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ZULEIKA sat on the sunny mountainside beneath the shade of a wild orange tree, just outside the little village in Kabylia where she lived with her father and mother and where she and all her brothers and sisters were born and reared. She was as brown as the soil where the plough had turned it, and the grass upon which she sat was intensely green. Overhead in the foliage of the tree were great splashes of gold, with which pearly white splashes alternated.

She was twisting with her slender brown fingers and deftly weaving a braid of camel's hair, which was brown also, and which when finished would serve to sell to some Arab merchant for his headdress. As she worked she chanted a weird, curious Kabyle song, beating time on the fresh green grass with her small, bare, brown foot. With her brown little foot she could imitate on the green grass the sound of the tam-tam.

She was a very pretty little creature, with long, waving black hair, which in the sunlight shone with glints of blue. Her eyes were almond shaped, full, dark and gentle. Her little nose was very finely modelled, and her pretty mouth was red and lovely, like a half-blown damask rose. She was as ripe as a fig in a honey fig, when the sun has turned it to the color of amber.

Her beautiful body was of the color of coffee to which milk has been added—such coffee as the Kabyles drink when they return home from long months of trading in El Djézaïr or in remoter Tunis—coffee into which they have poured milk from the goat, as the Bourais do in those great houses in the distant towns where there is gold—gold—and where the soldiers live who are such fine men.

The Most Jealous Men.

It was not right for her to think of the soldiers, of the Roumi soldiers, in their blue and red, for she was as good as promised to a husband, and in Kabylia men are jealous. More jealous are the men in Kabylia than anywhere else in the world, and whoever speaks to the wife of another man or to the girl who is promised to another must die at the same time when the woman dies.

The man to whom she was promised was the son of the richest merchant in the village, one who had amassed much gold in the towns on the coast and played the seas in cities which the Roumis inhabit, and where the true faith is unknown. This youth had seen her and had caught fire at the sight of her marvellous beauty and grace, for very desirable she looked to him as she slowly walked up the mountain path, with her rounded arms thrown backward, supporting the jar of water.

She had put her jar down and sighed, for she was a little tired and the May sun was very warm. Then she had sat down to rest a while and had taken out of her camel's hair from a little bag which she wore beneath her drapery and had begun to twist the small rope, or braid, which the Arabs wear.

She was a very fascinating little maid. She had never been educated like the two daughters of a neighbor, who had been brought up like French girls. They were taught too many things, and the men of the village looked askance upon them. No Kabyle would marry a Kabyle girl who learned the ways of the Roumi women. The woman who can read and write is not the wife for Kabyle, Moor or Arab. The woman who can read can read the letters that a sweetheart writes; the woman who can write can write letters which are not for the husband's eyes. At the age of fifteen, while all the girls of the village of their years were married and had children, they remained unwedded, dependent on the grudging bounty and protection of their father. They were pointed at and

laughed at as old maids who had been spoiled by the Roumis and might marry Kaffirs, as the faithful would have none of them.

Zuleika knew nothing. She was not quite twelve years old. In Europe and America girls of this age are just beginning to study, to prepare for life. In the mountains of Kabylia a girl is husband high before she is eleven years old and fit to be sold by her father. Zuleika's father expected to get a large sum for her, because she was unusually beautiful. Perhaps, he calculated, she might fetch as much as five hundred francs.

This would be two hundred francs more than her sister had fetched—her sister, who was one year older and who had been sold when she was eleven years old. But then Kaludja had been bought by a chief, who was old and cunning and careful of his money. He had pointed out to her father that Kaludja's nose was long—too long—and that she could never be desired as the favorite in the harem of any man.

With a Covetous Eye.

The youth who had watched Zuleika soon made up his mind; he watched her with eyes which grew covetous as he looked upon her. He hurried home and sought out his father and demanded that Zuleika should be procured for him in marriage. The father smiled benevolently. "My son," he said, "the Roumi fools shall pay for your bride and your wedding. All last winter I tolled in El Djézaïr, standing in the courtyards of the caravansaries where these people congregate; all the winter I tolled lies great and wonderful, and did in consequence induce them to buy as rare and curious weapons or as native jewelry—and at ten times their price—articles of merchandise which I did obtain from the very lands from which these people come. And as I tolled, and as I tolled shameful and deceitful stories, and as I hidged and

was paid down through an agent, a kind of marriage broker, or go-between, whose business it is to arrange the financial side of these Kabyle wife purchases and daughter sales.

The marriage of a Kabyle girl is not a thing to which the poor can aspire. The father has to be satisfied with purchase money, and besides that there is the corbeille de mariage, which in Kabylia must be presented by the bridegroom to the bride. It is a basket which contains the seventy different essences, medicines and cosmetics which a woman needs to make herself beautiful, to keep well and to add to her beauty that which is held next to the beauty of women, a sweetness of perfume.

The bride and bridegroom were not present at the marriage ceremony, but both of them well knew the ritual words from the Koran which the marabout, before he pronounced them man and wife, was reading to their assembled families and friends:—"Men are superior to women, because the qualities which God has given them elevate them above women and because they use their money for the marriage dowry of women. Virtuous women are obedient and subdued."

After the marriage was over the marabout gave the young husband some advice as from a man of the world. He advised him to reprimand Zuleika if he feared any disobedience on her part; should she disobey him he should beat her. He had seen Hussein often as a lad fighting with the girls in the street and had noticed that the lad could knock any girl down and give her a taste of the stick of olive wood. He could only advise him to practise this same superiority in his household. However, as soon as Zuleika had been reduced to obedience it became his duty to lay aside the olive stick and to cease chiding her.

After the marriage ceremony Zuleika for the first

time appeared more serene, crosser than her former gaspments and closely veiled.

She mounted on a white mule and was conducted to her husband's house. At his door Hussein was awaiting her. He handed to her a vase of water, with which she sprinkled the assembled people. Nobody knows why this is done, only that it has always been done and that it is right to do it.

A basket containing couscous, meat and cakes was next handed to Zuleika, who was still sitting upon her white mule. These victuals she threw to the crowd. In the basket she found an amulet bracelet, which she kept for herself. It was the symbol of the chain of wedlock which she had assumed.

Henceforth the duties of Zuleika, besides child bearing, comprised all the arduous of Hussein's household. Besides this, she had to weave cloth for his apparel, and it was her duty also to prepare the couscous on which he regaled himself. The hardest of

the olive stick had made. "I had thought," she said, "I have had five children—twice twice—and my figure is unpleasing."

Shortly after this one morning Hussein told her roughly that she must carry her bed into another room. "I am marrying another wife to-day," he said. She bowed her head and was silent, but because she was not swift enough in her movements in preparing the room for the new wife Hussein spat her cruelty with the olive stick.

Outside men and boys were firing guns in honor of Hussein's second marriage, and Zuleika felt wishing that one of the guns might contain a bullet, might be fired in her direction and that the bullet might pierce her heart. For it grieved her sorely to leave Hussein's chamber, but that was not what was most bitter. It was when the new bride having been brought into the room where she had been sole mistress so long, she had to stand over to her for her adornment all the presents that her husband had given to her.

Round the bride's neck she hung the necklace of fifty Frankish gold sequins with the pictures of the kings. Over the shoulders she threw the long gold chain to which was attached the little gold Geneva watch which rung the hours, merry hours, and hours as sad as this, when her heart was heavy in her disfigured and misshapen bosom. Over the bride's feet she slipped the babouches of violet kid worked with gold and on her wrists she braced the bracelets of heavy gold. Then upon her fingers she began to pass the rings of great value.

At each new jewel the bride, a girl of eleven, gave a little cry of sheer wonder and delight. She shook her head all the time, so that the golden sequins of the Frankish kings should rattle and clink; she held up now one foot, now another, to admire the violet slippers. She touched the button in the side of the watch and made the little bell ring for her, which sounded an hour so happy for her, so sad for Zuleika. One, two, three, four, five, six rings of great value had Zuleika set upon the new wife's fingers.

Then, making obeisance to her lord, Zuleika was about to leave the room to prepare meats for the bride's refreshment, when the girl cried out:—"There were promised to me seven rings of great value—diamonds, opals and turkis stones—and behold, Hussein, you have not kept faith with me, for I have received but six; and see, the ring with the blue stones, which are to pale when you love me no longer, is not on my finger and I have never had it at all."

Hussein turned upon Zuleika. "Dost hear?" he cried.

The Missing Ring.

"My lord," said the discarded wife, "the ring with the blue stones you gave me, saying I should keep it till the blue faded, which would be when you ceased to love me. The blue has not faded—see, here it is—and so I have kept it, because it tells me that your love is not yet quite lost to me."

As she spoke she drew a turquoise ring from the little bag she wore inside her robe. Hussein said not a word, but snatched the ring from the woman's hand and passed it over the finger which the new wife held out. Then he turned upon Zuleika, and, taking up the olive stick, beat her from the room.

Zuleika slunk away. Her position was what had always been the position of women of her race when their husbands grew tired of them—what it had been a hundred years ago, what it will be a hundred years hence. She was utterly without hope. She had no power to improve her condition. She could never win back her husband's affection, for his love was a purely physical one.

He had wasted her beauty and now despised her. But for the fact that she had five children he would have gone to the kadî, and the kadî would have pronounced him free. He would have been forced to feed her for three months and ten days after that—and after that? Well, after that there was the river at the bottom of the valley, or the streets of El Djézaïr, where they say the Franks are less particular about the freshness of the women whom they court.

Some people have an idea that the Kabyle women have a better position than the Arab women, perhaps because the Kabyles do not cover their faces like the Arab women. Perhaps in the old days the Berber women held a better position, but when Islamism was adopted in Kabylia the degradation of women followed as a matter of course.

The Koran permits the Kabyle, as well as all other true believers, to have as many wives as he chooses. This is, however, an expensive luxury unless a man is wealthy. So the Kabyle usually contents himself with from three to seven wives. The older wives act as servants to the favorite, the youngest wife.

I knew Zuleika when she was a child, and this spring, travelling through Algeria, I motored out from Algiers to Fort National and on from there to the village on the mountainside where she lived, hoping to see her. But I could get no news of her, because they told me that her husband had gone to Algiers to trade and had locked his wives up at home under the care of his mother. They would never leave his house, under pain of death, until he returned.

Some days later he came to the hotel where I was staying, with a basket full of the wares such as his father spoke about, and after winning his good graces by purchasing at six times its value a knife made in Birmingham, which he represented to me as a piece of fine Kabylia steel work, I asked him about the little nutbrown maid whom I had admired a few years before.

He shrugged his shoulders in an ugly, indifferent way. "Oh, madame," he said in a mixture of English and French which he had picked up on trading expeditions in France and England; "oh, madame mean my old femme, the old woman what I have at home. Why, she is very old and ugly, and she have five children, big children. Zuleika must be nearly twenty-five. No, I do not love her. I have ceased to love her some years ago. But I keep her on and feed her because she has five children. She fetch the water and she wait on my last wife, who is twelve years old." I turned away with a great rebellion in my heart and walked out to the terrace overlooking the slopes of Mustapha, a green slope dotted with many white Moorish villas, shining white and dazzling in the glare of the sun, amid the emerald of the trees and gardens, and I thought, with a great ache, of the sad-eyed, hopeless woman who at evening, when men are not looking, walk on the terraced roofs of those cloistered houses with leaden despair tugging at their heavy hearts.

I thought of all the sighs and all the prayers and all the hopes which ascend now, as they have done for centuries past and will so ascend forever, perhaps, to Allah—to Allah, who leads ear alone to the prayers of men.



Hussein Turned Upon Zuleika. "Dost Hear?" He Cried

her duties was, however, daily to fetch water for the household from the spring, which was far down in the valley below the village.

At certain hours of each day Zuleika joined the long line of women with heavy earthen water jars on their backs, who wound down the path to the distant well, and, heavy laden, toiled back again up the narrow, almost perpendicular paths which led back home. Each was clad in a large white tunic, fastened on each shoulder with heavy silver pins and held at the waist by a belt of camel's hair. Their legs and feet were bare except for three or four anklets; their long arms, thrown backward, supported the amphorae. They looked like women of old Greece or Rome, but they were slaves enthralled in a barbarous land.

The Collar of Gold.

Hussein approved of Zuleika while she was young. He did not chide her more often than another man, and over the wall Zuleika never complained that he beat her too cruelly. Indeed, she spoke in praise of him. He had given to her a collar on which were fastened fifty pieces of gold, on which were the heads of many Frankish kings, pieces of gold which clinked beautifully when she shook her head. He had given to her a pair of violet leather slippers worked with gold and tiny beads. He had given to her six bracelets of heavy gold. He had given to her a little Geneva watch which was of gold and which rang a little bell as often as the hour was when you touched a button on its side. He had given to her also seven rings of great value, with diamonds, opals and turkis stones set in gold.

But all these presents had been bestowed in the first years of their marriage. By the time she was fifteen he gave fewer things to her and scolded her oftener. Once down at the well she lifted her gown and showed on her brown skin purple weals which