top, which they call drink, but which is either fermented urine or something worse. And their women, my son, are the abominations of calamity. Like the men they do not wash; but they whiten their faces with slaked lime and powdered egg-shells. They do not wear linen or drawers to protect them from the dust of the road, so that their presence is pestilential and the fire of hell will never clean them. Such are the people among whom I, the last Mussulman here left alive, must pass what rests to me of earthly existence. Yet I praise the Highest who allowed me to be born in a Faith as pure as the sky from which it comes.'

When he had made an end of these words, the gardener saw, by his listener's face, that the young man was tired and hungry; so, he led him to his modest house at the bottom of the garden, and gave him food and drink. After his guest had eaten, he discreetly questioned him concerning his reason for coming to that place.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

## TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMIN AND PRINCESS BUDUR

*But when the two-hundred-and-eighth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Kamar al-Zaman was moved by the generosity of the gardener to such an extent that he told him the whole story of his adventures, and ended by bursting into tears.

The old man did his best to console him, saying: 'My child, the Princess Budur is certain to make her way to Khalidan, your father's kingdom. Here in my house you will find affection, protection and rest, until Allah send you a boat to take you to the neighbouring Isle of Ebony. There you will find many ships plying to Khalidan. I myself will go every day to the harbour, until I find some merchant who will consent to journey with you to the Isle of Ebony; you might wait for many years before finding one whose destination was

The gardener kept his word; but first days and then months passed without his finding any vessel bound for the Isle of Ebony.

I hasten to return to the lady Buclar, because her adventures were more than marvellous. When she woke, she opened her arms to clasp Kamar al-Zaman; great was her surprise at not finding him and greater when she saw that her drawers were undone and that the talisman had disappeared. For the time being she only thought that her husband had taken the carnelian outside to examine it, and therefore she waited patiently.

When hours passed and the prince did not return, she became very anxious; and when night fell, she said to herself: 'Ira Allah, some strange thing is keeping Kamar al-Zaman away from me. But why has the talisman gone also? O evil stone! O wicked brother, to give me as a present the cause of all my grief!'

After two days of waiting, Buchir, instead of collapsing as any other woman would have done under the circumstances, found an unusual strength. She said nothing of her husband's disappearance, for fear that she might be betrayed or badly served by her slaves; and she forbade her maid to say anything of it either. Knowing how perfectly she resembled Kamar al-Zamin, she put aside her woman's garments and dressed herself in a fair striped robe of his, which fitted exactly and left the neck at liberty. In a belt of carved gold she placed a dagger having a jade hilt encrusted with rubies; she covered her head with a rainbow-coloured silk turban, fastened about the brow with a triple cord of young camel's hair. Making her slave

### THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

dress in the garments which she had discarded, she took a whip in her hand and left the tent. The other walked behind her, so that all thought that she herself was the lady Budtar and that it was Kamar al-Zarnan who gave the order for departure.

The princess, in the likeness of her husband, voyaged for many days until she came to a city by the sea. She had her tent pitched near the gate and asked what the name of the city might be. When she was told that it was the capital of the Isle of Ebony, she asked what king ruled over it. 'Our King's name is Armanis, and he has one daughter of surpassing loveliness, whose name is the lady Hayyat al-Nufils,' answered the stranger whom she had questioned.

At this point Shahraid saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-ninth night had come*

SHE SAID:

She sent a letter to King Armanas, in which she announced herself as Prince Kamar al-Zamin, son of Shahrman, lord of Khaliclan. As King Armanas was on the best of terms with Shahrman, he was pleased to do the honours of the city for his son. Therefore he went out to the tents, followed by the principal people of his court, and welcomed the princess with every honour. He even persuaded her, in spite of her hesitation, to accept a lodging in his own palace, and made her entry the cause for three days' sumptuous festivity throughout the whole court.

On the fourth day Armanas spoke to Budar of her journey and asked her intention in making it. That day also the princess went to the palace hammam, without calling for the services of a rubber, and came from it so shining and beautiful that people stopped to catch their breath and thank her Creator as she passed by.

King Armanis sat by her side and as he spoke with her, her perfection and eloquence so wrought on him that he said: 'My son, it is Allah Who has sent you to my kingdom that you may be the consolation of my declining years and art towards me as a son and heir. Will you do so, my son? Will you marry my daughter Hayyat al-Nufas? No one in the world is so worthy as you of her fortune and her beauty. She is just marriageable, having crossed the threshold of her fifteenth year; an exquisite flower which I would delight to see you breathing. If you accept, I will abdicate my throne in your

### TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDOR

favour at once, because my great age is wearied by the burden of kingship.'

Princess Budar was naturally embarrassed by this generous offer and, to prevent her perturbation being seen, cast down her eyes as if reflecting, while a cold sweat like ice stood out upon her brow. 'If I tell him that I, Kamar al-Zaman, am already married to the lady Buda., he will answer that the Book allows me four wives,' she said to herself. 'If I tell him the truth, he may force me into marriage with himself, and the story is bound to be noised abroad to my everlasting shame. If I simply refuse his paternal offer, his love will turn to great hatred and, when I leave his palace, he will set snares to destroy me. Therefore I must accept, and let Destiny work itself out in its own way; for who knows what the gulf of the future may hide? At least, by becoming King, I will have acquired a fair land for Kamar al-Zamin when he returns. As for the consummation of my marriage with the child, I shall have to think out a way.'

She raised her head, with a fine colour which the King attributed to modesty, saying: 'I am the submissive son of the King. I answer that to hear is to obey.' King Armanas rejoiced exceedingly at this reply and insisted on the marriage taking place at once; before all his wazirs, amirs, and chamberlains, he abdicated in favour of Kamar al-Zaman, and announced the change of dynasty in the city and the provinces by means of heralds. In less time than it takes to tell, festivities were organised on a scale which had never been seen before, and, amid cries of joy, to the sound of fifes and cymbals, the marriage contract was written for the new King and Hayyat al-Nufas.

That evening the old queen, surrounded by her maidens who cried for joy, brought the young bride to Buclar's room, and the pretended husband took her gently and, for the first time, raised the veil from her face. Those who were by grew pale with desire and emotion when they saw this wonderful couple; they discreetly retired after a thousand compliments and good wishes, leaving the bridal pair alone in the torchlight of their chamber.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

*But when the two-hundred-and-tenth night had come*

SHE SAID:

After a rapid inspection, Budar was delighted with the girlish charms of Hayyat al-Nufus; she saw great black frightened eyes, a colouring as pure as water, and little breasts childishly lifting the light gauze which covered them. The young bride smiled timidly with lowered eyes when she knew that she had pleased her husband; though she hardly dared to move, she had herself taken stock of the virgin cheeks of her companion, and found them more beautiful than any which she had yet seen in the palace. She was stirred to the depths of her being when she saw her husband approach and sit down beside her on the carpet-covered mattress.

Budar took the girl's little hands in her own and gave her a kiss upon the mouth which was so delicious that Hayyat did not dare to return it, but shut her eyes and sighed for happiness. Taking the small head in the curve of her arm and leaning it against her breast, Budar softly sang lullabies to the child until she went to sleep with a happy smile upon her lips. Then she freed the slender body from its veils and jewelry and, lying down beside it, slept till morning.

The lady Budi:u., who had kept on most of her own clothes and even her turban, hastened to make her necessary ablutions as soon as it was light and, putting on the insignia of royalty, went to her throne-room to receive the homage of the court, to do the business of the state, to put down abuses, to give office and to take it away. Deeming these reforms urgent, she abolished tolls, customs, and prisons; therefore her new subjects loved her and prayed for her prosperity and long life.

In the meanwhile King Armanas and his wife hastened to ask their daughter news of her bridal. They questioned her as to whether her husband had been gentle; they asked her if she was too tired, for they did not wish to come to the important point at once. 'My husband was delightful,' answered Hayyat. 'He kissed me on the mouth and I went to sleep on his breast to the rhythm of his lullabies. How tender and gentle he is!' Is that all that passed?' asked Armanas, and she answered: 'That was all,' 'Were you not even undressed?' stammered the queen. 'No, I was not,' replied the little princess. Then her father and mother looked at each other without saying a word, and left the apartment.

When the royal business was over, Budar returned to the

## TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDOR

marriage chamber and asked her bride what the King and Queen had said to her. 'They asked me whether I was undressed,' answered Hayyat. 'As to that, let me help you,' said Budiir and, undressing the little girl garment by garment, lay down with her naked on the mattress.

Very gently she kissed her between the eyes, asking: 'My lamb, do you love men very much?' I have never seen any except the eunuchs of the palace,' answered the other, 'but it appeared to me that they were half men. What is it that they lack?' 'Just what you lack yourself, sweet eyes,' said Budiir, and the child said: 'What is that?' A finger!' laughed the false bridegroom.

Little Hayyat al-Nuffis uttered a stifled cry of terror and, taking her hands from under the coverlet, spread out the ten fingers before her frightened eyes; but Budar pulled her close and said, kissing her hair: 'As Allah lives, I was only jesting!' She covered her with kisses until she was quite reassured, and then said: 'Kiss me, gentle one.' Their lips met and stayed. Thus they slept till morning.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-eleventh night had come*

SHE SAID:

When Budar went forth to look after the affairs of the nation, the King and Queen came to their daughter, and Armaniis said: 'The blessing of Allah be upon you, my child. I see that you are still in bed. Did he wound you too much?' Not at all,' answered Hayyat. 'I slept wonderfully well in his beautiful arms; this time he undressed me and covered all my body with delicate little kisses. Ya Allah, I still feel all tingling and shivery. It is true that he frightened me once by saying that I lacked a finger, but that was only a joke. His kisses were so pleasant, his fingers so sweet upon my naked flesh, his lips so warm, that I thought myself in Paradise.' But where are the napkins? Did you lose much blood, my dear?' asked the Queen. 'I did not lose any!' replied the astonished child. At this her father and mother beat their faces, crying: 'Oh the shame, the unhappiness! Why does your husband so despise us?' Little by little, the King entered into a violent passion of anger and, as he withdrew, he cried so loud to his wife that Hayyat al-Nuffis heard: 'If he does not do his duty to-night and take our daughter's virginity, thus saving our

## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

honour, I will find a way to chastise him. I will take away the throne which I have given him, I will drive him from the palace; let him beware lest I do something worse.'

When night came, Bud'lr found the bride sobbing with her head among the cushions of the bed; when she kissed her brow and wiped away her tears, asking the reason for her despondency, Hayyat al-Nufils answered in a dolorous voice: 'Dear my lord, my father wishes to take away the throne which he gave you, and even hinted at worse things, because you do not take my virginity and save the honour of his name. He says that the thing must be done to-night. I only tell you this, sweet master, as a warning, and to persuade you to the act which he requires. All day I have been weeping at your danger. I pray you hasten to take my maidenhead and make the napkins red to delight my mother's eyes. I trust to you entirely and place my body and myself between your hands.'

'Now is the time,' thought Budar to herself, 'there is nothing else to be done; I put my faith in Allah.' Then to the young girl she said: 'Sweet eye, do you love me very much?' 'As I would love Paradise,' answered the other. Budar kissed her on the mouth, asking: 'How much more?' And the little one replied under the kiss: 'I do not know; but very much.' Since you love me so,' said Budir, 'would you be happy if, instead of being your husband, I were only your brother?' 'I would die of happiness,' cried the little one, clapping her hands. 'And supposing, my gentle one,' went on the princess, 'instead of being your brother, I were your sister, would you love me as much?' 'More, more!' exclaimed Hayyat, 'for then I could be always with you, always play with you, always sleep with you, and never be separated.' Budirr drew the girl to her and covered her eyes with kisses, saying: 'O Hayyat, can you keep a secret to prove your love for me?' Since I love you, everything is easy,' cried Hayyat al-Nu fus.

After a final kiss which robbed them both of breath, Budiir stood up and, crying: 'Look at me, child, and be my sister!' opened her robe from neck to waist and pulled out two shining white breasts crowned with roses. 'See, I am a woman like yourself, my dear,' she said. 'I am disguised as a man, because of a most strange adventure, which I shall recount to you at once.'

Sitting down again and taking the bride on her knee, she told her the whole story from beginning to end. But nothing would be gained by repeating it here.

## TALE OF KI4MAR AL-ZAMIN AND PRINCESS BUDCR

Little Hayyat al-Nuffis marvelled at this tale and, as she lay in the breast of Budar, took the other's chin in her small hand, saying: 'Dear sister, what a delightful life we are going to live together while waiting for your Lamar al-Zaman. Allah hasten his coming that our joy may be complete!' May He indeed hear your petition, dear,' said Budih. 'I shall give you to him as a second wife, and the felicity of all three of us will be perfect.' The girls embraced each other and played a thousand games together, so that Hayyat was astonished at the many beauties which she found in her friend. Taking hold of Budiir's breasts, she said: 'How beautiful they are, dear sister. Look, they are much bigger than mine. Mine are quite tiny; do you think they will ever grow?' After that she examined Budiir everywhere, questioning her about the discoveries which she made; and the elder girl, amid a hundred kisses, clearly exposed to her the use of many things. 'Ya Allah,' exclaimed Hayyat, 'now I understand perfectly. When I used to ask the slaves: "What is this for?" and "What is that for?" they were accustomed to wink for sole answer. Sometimes even they would click their tongues, which drove me into a great rage; I used to scratch my cheeks and cry louder and louder: "Tell me what that is for?" Once, hearing my shout, my mother ran in and the slaves said to her: "She is yelling because she wand us to tell her what that is for." Although I promised repentance, the Queen was very angry and, baring my little bottom, gave me a furious slapping, and said: "That is what that is for!" So I ended by believing that its only use was for slapping.'

The pair said and practised a thousand follies, so that by morning Hayyat al-Nufils had nothing to learn of the charming uses which her most delicate organs were destined to fulfil.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

### *But when the two-hundred-and-twelfth night had come*

SHE SAID:

When the hour approached for a visit from the King and Queen, Hayyat al-Null:is said to Buchan 'My sister, what shall I say to my mother when she wishes to see the blood of my virginity ?'"That is easy,' smiled Budiir and, going out secretly, she returned with a fowl. She cut its throat and bathed the girl's thighs and dipped the napkins in the blood, saying: 'You need only show her these; for

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happily custom does not allow any further examination.' 'But why will you not take it yourself, with one of your fingers?' asked Hayyat. 'Because, my *sweet*,' replied Buckir, 'I am keeping it for Kamar al-Zarnan.'

As soon as the supposed King had departed to his hall of justice, the King and Queen entered to their daughter, ready to give rein to violent anger if the marriage had not been consummated. But, when they saw the blood and reddened thighs, their happiness knew no bounds and they ran to set open all the doors of the apartment. The women of the palace trooped in with cries of joy and triumph, and the proud Queen placed the ensanguined napkins on a velvet cushion, and bore them in procession round all the women's quarter. The King, for his part, gave a great feast and slaughtered countless sheep and young camels for the poor. The Queen and the female guests returned to the young bride and, kissing her with many tears, stayed with her till the evening, when they led her to the hammam, closely covered against the cold.

The lady Bud sat every day upon the throne of the Isle of Ebony, reigning so justly that all her subjects loved her; but in the evening she joyfully returned to her young friend and, taking her in her arms, lay with her upon the mattress. Clapsed together as if they were really husband and wife, they consoled each other with every kind of attempt and pretty game, still waiting for the time when Kamar al-Zaman should come to them.

All this while the prince lived in the house of the Mussulman gardener, outside the city of the unclean and inhospitable western invaders. At the same time his father Shahrman, in the islands of Madan, being bitterly convinced of his death, made all his kingdom assume mourning and built a funeral monument, in which he shut himself to grieve silently for his child.

In spite of the companionship of the old gardener, who did his best to distract him and to make him believe in the arrival of a boat that should carry him to the Isle of Ebony, Kamar al-Zaman became progressively sadder as he recalled his happy past.

One day, while the gardener was away at the harbour as usual, Kamar al-Zaman sat sadly in the garden and said over verses to himself, as he watched the birds fighting. Suddenly his attention was attracted by the harsh cries of two great birds; he lifted his eyes and beheld them battling in the branches of a tree, with cruel strokes of beak and claw and wing. Very soon one of them fell lifeless at his

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feet, while the victor flew far away in the sky. Immediately two other birds, which were larger still, flew out of a neighbouring tree and alighted by the side of the dead. One of them stood at his feet, one at his head, and both wept loudly with bowed beaks. Seeing this, Kamar al-Zaman also wept out of sympathy; then, after a few minutes, he saw the two birds dig a grave with their claws and beaks and bury the dead. This done, they flew away and returned carrying between them the murderer, who struggled violently to escape and uttered piercing cries. They held him down over the grave and, ripping up his belly with a few rapid strokes of their beaks, pulled forth his entrails and flew away, leaving him struggling in agony upon the grave.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

### *But when the two-hundred-and-sixteenth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Kamar al-Zaman stayed motionless with surprise at such an extraordinary sight; but, when the birds had flown away, he curiously approached the place where the dead criminal was lying and, while looking at the corpse, saw in the middle of the split belly some red and sparkling thing. He picked it out, and fell in a faint upon the grass; for he had recovered his wife's carnelian talisman.

When he came to himself, he hugged the precious relic to his breast, crying: 'Allah grant that this be a good omen and that I will find my love again!' He kissed the stone and carried it to his forehead; then he wrapped it carefully in a piece of linen and fastened it safely round his arm, jumping for joy the while.

When he became calmer, he remembered that the good gardener had requested him to cut the roots of an old locust-tree, which bore neither leaves nor fruit. He girt himself with a hempen belt and, taking an axe and basket, set to work with hearty strokes on the roots of the old tree. Suddenly he felt the iron of his tool strike against a metallic object, which gave out a low grumbling sound beneath the earth. Shovelling aside the mould and stones, he found a large plate of bronze, which he hastened to lift. The hollow thus exposed showed him a stair of ten steps, hewn in the living rock; he quickly climbed down and discovered a large square cave, dating from the time of Aad and Thamad. In this cave were ranged twenty

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gigantic vases; lifting the cover of the first, he found it filled with ingots of red gold; a second was heaped to the brim with gold dust; and the remaining eighteen held gold in one of these two forms.

As soon as he had recovered from his surprise, he left the cave and, replacing the bronze plate, went on with his work of watering the trees in the garden, until his old friend returned at night fall. The gardener's first words were filled with good news. 'My child,' he said, 'it delights me to tell you that you will soon return to the land of the Mussulmans. I have found a vessel, freighted by rich merchants, which will set sail in three days and bear you to the Isle of Ebony.' Kamar al-Zaman cried aloud for joy and kissed the old man's hands, saying: 'Father, I also have good news which will rejoice your heart, although I know that you are removed from the greed of this century and that your soul is set above ambition. Come with me to the garden and I will show you the fortune which a compassionate providence has prepared for you.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-nineteenth night had come*

SHE SAID:

He conducted the gardener to the locust-tree and, lifting the bronze plate, led him, in spite of his astonished fears, down into the cave. When the gardener saw the twenty jars of gold, he lifted his arms and opened his eyes, crying: 'Ira Allah!' in front of each vessel. 'Thus is your hospitality rewarded by the Great Giver,' said Kamar al-Zaman. 'That same hand which a stranger held out to you that you might lift him from his adversity, has caused a river of gold to flow into your dwelling. This is the work of Destiny, which loves actions coloured by the beauty of kindness.'

Tears flowed from the old man's eyes and ran down into his beard, before he could say: 'My child, what should an old man like myself do with all this treasure? It is true that I am poor, but my happiness is great enough; it will be complete if you give me a dirham or two with which to buy a winding-sneet. I can lay it by my side when I come to die alone, and the first charitable stranger may dress me in it for the Judgment Day.'

This time it was Kamar al-Zaman who wept. At last he said to the gardener: 'Father of wisdom, old man with perfumed hands, the

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holy solitude in which your quiet days have passed has made you forget those laws of Destiny which bind the cattle of Adam's seed, both the just and the unjust. But I am myself returning shortly to the company of greedy mortals, and I must not forget the rules which govern them or I shall be devoured. This gold belongs to you in the sight of God; but, if you wish, we will share it. Only if you will not take half, I will touch none of it.'

'My son,' replied the gardener, 'ninety years ago my mother bore me in this place; she died, and my father died also. The benevolent glance of Allah followed my footsteps as I grew up in the shade of this garden, to the murmur of this native stream. I love the stream and the garden; I love the sighing of the leaves and the sunshine and the grass on which my shadow moves at liberty, and the moon which shines above these trees and smiles upon me until the morning. All these things speak to me in voices which I understand better than the voice of man. You know that I cannot voyage with you to the country of the Mussulmans, because I am myself the last Mussulman in a land where many lived of old. I pray to Allah that my bones may whiten here, and that the last Believer may die with his face turned towards that sun which shines upon an evil world, soiled by the barbarity of the West.'

The old man's hands trembled as he continued:

'As for those precious jars which you admire, since you desire it I will leave ten of them in the cave as a recompense for the stranger who wraps me in my shroud and buries me. The difficulty is not in this; it lies in shipping your jars without exciting the black hearts of this city. Now the olive trees in my garden are heavy with their fruit, but olives are rare and much sought after in the Isle of Ebony. I will buy you twenty large jars, which we will half fill with gold and then complete with olives. Thus we can safely have your treasure carried to the ship.'

Kamar al-Zaman took his friend's advice and spent the day in preparing the new jars. While he was working on the last one, he thought to himself: 'This talisman is not safe upon my arm; it might be stolen during my sleep or lost in some other way. It will be better to place it at the bottom of this jar, and cover it first with gold and then with olives.' This he did, and stoppered the last jar with its cover of white wood. Then, so that he might remember which one it was, he first made a notch in the leather near the bottom of it and then, being started, cut the whole of his name in fair interlacing characters.

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When all was finished, he sent his old friend to advise the sailors to come for the jars in the morning. The gardener did as he was asked, and then returned to the house in a state of some fatigue. He lay down shivering, with a light fever upon him.

In the morning the old man, who had never been ill in his life before, felt that his fever had increased; but he said nothing, as he did not wish to sadden Kamar al-Zaman's departure. He lay upon his mattress, growing weaker every hour, and understood that his last moments were not far off.

During the day the sailors came to the garden and asked Kamar al-Zaman to show them what they had to take. He pointed out the twenty jars ranged by the hedge, saying: 'They are filled with olives of the finest quality. I beg that you do not knock them about too much.' Then the captain, who was with his men, said: 'Above all, my lord, do not be late, for to-morrow morning's wind will blow from off shore and we shall be obliged to set sail.' After this the men departed with the jars.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-twenty-second night had come*

SHE SAID:

Kamar al-Zarnan went back to the gardener and found that his face was very pale, though marked with a great serenity. In answer to his enquiries, he learnt of his friend's illness and was much disturbed by it, in spite of the reassurances of the invalid himself. *He* prepared various decoctions of green herbs, which did little good, and watched over him that day and all through the night, seeing the fever increase every hour. In the morning the good gardener called to him and took his hand, saying: 'Kamar al-Zaman, my son, listen! There is no God but Allah! And Muhammad is His Prophet!' Then he fell back dead.

Kamar al-Zaman burst into tears and stayed some time weeping by the old man's side; then he shut the eyes of the dead, performed the last rites, made him a white shroud, dug a grave, and buried the last son of the Faith in that idolatrous land. Not till then did he think of going to join his ship.

He collected provision for the journey, locked the gate of the garden, and ran in haste to the harbour; the sun was already high

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and he saw the ship that should have carried him making, with all sails set before a favourable wind, for the open sea.

His grief and despair were boundless, but he hid them so that the low fellows about the shipping should not laugh at him. He went back to the garden which was now his and, lying down on his bed, wept bitterly for himself and for Budar and for the talisman which he had just lost for a second time.

In his grief at knowing that he was doomed to stay in that inhospitable country for an unknown length of years, he said to himself: 'My misfortunes began with the loss of the talisman, luck came back to me when I recovered it; and, now that it is gone once more, who can tell what calamity hangs above my head? Yet there is no help save in Allah!' With that he rose and bought twenty new jars, as he did not wish to risk the loss of the rest of his treasure. He filled the jars with gold covered by olives, saying to himself: 'They will be ready for the day on which Allah sends me a ship.' After this he took up the old life again, and spent his days in watering the garden and declaiming sad verses about his love for Buclur.

The ship met favourable winds and made a good passage to the Isle of Ebony; it dropped anchor alongside a jetty, overlooked by the palace where Princess Budar lived in her character of Kamar al-Zaman. Seeing the vessel arriving under a spread of sail and windy flags, Budar was seized with a desire to visit it, especially as she was always hoping that one of the ships which came to her over the sea would bring her husband back to her. Therefore she ordered some of the chamberlains to accompany her, and went down to the ship.

When she was alongside, she called the captain and went aboard; all too soon she learnt that Kamar al-Zaman was not among the passengers. Through idle curiosity, she said to the master: 'What cargo have you got?' The captain answered:

'My master, beyond our lading of merchants, we have in the hold: beautiful fabrics and silk from all countries, brocades and embroidered velvets, painted cloths in the old style and the new, which make an excellent show; Chinese and Indian drugs, medicines in leaf and powder, salves, pomades, collyriums, unguents, and precious balms; diamonds, pearls, coral, and yellow amber; choice spices and every kind of aromatic thing, musk, amber, incense, transparent tears of mastic; unrefined benzoin, and essences of every flower, camphor, coriander, cardamoms, cloves, cinnamon from Sarandib, Indian tamarind and ginger; and, at our last port, we took

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on a quantity of bird-olives, those with the thin skins and sweet flesh, filled with juice and coloured like blond oil.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-twenty-fifth night had come*

SHE SAID

Now Princess Budar had a passion for olives; so, when she heard the word, she stopped the captain in the middle of his list and asked him, with bright desirous eyes: 'How many of these bird-olives have you?' Twenty large jars,' he answered. Then she said: 'Tell me, are they very large? Have they stuffed olives among them? You know the kind; they are stoned and filled with tart capers; my soul prefers them to the ones with stones.' I expect there are some of that kind among the rest,' answered the astonished captain.

Budar felt her palate filled with the water of unsatisfied desire and told the captain that she wished to buy one of the jars. 'As the owner missed the boat,' he answered, 'I cannot sell them; therefore our lord the King has the right to take what he wills.' Then, turning to the crew, he cried: 'Hi, there! Bring one of the twenty olive pots out of the hold.'

This was done on the instant and, when one of the covers had been knocked off, the princess, seduced by the appearance of the fruit, cried: 'I will buy the whole twenty! How much would they fetch in the open market?' Olives are much sought after in your kingdom, my lord,' answered the captain. **should say that they would fetch a hundred dirhams the jar.'** Then said Budar to her chamberlains: 'Pay the captain a thousand dirhams for each jar!' She departed, followed by porters carrying the jars, and saying over her shoulder to the captain: 'When you return to the owner's country, you will hand over the price to him.'

Budar ran to tell her friend Hayyat al-Nufas of the arrival of the olives; when they were carried into the harim, the two women had the largest conserve plate brought to them and ordered the slaves to separate on its surface the olives from the first jar **so that they might distinguish between the natural and the stuffed**. Great was their astonishment when they saw the olives mingled with gold dust and ingots. Also they were a little disappointed, as they feared that the fruit might have been harmed by this mixture. Budar commanded

### *TALE OF KAMAR 4L-ZAM.rIN AND PRINCESS BUDOR*

other plates to be brought, and had all the jars emptied. While the slaves were dealing with the twentieth, the princess saw, first the name of Kamar al-Zarnan carved upon it, and then the talisman, shining red among the yellow olives. She uttered a great cry and fell fainting into the arms of Hayyat al-Nufus; for she had recognised the carnelian which had stayed so long fastened to the silk knot of her drawers.

When she came to herself through the ministrations of her friend, she carried the stone to her lips with sighs of contentment and then, dismissing her slaves, said to Hayyat: 'Dear sweetheart, this is the talisman which separated me from my husband; now that I have found it again, I feel in my heart that he will return to me and fill the souls of both of us with happiness.'

She sent for the captain of the ship and, when he appeared before her, asked him what the owner of the olives did in his own country. 'He is an assistant gardener,' answered the other, 'he should have come with us to sell them in your kingdom, but missed the boat.' Then said Budar: 'The best of the olives were stuffed. As I tasted them, I recognised that they could only have been prepared by my old cook, for he alone of all men could make a stuffing of capers which at once raises the appetite with its sharpness and soothes the palate with complete softness. This wicked cook of mine fled one day, for fear that I should punish him for having split a kitchen boy while trying hard and disproportionate embraces upon his form. You must set sail at once and bring him back to me, and I will pay you well if you are diligent in the search. If you are not, you shall never land in my kingdom again; or, if you do land, you shall be put to death with all your crew.'

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-twenty-eighth night had come*

SHE SAID:

The captain was constrained to undertake this mission and, although he knew his departure would prejudice his sales, he comforted himself with hopes of the King's liberality. Allah permitted his ship to make a swift voyage to the unbelieving city, and, a few nights later, he disembarked with the strongest of his crew.

He hastened to the garden where Kamar al-Zamin was living and



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knocked at the door. The prince was sitting sadly, after his day's work, reciting verses on the subject of separation; when he heard the knocking on the door, he rose and cried: 'Who is there?' The captain answered in a feigned and sorrowful voice: 'One of Allah's poor!' The prince felt his heart beat compassionately when he heard one asking for help in his native tongue; therefore he opened the door and immediately fell into the hands of the sailors, who pinioned him. Seeing twenty olive pots ranged by the hedge as before, they took them up and bore them to the ship, which immediately set sail.

The captain came up to Kamar al-Zaman, followed by some of his crew, and said: 'So you are the lover of boys, who split the child in the King's kitchen? As soon as we get in, you will find an impaling post ready to return the compliment, unless you would rather be broached in the meanwhile by these jolly fellows, who are filled with abstinence.' As he said this, he pointed to the sailors, who winked at the young man and considered him an excellent windfall.

Although his bonds had been unfastened as soon as the vessel sailed, Kamar al-Zaman had so far said no word; but now, being unable to remain silent under such an accusation, he cried: 'I take refuge in Allah! Are you not ashamed to speak in this way? Pray for the Prophet!' 'I do pray for Him,' answered the captain, 'I pray that the blessing of Allah be upon Him and upon His people. Yet it was certainly you who outraged the boy.'

Kamar al-Zaman cried out afresh: 'I take refuge in Allah!' and the captain said: 'May Allah be merciful to us all!' Then exclaimed the prince: 'I swear before you all, on the life of the Prophet (upon whom be prayer and peace!), that I understand nothing of what you say, and that I have never set foot in the island to which you are taking me. Pray for the Prophet, good people!' Then all replied according to custom: 'May the blessing of Allah fall upon Him!'

'Am I to understand, then,' continued the captain, 'that you have never been a cook and never split a child in your life?' Kamar al-Zaman spat indignantly on the deck, saying: 'I take refuge in Allah! I shall answer no more: 'That is as you like,' said the captain, 'my business will be done when I hand you over to the King. If you are innocent, you must get out of your scrape in the best way you can.'

Soon the ship came to the Isle of Ebony, and the captain at once led Kamar al-Zaman to the palace, where he was immediately conducted into the presence.

## TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDOR

Now Princess Buder had hit upon a plan, which was really a very clever one for a woman, to safeguard the interest of both of them. As soon as she saw the captain's prisoner, she recognised her beloved and became as yellow as saffron. Her courtiers put down this change of colour to anger; while the prince, in his old gardener's robe, trembled before the monarch who looked at him so closely. He was far from guessing that he was in the presence of her for whom he had shed so many tears.

At last Budar gained control of herself and said to the captain: 'You may keep the price which I paid for the olives as a reward for your faithful service.' And what shall be done with the other twenty pots which I have in my hold?' asked the delighted sailor, as he kissed the earth before the throne. 'Send them to me and you shall receive a thousand dinars of gold,' said the supposed King, as she dismissed the captain.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

### *But when the two-hundred-and-thirtieth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Turning towards Kamar al-Zaman, who stood before her with lowered eyes, Budar said to the chamberlains: 'Take this young man to the hammam and then habit him sumptuously; bring him before me to-morrow at the first hour of the diwan.'

The princess hastened to her friend Hayyat al-Nufas and said to her: 'My lamb, our well-beloved has returned. As Allah lives, I have thought of a plan which will prevent his recognition of me. I do not wish him to betray us in the sight of any who see one day's gardener made King upon the next. My scheme is such that were it written with needles on the inside corner of an eye, yet would it serve as a lesson for the circumspect.' Hayyat threw herself joyously into Budar's arms, and that night the two girls behaved moderately, so that they might later receive their lover in all freshness.

Next morning, as Kamar al-Zaman stood in his rich robes before the throne, his face shining from his bath, his slight waist and mountainous croup shown off by the well-fitting tissues, the amirs and chamberlains were not surprised to hear the King say to his grand wazir: 'Give this young man a hundred slaves to serve him, with allowances from the treasury worthy of the rank to which I

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raise him from this moment.' Then Buclur named her husband a wazir among the wazirs, and gave him a complement of horses, mules and camels, of well-filled cupboards and chests.

After this she withdrew. But next morning, still in her character of King, she called Kamar al-Zaman before her and, taking away his appointment from the old grand wazir, invested it upon the prince; so that he sat in council straightway and began the direction of affairs of state.

When the diwan rose, Kamar al-Zaman went aside and reflected deeply, saying to himself: The honour and friendship with which this young King has loaded me in the presence of all his people must certainly have some cause. But what is it? The sailors who brought me here said that I was accused of having harmed a boy; and the King, instead of punishing me, sends me to the hammam and richly rewards me. What can lie behind so strange a happening? ... As Allah lives, I have found the reason, and it is a wicked one! The King, who is young and handsome, must think that I am a lover of boys and has treated me thus splendidly on that account. But I swear that I will never undertake such duties. I will discover his plan and, if he wishes either himself or myself to suffer the shameful thing, I will return all his gifts and go back to my garden.'

Kamar al-Zaman went to Budiir and said: 'O auspicious King, you have loaded your slave with honours and positions which are usually only accorded to the white hairs of wisdom, while I am still a young boy. If there be not some unknown reason behind all this, then the thing passes my understanding.'

Budar smiled and looked at Kamar al-Zaman with languorous eyes, saying: 'O handsome wazir, there is, as you say, a reason behind all this; it is the sudden fire which your beauty has lighted in my heart. The colouring of your cheeks is both calm and delicate; I am quite in love with the colouring of your cheeks.' Allah lengthen the days of Your Majesty,' said Kamar al-Zaman, 'but your slave has a wife whom he loves with his whole heart, weeping for her throughout every night since Fate has parted them. Your slave requests permission to journey on across the sea, after having given back those delightful things with which you wish to honour him.'

Budiir took the young man's hand, saying: 'Be seated, O fairest of wazirs. Do not speak of departure; rather stay here with one who burns for the beauty of your eyes and who is very ready, if you

### TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDUR

return his passion, to seat you on the throne beside himself. I, even I, only became King because of the love which the old King bore me and the complacency with which I answered it. Gentle youth, you must learn something of the customs of our country; for it is one in which beauty is the sole title to eminence .

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-thirty-second night had come*

SHE SAID

'Do not forget this truth of one of our greatest poets:

Our time recalls the age of Lot,  
The Friend of Allah, who had got  
A beard  
On cheeks like roses bending to the waters;  
When angels came to visit him  
He kept the lovely cherubim,  
Nor feared  
To throw the naughty populace his daughters.  
  
God recompensed his charming fault,  
By turning his good wife to salt,  
A dame  
With shrewish tongue and feminine opinions.  
Our age like his, as I repeat,  
Has learnt to cultivate one sweet  
Clear flame  
For little boys and paint-and-perfume minions.'

When Kamar al-Zaman heard these verses and recognised their trend, he blushed like a coal under the bellows, and said: 'O King, your slave must confess that he has no taste or aptitude for such things; he is too slight to bear weights and measures which would break the back of an old porter.'

The lady Budar laughed heartily at this, and continued: 'I do not understand your backwardness, delicious lad. Listen and I will tell you about the thing. Either you are a major or a minor: if you are a minor, you have no responsibilities and cannot be blamed for anything you do; if you are a major (and, to hear you discourse so well,

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I imagine you to be so), why do you hold back, for you are master of your own body and may do with it what you will? Nothing happens which was not written; and I myself might more reasonably be backward, seeing that I am smaller than you are. But, on the contrary, I apply these charming verses to myself:

As the boy looked at it, my thing  
Moved and he whispered: 'It is splendid!  
Do let me try its love-making.'  
I answered: 'Such an act is reprehended;  
In fact, a lot of people call it awful.'  
He said: 'Oh, they—oh, they!  
With me all things are lawful.'  
And I was too polite to disobey.

Kamar al-Zaman saw the light change to darkness before him as he heard these lines; he lowered his eyes, saying: 'O glorious King, you have many young women and beautiful virgins in your palace; no other monarch has ever possessed the like. Why then would you neglect all these for me? Do you not know that it is lawful to use women in any way which desire, curiosity or experiment may suggest to you?'

Budar smiled, looking sideways at the prince through half-shut eyes. 'Nothing could be more true, O wise and handsome wazir,' she retorted, 'but when taste changes desire, when our senses become refined and our humours alter their direction, what is to be done? Yet let us leave a discussion which is certain to come to nothing, and listen together to the verses which our chief poets have made upon this subject. One of them has said:

Come with me to the fruit-seller's green shade:  
Here on cool palm-leaves you may see displayed  
Ripe figs with their emotional brown bums;  
And in the place of honour you may find  
The small and rosy sycamore's behind,  
Yea, fruit of sycamore for each who comes.

A second has said:

Ask the girl whose breasts grow big,  
While consciousness invades her fig,  
Why she prefers the taste of lemons  
To pomegranates and water-melons!

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Another has said:

Though my full and present joys  
Are concerned with tender boys,  
Taste for women never ends  
And my less observant friends  
When they see me go without  
Think I have become devout.

Another has said:

Brown-breasted Zainab, Hind whose hair is dyed  
With youthful art, both say that I neglect them  
By finding roses in my friend's backside  
Fairer than any rose which ever decked them;  
Hind cannot tempt my senses to abide,  
And Zainab's razored slice cannot affect them;  
Even their bottoms now entice in vain  
One who has learnt of muscles and a mane.

Another has said:

Who says this fawn of boyish grace  
Is lovely as a girl,  
Commits a blasphemy:  
There is a difference.  
You take a girl at face to face,  
But the fawn has to curl  
Round and stoop pleasantly:  
There is a difference.

Another has said:

I freed you, child, because your flanks  
Cannot conceive an answer to my wooing;  
Oh, I abominate those tunnelled fats  
Which at the first excitement of my pranks,  
Even before I know what I am doing,  
Hurry indecently to birth  
And fill the suffering earth  
With ranks and ranks and ranks and ranks  
Of useless brats.

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Another has said:

A wife is that unpleasant thing which gets you  
To lie with her and, when no child is born,  
Ignores your deathly lassitude and frets you  
By saying in a voice of peevish scorn:  
'If being hard for women so upsets you,  
I promise you another kind of horn.'

Another has said:

A man lifts up his arms to God  
Asking that bliss  
Be his;  
A woman lifts her legs in air  
With the same prayer.  
Is it not odd?

And yet another has said:

Some women think, because they have  
Bottoms like men, that they can save  
Their faces by analogy.  
I showed one child her fallacy  
The other day, or rather night;  
She showed a grotto sweet and tight,  
And when I said: 'That's out of fashion,'  
Instead of flying in a passion  
She turned quite round and smiled. 'I know  
That modern men do not do so;  
See, I am up-to-date,' she said.  
'Although you turn your maidenhead,  
I am unworthy,' answered I,  
'Of such great hospitality.'

Hearing all these poems, Kamar al-Zaman thought that there could be no doubt as to the intentions of the King, and decided that it would be useless to resist any further. Also he was a little tempted to experience for himself this new fashion of which the poets spoke.

At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of mornip and discreetly fell silent.

## TALE OF ICAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND PRINCESS BUDOR

*But when the two-hundred-and-thirty-fourth night had come*

SHE SAID:

So he answered: 'King of time, I ask you to promise me that we shall do the thing together once and once only. If I consent, it is that I may show you how much better it would be to return to the old fashion. I beg you to give me a formal undertaking that you will not ask me to commit a second time an act for which I ask Allah's pardon in advance.' I give you my formal promise,' cried Budar, 'and I also pray to the Merciful One that He may lead us from the darkness of error into the light of true wisdom. Nevertheless it is absolutely necessary that we try the thing once, for the reason which the poet gives:

The good, the friends of Allah, countless times  
Accuse us of unknown and nameless crimes.  
God says false accusation is a sin,  
Come let us save them from it, dear. Begin!

With that she rose and dragged the prince towards the great mattress, as he tried to defend himself a little and shook his head, sighing: 'There is no refuge save in Allah! This would not happen if He did not mean it to.' Hurried by the impatient princess, he took off his baggy trousers and linen drawers, and found himself, in the twinkling of an eye, up-ended by the King upon the mattress. The supposed Sultan clasped him, saying: 'You are about to know a night such as the angels could not give you. Oh, close your legs . . . Give me your hand, put it between my thighs to waken the sleeping child!' 'I do not dare!' said Kamar al-Zaman, and the King answered: 'I will help you.'

When Kamar al-Zaman felt his hand touching the King's thighs, he realised that he had found something very delicious, softer than butter and sweeter than silk; so he explored high and low on his own account and found a dome, which seemed both animated and delightful. But, though he let his fingers wander everywhere, he could not find a minaret. He said to himself: 'The works of God are hidden; how can there be a dome without a minaret? I think this charming King is neither man nor woman, but a white eunuch. That is much less interesting.' He presently said aloud: 'O King, I do not know how it is, but I cannot find the child!'

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At this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

*But when the two-hundred-and-thirty-fifth night had come*

SHE SAID:

Buda burst into such a peal of laughter that she almost fainted. Then she became serious and, resuming her sweet and woman's voice, said: 'O my dear husband, have you so quickly forgotten those fair nights of ours?' She rose and, throwing aside her masculine garments, appeared naked with her heavy hair falling down her back.

Kamar al-Zaman recognised his wife Budar, daughter of King Ghayyur, master of al-Buhar and al-Kusilr; they embraced, they clasped each other, they wept for joy, they confused each other with kisses on the mattress. The princess said many verses, and this was one of them:

My beloved dances,  
Setting one foot before the other.

This is my beloved,  
The flowers are a carpet for his dancing.

The dust of his dancing  
Is a balm upon my tired eyes.

I have seen the dawn dancing  
Upon the face of my beloved:  
O daughters of Arabia,  
How could I be unmindful of him?

When Buchir had told all her story to Kamar al-Zaman and he had answered with his own adventures, he began to blame her, saying: 'That which you did to-night was most extraordinary.' As Allah lives, it was only a joke,' she replied; and they continued between each other's arms and thighs until the morning.

With the coming of dawn, Budar went to King Armanils, father of Hayyat al-Nufas, and told him the truth about herself, adding that his daughter was still a virgin. Armanils marvelled to the limit of marvel and ordered the whole prodigious story to be inscribed in golden letters upon parchment of exceeding whiteness. Then he turned to Kamar al-Zaman, saying: 'O son of Shahrman, will you

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become one of my family and take my maiden daughter, Hayyat al-Nufas, as your second wife?' 'I must first consult the lady Budar,' answered Kamar al-Zaman, 'for I owe all my respect and love to her.' Turning to the princess, he said: 'Have I your consent to marry the child?' 'Indeed you have,' answered Budar, 'I myself have kept her for you, that she might gladden your return. I am so grateful to her for all her kindness that I will willingly take the second place.'

Then Kamar al-Zaman turned to King Armanas, saying: 'My wife willingly consents, saying that she would be happy to be your daughter's slave.'

The old King rejoiced with a greater joy than he had known in all his life, and went to sit once more upon his throne, that he might tell the whole story of Kamar al-Zaman and Budar to the wazirs, amirs, chamberlains, and notable persons of his kingdom. He informed them of his intentions with regard to Hayyat al-Nufas, and solemnly proclaimed Kamar al-Zaman King of the Isle of Ebony in the place of Budilr. All who heard him kissed the earth between his hands and answered: 'Since Prince Kamar al-Zaman is the husband of our dear King, we accept him joyfully and will be his faithful slaves.'

King Armanas moved all his limbs with joy and, sending for the kadis and their witnesses, had a contract of marriage written upon the instant for Kamar al-Zaman and Hayyat al-Nufas. He ordered general rejoicing and held marvellous feasts, killing thousands upon thousands of animals to feed the poor and sorrowful, and presenting gifts of money to the army and the people. There was not one soul in all the land who did not pray for the long life and happiness of Kamar al-Zaman and his two Queens.

Kamar al-Zaman governed his kingdom as perfectly as he contented his two wives, with whom he passed alternate evenings. Budar and Hayyat lived together in harmony, allowing the nights to their husband, but reserving the days for each other. Kamar al-Zaman sent messengers to his father, King Shahrman, to tell him of his happiness, and to promise that he would visit him as soon as he had put to death all the western invaders in that city by the sea which had once been inhabited by Mussulmans.

In the course of time Queen Budar and Queen Hayyat al-Nufas, who had been wonderfully impregnated by their King, each gave birth to a man-child as excellent as the full moon. All lived together

## THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT

in complete happiness until the end of their days. Such is the marvellous tale of Kamar al-Zaman and Princess Budar, Moon of Moons.

At this point Shahrazad smiled and fell silent.

Little Dunyazad, whose cheeks were usually so white, had grown very red at the last part of this tale; her eyes were round with pleasure, curiosity and confusion; so that at last she covered her face with her two hands, but looked through the fingers.

While Shahrazad was refreshing her tired voice with an iced cup of raisin juice, Dunyazad clapped her hands, crying: 'O my sister, what a shame that this delightful tale should be so soon finished! This is the first of its kind that I have heard you tell and . . . I do not know why I am blushing like this?

Shahrazad, after swallowing a draught, looked at her sister out of the corners of her eyes, saying:

'What will you think when I have told you the Tale of Ala al-Din Abu Shamit? . . . Only first I mean to tell you the tender Tale of Happy-Handsome and Happy-Fair.'

Dunyazad jumped for joy, crying: 'O sister, please tell me about Ala al-Din Abu Shamat before you recount the tale of those people with delightful names, Happy-Handsome and Happy-Fair.'

'But Ala al-Din Abu Shamat was a boy, my dear,' answered Shahrazad.

Then King Shahryar, whose sadness had quite disappeared at the opening sentences of the tale of Budar and who had heard it through with the greatest attention, said: 'O Shahrazad, I must confess that the tale which you have just told pleased me, even rejoiced me, even incited me to find out more about that new fashion which Budur described in prose and verse. If the stories which you promise us contain explanatory details of this unknown pastime, you may begin at once.'

But at this point Shahrazad saw the approach of morning and discreetly fell silent.

King Shahryar said to himself: 'As Allah lives, I will not kill her until I have heard many more details of the new fashion, for at present it seems to me both obscure and complicated.'

## THE TALE OF HAPPY-HANDSOME AND HAPPY-FAIR

*But when the two-hundred-and-thirty-seventh night had come*

DUNYAZAD CRIED: 'O Shahrazad, dear sister, please begin!'

Shahrazad smiled at her sister and then, turning towards King Shahryar, said:

### *The Tale of Happy-Handsome and Happy-Fair*

**I**T is related—but Allah is all-wise and all-knowing—that there was once a rich and respected merchant in the city of Kafah, whose name was Spring. A year after his marriage the blessing of the Highest descended upon his house, for a handsome son was born to him. As the child came into the world smiling, his father called him Happy-Handsome.

Seven days after the birth of his son, the merchant Spring went down to the slave market to buy a handmaiden for his wife and, looking over the women and boys exposed for sale, saw a pleasant-faced slave, who carried her little daughter fastened on her back by a broad belt. Saying to himself: 'Allah is generous,' he approached the broker and asked how much the two would cost him. 'Fifty dinars, neither more nor less,' said the broker, and at once the merchant answered: 'I will take them. Write out the contract and receive the money.' When these formalities had been gone through, the merchant said kindly to the young woman: 'Follow me, my child,' and led her to his house.

As soon as his wife saw the slave, she exclaimed: 'O husband, why have you gone to this useless expense? For, although I have just risen from childbed, I can still manage the affairs of the house as I did before.' Dear wife,' answered the merchant, 'I bought this slave because of her little daughter, whom I intend to bring up with our own Happy-Handsome. I prophesy that, when she has grown up, she will not have her equal for beauty in all the lands of Irak, Persia and Arabia?'

The merchant's wife asked the slave her name, and the other answered that she was called Prosperity. 'As Allah lives, it suits you!' cried the delighted wife. 'And what is your daughter's name?' 'Fortune,' answered the slave. Pleased by this omen, the mistress