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**"THE THIEF OF BAGDAD"**

BY AHMED ABULLAH

Based on Douglas Fairbanks' Fantasy of the Arabian Nights, by Elton Thomas

When early in the morning Fount-in-the-Forest had visited the Mongol encampment, she had assured Wong K'ai that, a Mongol to the core of her, she would do all in her power to further the Mongol Prince's cause. Now here she was again, mingling with the retinue and presently, having reached Wong K'ai's side, whispering to him the secret of the rose tree and the fortune-teller's prophecy.

"These Arabs," she added contemptuously, "are superstitious. They believe in such portents."

"Ten thousand thanks!" replied Wong K'ai. "Exquisite and charming honors shall be thine when Cham Sheng shall plant the standard of the Five-Clawed Golden Dragon upon the walls of Bagdad!"

And, entering the Prince's palanquin, he brought to his master the slave girl's message.

This palanquin was an immense affair. Built on a marble platform, reached front and back by broad stairs and carried on the shoulders of a hundred red-faced warriors, it resembled a Chinese pagoda, surmounted by a peaked cupola. The walls of the pagoda were of malachite and jasper, carved into an inter-lacing scroll work of plum-blossoms and wind-swept reeds, while the cupola was of gold and inlaid with crystal, ivory, white and green jade, turmaline and agate, in a design of great, coiling dragons. The palanquin was surrounded by Tartar, Mongol, and Manchu horsemen, each riding under a flag painted with the device of his tribe or clan. There was here the banner of the White Tiger, the banner of the Red Tiger, of the Azure Dragon, of the Purple Light, of Sublime Union, and a hundred more; and, greater than all the other banners, carried by two gigantic, yellow-skinned priests, the banner of the Buddha of the Paradise of the West and the banner of the Buddha of the Light without Measure.

Thus the procession entered the grounds, while the Caliph's herald an-

nounced the princely visitor:

"Cham Sheng, Prince of the Mongols, King of Ho Sho, Khan of the Golden Horde, Khan of the Silver Horde . . ."

"Heaven-Born!" cried Zenzem. "Look—look . . ."

"Oh!" For the palanquin had stopped. Its front door was thrown wide open; and, slowly, majestically, his tall, lean form robed in crimson satin embroidered over the right shoulder with a five-clawed, golden dragon, a carved jade sceptre in his left hand, Cham Sheng came down the steps, into the garden.

When Zobeid saw him she shuddered. His face was butter-yellow, with high cheekbones; and there was in his narrow-lidded, purple-black eyes the infinite, cruel, passionless look of one who has gazed too much on danger and death and desolation, without ever feeling the pity and shame and sorrow of it.

"Oh!" sobbed Zobeid. "He chills my blood with fear!" And she shook as if in an ague, while Fount-in-the-Forest changed shrill, triumphant laughter into a cough, and while, a thin, ironic smile curling his bloodless lips, the Prince of the Mongols, as if aimlessly, negligently, with all his slow racial dignity, turned toward the rose tree.

"O Allah! Help me, All-Merciful Allah!" came Zobeid's heartbroken sob. "Please! Please! Do not permit him to touch the rose tree . . ."

But prayers were forgotten, for was forgotten the very next moment when, with the Caliph's herald announcing the arrival of yet another suitor, she looked toward the outer gate.

"Why . . ." Zenzem made wondering comment—"I thought there were only three Princes coming to woo you! And here comes a fourth! Who might he be . . .?"

"Who might he be?" echoed Fount-in-the-Forest, with angry suspicion.

"Who might he be?" echoed the curious crowd in the garden.

"Who might he be?" echoed Cham Sheng, to Wong K'ai in a low voice.

"Who might he be?" echoed Zobeid, a strange, sweet sensation clutching her heart.

And the herald gave answer.

"Ahmed, Prince of the Isles and of the Seven Palaces!"

"By the Excellent Lord Buddha!" whispered Cham Sheng to his confidential clerk. "There is no such rank or title!"

And he turned away from the rose tree without touching it to stare at Ahmed, who rode toward the palace, superbly mounted on a stolen, snow-white stallion, superbly robed in stolen, gold-threaded brocade, superbly armed with stolen, jeweled scimitar and battle-ax, followed by Bird-of-Evil perched like a monkey on a tiny, grey donkey, his finery only a shade less costly than Ahmed's. The latter rode his horse well, with a loose rein and long stirrups, swaying gracefully in the saddle. High in the air he carried his head, and when he came trotting beneath Zobeid's window, she smiled.

"Ah!" she said to Zenzem. "He rides like a Prince! He looks like a Prince! He is the Prince for me! Allah! Permit him to touch the rose tree—as he has already touched my heart!"

Fount-in-the-Forest stood by her mistress' side. She wondered, puzzled: who was this Prince of the Isles? Where had she seen him . . .?

Down in the garden Wong K'ai was whispering to his master that, as to this new suitor's rank and titles, he would look into them presently; but in the meantime . . . "Please, O Great Dragon! Remember the fortune-teller's prophecy! Remember the Arab superstition! Whoever is first to touch the rose tree . . ."

"Yes, yes!" replied Cham Sheng. He stepped forward; and while, horrorstruck, Zobeid watched, he raised a thin, yellow hand to pluck one of the flowers.

At which precise moment, up in the Seventh Hall of the Blessed, the Angel of the Scrolls, the Black-Winged Angel of Destiny, hearing Zobeid's silent prayers to Allah, decided to interfere. He interfered by ordering a tiny honey-bee that had been sucking at the rose's sugary heart to fly out suddenly with a whirring of brown-and-gold wings, to light on the Mongol Prince's hand before he could touch the blossom, to sting him painfully, and to cause him to recede a few steps. A moment later, perhaps to make assurance doubly sure, the Angel of the Scrolls ordered the same little honey-bee to fly from Cham Sheng's hand unto the back of Ahmed's horse. The horse became frightened. It bucked and reared; and before the Thief of Bagdad could pull down on the snaffle and gain control over his nervous mount, it catapulted him out of the saddle, shot him through the air in an audacious curve, and deposited him in the very midst of the rose tree.

The Princess broke into peals of laughter.

"By Allah!" she exclaimed. "Behold! He has touched the rose tree!"

"Touched it?" commented Zenzem, echoing her mistress' laughter. "Why—he has nearly crushed it!"

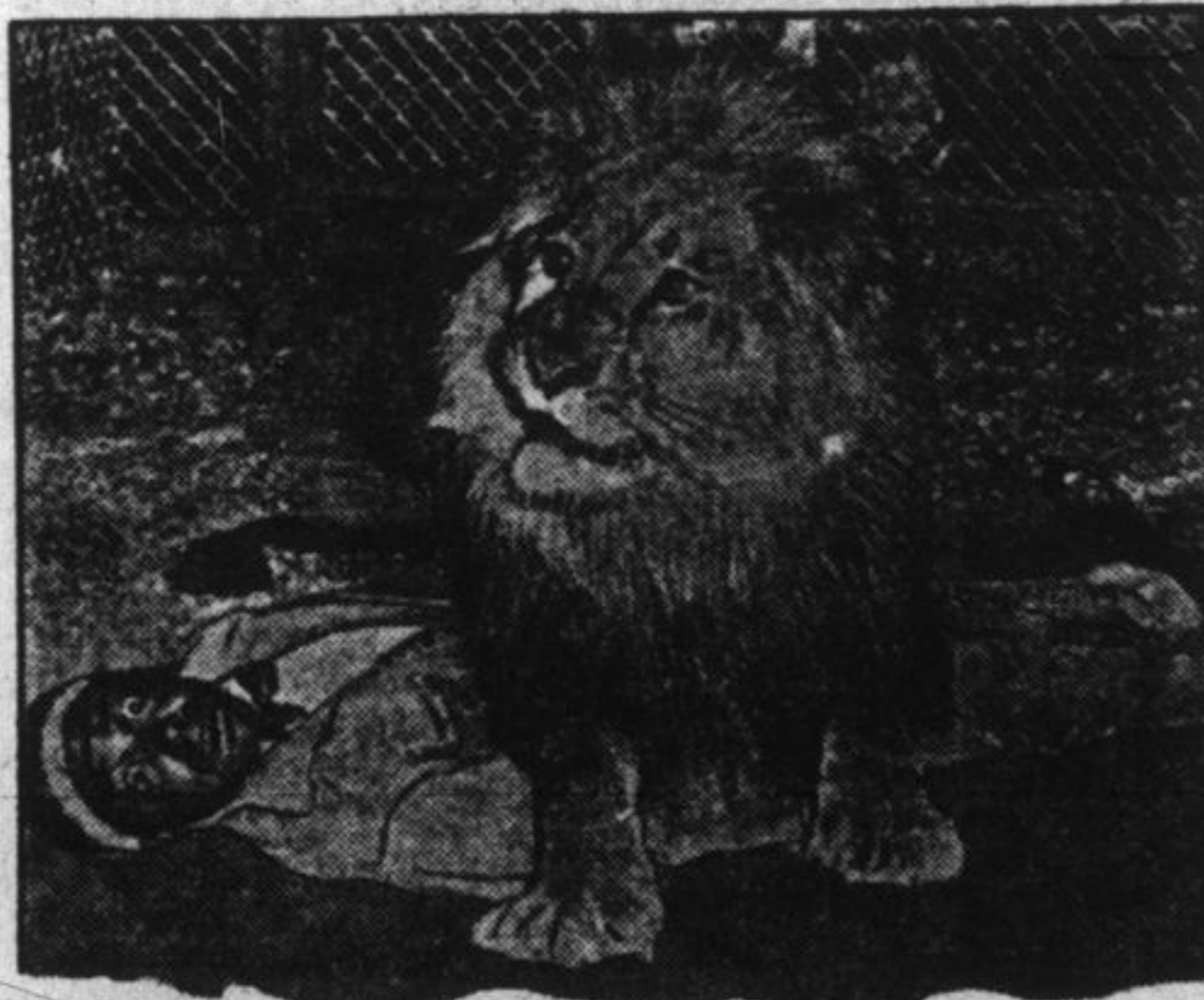
Ahmed accepted the accident with supreme unconsciousness. Calmly he plucked one of the roses, stuck it in his waist shawl, and jumped lightly out of the tree and to the ground, not far from Cham Sheng, who spoke to him gliding, low words of bitter irony.

"How tragic it would have been, O great Prince of the Isles, if the horse had killed you—and—ab—ended your doubtless ancient and illustrious dynasty!"

He turned away, while Bird-of-Evil drew his friend to one side.

"The Mongol pig suspects you," he whispered. "Hurry up, soul of my soul, and steal the Princess. Here!"—pressing a small crystal bottle into his hand. "This is the drug. And—here—

**SCARED BY LION—NO LYIN'**



Sam never was so scared in all his life. Here he was, a modern Daniel in the lion's den, with old Nero right on top of him. But Nero, for some reason or other, didn't think much of Sam as food. Evidently he had just had his dinner Sam, though, surely put in a couple of terrible minutes—they seemed like ages—until they opened the door and let him out. The picture was taken on the Gays Lion Farm at El Monte, Cal.

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The Rohrbach flying boat, equipped with wings and two great propellers for flying and with sails for cruising on the water, recently broke several speed records on a Switzerland lake.

take this bit of cloth. Sprinkle a few drops of the drug on it and . . ."

"No, no!" interrupted the Thief of Bagdad. "I shall sprinkle the drug on the rose—the rose of destiny . . ."

And he opened the bottle and saturated the crimson flower with the subtle Egyptian liquid.

(To Be Continued.)

**Oso Tidings.**

Oso Station, Nov. 21.—The farmers were glad to see the rain as the water was getting low. James and John Warren spent a few days in Perth. Mrs. Joseph Warren has gone to Sharbot Lake to be in the care of Dr. Suddaby. Mrs. William Conboy and son, Arthur, also Ethel Conboy have returned from King-

**Improving Her House.**

Tysic Corners, Nov. 25.—The hunters are returning from the north and report the weather very disagreeable for hunting. Mrs. Andrew Crain has brought her little daughter, Margaret, from the hospital at Perth and greatly improved. Neal Tysic and Mrs. Tysic and E. J. Stafford, motored to Kingston for

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