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Jether, with a laugh, turned again to Tisha. The men, with madness in their brains, were thinking little of the promised feast and much of the wine served them by the Nubians, and of the beautiful women who lolled so languidly about the garden upon the divans and cushions. Within the house the strumming of the harps and the beating of the cymbals made rough, weird music, and as the darkness descended a score of lamps were lighted in the gardens to cast a strange and rosy light over the picture of oriental magnificence.

As Tisha, clasped in the arms of Jether, toyed with the scarf he wore, Ahab, the servant of Put, who had been waiting without the gate, approached

ther. "A maiden at the gate asks tidings of Master Jether." "A maiden asks for me? Who is

she?" demanded Jether, curiously. "I know not."

"How doth she look?"

"As one a stranger to the city, all clad in simple white, with leathern sandals. She draws her veil before her face and says, 'Canst tell me, my good man, how fareth Master Jether?"

As Tisha started to rise as if to see the stranger, Jether held her by the arm. Tisha paused and smiled. "Wears she many jewels?" she demanded. "Nay, good mistress, none."

"Then bid her come in," ordered Tisha triumphantly. No need to fear this rival if she were indeed so plain and unadorned. Struck by a sudden thought, she laughed and tore the scarf from Jether's neck. Then as he tried to recover it she ran round and round the garden, laughing hilariously as she waved the scarf in her hands, circling the edge of the fountain, leaping over lovers in their wooing and all the time pursued by the laughing Jether, who wished to regain the scart.

Just as they circled the fountain for the second time and passed the gateway a slender, girlish figure in simple white, with veil drawn before her face, passed them. She gave a sharp cry of pain as she beheld the fluttering scarf in the hands of Tisha, with Jether laughingly pursuing her. She paused and turned to Ahab.

"Who is she, so strange, so fair?" she cried, tremulously.

Ahab bowed low at the mention of the wonderful Tisha.

"The joy of all Jerusalem-the most beautiful, the most superb. Tisha, whom all men worship-Tisha, the beautiful. By what name shall I announce you?"

"My name? Naomi"-the girl hesttated. "Nay, say nothing-I am gone." And in another moment she had disappeared. When Jether, who had dimly seen the familiar apparition as he dashed by and had scarcely recognized it, came to the gate to see the girl who had asked for him the smirking Ahab told him the maiden had made a mistake. As Jether, his eyes half filled with tears for a cause he knew not, again wound the scarf around his neck Tisha stole up behind him and asked, "What dost thou see?"

"Nothing-a sudden thought," he replied softly, "a memory drifting on the waves of wine. Perchance I seemed to see a maiden I knew among the hills at home. Who was she? I wonder was it all but a dream, or did I see Naomi standing here amid all the wickedness of Jerusalem? Naomi-L

Tisha climbed upon a cushioned divan, raised a goblet of wine far above her head, ere she drank, and cried, "This night is dedicated to love."

An answering chorus of approval gave a mighty echo, and Tisha leaned over Jether and kissed him.

"Put." she suddenly called, "where art thy boasted dancing girls? We would have entertainment, music, wine and dance."

Put clapped his hands thrice and gave a signal to Ahab, who motioned to one of the Nubians. Within the house the sound of music pow grew louder and louder, as the musicians thrummed their harps and clashed the cymbals. The so't voices of lovers were drowned in the crash of the musical instruments and the thrumming of the harp strings. Tuen within the gate glided half a hundred or more dancing houris, fair of face, barefoot, clad in soft and flowing garments which were scant, yet picturesque displaying many bare limbs and ivory shoulders. Round and round they whirled, while Put and the wealths young men of Jerusalem gazed acmir ingly and applauded at intervals. Fast er and faster grew the dance as with one accord the young women faced the statue of the Babylonian Ishtar. and finally in an ecstasy of adoration all cast themselves prostrate upon the ground before the image. Then the music changed. A weird, mystic, barbaric note swept through the air. The leader of the dancers rose and clapped her hands. Through the gateway came

a group of fantastic Arab boys, noth-

ing but a skin or a bit of tunic cover-

ing their dark, swarthy bodies. On

bands, with feet in air, they pranced around through the maze of the dancers. A gaunt Arab boy beating a drum added a fierce and oriental touch to the strange dance.

Suddenly above the babel of the music and the voices of the lovers and the cries of the dancers rose a shrill, penetrating, commanding voice. It came from without the garden. Involuntarily all the dancers ceased. The revelers paused, wine still untasted in the gobiets. All shrank instinctively as fram a nameless dread.

"A doom upon this house and all within it!" cried the voice. A panic seized the superstitious wor-

shipers of idols. "A prophet!"

A tall, gaunt, white bearded man, leaning upon a staff, suddenly appeared among the half maddened throng.

"A doom upon this house!" thundered the holy man, raising his staff as though to smite all present. "Woe unto ye who revel here! Idolaters. laden with iniquity, the sword of the Lord is turned against you."

Tisha broke the spell with a coarse. hard laugh of derision.

"A prophet?" she cried. "Ye fools, to listen to such a madman. I know this man, a mender of nets gone mad from starvation. Bring him wine, slaves. and he will not curse us then."

But the holy man frowned as he fair ly pronounced their doom:

"The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, for it is the day of his vengeance. Your idols shall not save you. neither shall your abominations avail you, for the Lord God bath turned his "Thy pardon, good master," bowed wrath upon you, and ye are all doomed. Ahab, prostrating himself before Je A doom upon the house! A doom upon this house! Woe unto ye all, woe unto And while all present sat stricken

with awe and fear the holy manuslowly withdrew, still shouting his curse upon the house of Nadina.

For perhaps half a minute silence reigned. The revelers ceased their riotous behavior. Lovers besitated and spoke not. Then, as if by one accord, all broke into an outburst of hilarious and uncontrollable hysterical laughter, as if to drown out all remembrance of by night, that name may trace his the unexpected visitation. "Lights, lights!" cried Tisha, break

ing away from Jether and clapping her hands to the slaves. "Bring more wine. and let there be music." Nadina made her way through the

throng to Tisha while Tola and Jether drank together. "Pharis, the sea captain, has come,"

whispered Nadina to Tisha in great ex-



NADINA, MOTHER OF TISHA. "Pay no more attention to this young fool Jether."

citement. "Attended by slaves who bear his treasure chests, he is now waiting within. I have told him would bring thee to him."

Tisha laughed scornfully.

"Bring me to him?" she repeated "When did Tisha seek favors from any man?"

Nadina shook her roughly by the arm. "This man is a great sea captain with much wealth. Couldst thou but win his favor, they fortune is assured. Pay no more attention to this young fool Jether when thou mightest even have this merchant prince for thine own Wait-I will bring him."

CHAPTER IX.

Pharis, the Sea Captain.

LL turned and gazed in awe and surprise at the giant figure which now emerged from the house, following Nadina. Six feet and a half in height, with a great oriental turban, which made him seem fully six inches taller, and attired in tich and flowing garments, Pharis, the great sea captain, with bushy beard and heavy eyebrows and blackest hair. made an imposing and barbaric figure as he stood at the divan where Tisha half reclined, casting nim a saucy look as he gazed upon her. Then, as she poured him a goblet of wine and tauntingly leaned forward to hand it to him, the great Pharis emitted a guttural re- ers tickled her fair face. mark which might almost bave been the roar of a bull.

this beautiful creature before him-"Thou, girl, thou art fair. Dost know who I am?"

Tisha flaunted herself before him, me on his next voyage a little creature turning full around so that he might see and admire the beauty of her back.



"Dost kill thy lions with bow or javelin, mounted or on foot?"

Then, with a little gargling laugh, she motioned for him to sit upon the divan, while she climbed upon one knee and stroked his great bushy beard. Whereat Pharis laughed, a heavy, reverberating laugh, which made dether involuntarily turn and survey the scene in astonish-

"Tola," be cried, drawing his friend to him anxiously. "who is that man | who speaks with Tisha?" "Pharis, the sea captain, who sails

course," explained Tola. "He goes on distant voyages to some island marked upon his chart alone, and then brings back cargoes of tin, worth more than its weight in gold for use they make of it. For his secrets I know many merchants who would pay the ransom of a king-could Tisha tempt it from him in his sleep."

Jether turned upon his friend angrily. "Sayest thou that-yet art thou a friend of mine?" he demanded.

"So good a friend I'll lose a bag of gold for thee," answered Tola. "And tell Tisha nothing."

Jether heard the rippling laugh of the temptress as she toyed with the beard of the sea captain. He strode to her angrily, grasped her by the arm and by main strength tore her away from the captain's knee. The girl faced him angrily, and the giant of the sea stepped forward as if to smite him with one blow, had not Nadina interfered to quiet Pharis.

"Thou shalt not stay here." declared Jether. "Thou wilt come with me. Tisha."

"Where is the necklace thou didst

The girl twisted herself from his em-

promise me?

"My friends have borrowed what had with me, but thy mother knows my chest of gold is in my chamber, under lock and key. Come with me, and will get thee gold for thy necklace." "Nay; I shall await thee here." She

cast a knowing smile at Pharis. "I bid thee come with me." com-

manded Jether. "And I bid thee first make good thy promise," she retorted, turning to the sea captain. Jether looked at Tola and said to him quietly: "Thou art my friend. Tola. If this man seek to speak with Tisha in my absence thou wilt guard her for me."

Tola smiled sardonically. "I will guard her as tenderly as if she were mine own-again," he added softly. But the boy heard the last word. "Again?" he cried. "Then thou wert

her lover after all?" But Tisha quickly sprang between

them ere Jether could strike Tola. "Now quarrel with thy friend," she

said, parting them. "Anything so that

thou mayest save thy money." "Thou shalt have thy necklace," cried Jether, plunging abruptly into the mansion and going to his room for his

treasure chest. Tola whispered aside to Tisha: "Pharis comes toward thee. He is

worth a hundred Jethers couldst thou but win his favor." he added and glided away as the giant sea captain came

Pharis grasped her with his mighty hands. He turned her around and round. He ran his great thick fingers through her hair, and Tisha laughed, for she knew that he was in the toils of the siren and that she could make this mighty giant do her bidding. Suddenly he spoke gruffly: "Dance for me, girl."

The harpists played, the giri danced Slowly and sinuously, like a snake, like a cobra charming its victim, Tisha danced. Her shoulders swayed in rhythm with the music, ber slender ankles flashed white beneath the swaying skirt, until finally Pharis, with a great cry of joy, seized her and lifted her bodily from her feet so that he might kiss her face. Tisha screamed and laughed when the great bushy whisk-

"Dost know who I am?" demanded Pharis. The girl wriggled from his "Thou, girl," he spoke, a deep breath | embrace and faced him with an artful showing the emotion he felt at seeing upward glance as she nestled snugly against his glant frame.

"Aye." she mocked him. "Thou art Pharis, who if he would could bring with hands that are like feet and with a face like an old man's to sit on my shoulder and do each thing that I do

and make me laugh. I have heard of such animals. Monkeys they are called. Hast thou perchance seen such?"

The giant laughed, a veritable roar. "Thousands of them." he cried, "swinging on trees taller than masts of vessels. Thou shalt have one, in truth. Its ugly face peeping over thy shoulder will make thee seem even fairer than thou art."

He paused a moment, once more look. ed her over critically from head to foot and added:

"Or, better still, girl, wouldst go with Pharis on a voyage?"

"Where?" asked Tisha in surprise. "I have long wanted to seek a distant land, where there are men with bodies like a horse, who roam in forests, and in the sea nearby are maidens wondrous fair, with tails like fishes."

Tisha laughed incredulously. "Aye, such there are, for I have heard of them." said Pharis, with conviction. "Thou shalt go with me." "But shall I know that thou lovest

Continued on page 7.

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