

The New Arabian Nights

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"For God's sake," said Francis, "tell me who you are and what this means? Why I should obey your most unusual suggestions I am sure I know not, but the truth is I have fallen this evening into so many perplexing adventures, and all I most conduct themselves so strangely, that I think I must either have gone mad or wandered into another planet. Your face inspires me with confidence. You seem wise, good and experienced. Tell me, for heaven's sake, why you accost me in so odd a fashion?"

"All in due time," replied the stranger. "But I have the first hand, and you must begin by telling me how the rajah's diamond is in your possession."

"The rajah's diamond?" echoed Francis.

"I would not speak so loud if I were you," returned the other. "But most certainly you have the rajah's diamond in your pocket. I have seen and handled it a score of times in Sir Thomas Vandeleur's collection."

"Sir Thomas Vandeleur? The general? My father?" cried Francis.

"Your father?" repeated the stranger. "I was not aware the general had any family."

"I am illegitimate, sir," replied Francis, with a flush.

The other bowed with gravity. It was a respectful bow, as of a man silently apologizing to his equal, and Francis felt relieved and comforted, he scarce knew why. The society of this person did him good. He seemed to touch firm ground. A strong feeling of respect grew up in his bosom and mechanically he removed his wide-awake as though in the presence of a superior.

"I perceive," said the stranger, "that your adventures have not all been peaceful. Your collar is torn, your face is scratched, and you have a cut upon your temple. You will perhaps pardon my curiosity when I ask you to explain how you came by these injuries and how you happen to have stolen property to an enormous value in your pocket."

"I must differ from you," returned Francis hotly. "I possess no stolen property, and if you refer to the diamond it was given to me not an hour ago by Miss Vandeleur in the Rue Leprieux."

"By Miss Vandeleur of the Rue Leprieux?" repeated the other. "You interest me more than you suppose. Pray continue."

"Heavens!" cried Francis. "His memory had made a sudden bound. He had seen Mr. Vandeleur



A HAND UPON HIS THROAT, AN INFERIATED FACE CLOSE TO HIS OWN.

take an article from the breast of the dragged victim, and that article, he was now persuaded, was a morocco case.

"You have a light?" inquired the stranger.

"Listen," replied Francis. "I know not what you are, but I believe you to be worthy of confidence and helpful. I find myself in strange waters. I must have counsel and support, and since you invite me I shall tell you all. And he briefly recounted his experiences since the day when he was snatched from the bank by his lawyer. Yours is indeed a remarkable history," said the stranger after the young man had made an end of his narrative, "and your position is full of difficulty and peril. Many would counsel you to seek out your father and give the diamond to him, but I have other views. Waiter!" he cried.

The waiter drew near.

"Will you ask the manager to speak with me a moment?" said he. And Francis observed once more, both in his tone and manner, the evidence of a habit of command.

The waiter withdrew and returned in a moment with the manager, who bowed with obsequious respect.

"What," said he, "can I do to serve you?"

attribute the loss of your highness' presence?"

"I am come on business," returned the prince. "On business with you. As soon as that is settled I shall request Mr. Rolles to accompany me for a walk. Mr. Rolles," he added, with severity, "let me remind you that I have not yet sat down."

The clergyman sprang to his feet, with an apology, whereupon the prince took an armchair beside the table, handed his hat to Mr. Vandeleur, his cane to Mr. Rolles, and leaving them standing and thus manfully employed upon his service, spoke as follows:

"I have come here, as I said, upon business. But had I come looking for pleasure I could not have been more displeased with my reception nor more dissatisfied with my company. You, sir," addressing Mr. Rolles, "you have treated your superior in station with discourtesy. You, Vandeleur, receive me with a smile, but you know right well that your hands are not yet cleansed from misconduct. I do not desire to be interrupted, sir," he added imperiously. "I am here to speak and not to listen, and I have to ask you to hear with respect and to obey punctiliously. At the earliest possible date your daughter shall be married at the embassy to my friend, Francis Scrymgeour, your brother's acknowledged son. You will oblige by offering not less than \$10,000 dowry. For yourself, I will indicate to you in writing a mission of some importance in Siam which I desire to your care. And now, sir, you will answer me in two words whether or not you agree to those conditions."

"Your highness will pardon me," said Mr. Vandeleur, "and permit me, with all respect, to submit to him two queries?"

"The permission is granted," replied the prince.

"Your highness," resumed the dictator, "has called Mr. Scrymgeour his friend. Believe me, had I known he was thus honored I should have treated him with proportional respect."

"You interrogate audaciously," said the prince, "but it will not serve your turn. You have my commands. If I had never seen that gentleman before tonight, it would not render them less absolute."

"Your highness interprets my meaning with his usual subtlety," returned Vandeleur. "Once more, I have unfortunately put the police upon the track of Mr. Scrymgeour on a charge of theft. Am I to withdraw or to uphold the accusation?"

"You will please yourself," replied Florizel. "The question is one between your conscience and the laws of this land. Give me my hat, and you, Mr. Rolles, give me my cane and follow me. Miss Vandeleur, I wish you good evening. I judge," he added to Vandeleur, "that your silence means unqualified assent."

"If I can do no better," replied the old man, "I shall submit, but I warn you openly it shall not be without a struggle."

"You are old," said the prince, "but years are ascribed to the wicked. Your age is more unwise than the youth of others. Do not provoke me or you may find me harder than you dream. I give the first time that I have crossed your path in anger. Take care that it be the last."

With these words, motioning the clergyman to follow, Florizel left the apartment and directed his steps toward the garden gate, and the dictator, following with a candle, gave them light and once more under the elaborate fastenings with which he sought to protect himself from intrusion.

"Your daughter is no longer present," said the prince, turning on the threshold. "Let me tell you that I understand your threats, and you have only to lift your hand to bring upon yourself sudden and irremediable ruin."

The dictator made no reply, but as the prince turned his back upon him in the lamplight he made a gesture of menace and instant fury, and the next moment, slipping round a corner, he was running at full speed for the nearest cab stand.

Here, says my Arabian, the thread of events is finally diverted from "The House With the Green Blinds." One more adventure, he adds, and we have done with "The Rajah's Diamond." That last link in the chain is known among the inhabitants of Bagdad by the name of "The Adventure of Prince Florizel and a Detective."

The RAJAH'S DIAMOND PART IV

The Adventure of Prince Florizel and a Detective

PRINCE FLORIZEL, walked with Mr. Rolles to the door of a small hotel where the latter resided. They spoke much together, and the clergyman was more than once affected to tears by the mingled severity and tenderness of Florizel's reproaches.

"I have made ruin of my life," he said at last. "Help me, tell me what I am to do. I have, alas, neither the virtue of a priest nor the dexterity of a rogue."

"Now that you are humbled," said the prince, "I command no longer. The repentant have to do with God and not with princes. But if you will let me advise you, go to Australia as a colonist, seek manual labor in the open air and try to forget that you have ever been a clergyman or that you ever set eyes on that accursed stone."

"Accursed indeed," replied Mr. Rolles. "Where is it now? What further hurt is it working for mankind?"

"It will do no more evil," returned the prince. "It is here in my pocket. And this," he added kindly, "will show that I place some faith in your penitence, young as it is."

"Suffer me to touch your hand," pleaded Mr. Rolles.

"No," replied Prince Florizel, "not yet."

The tone in which he uttered these last words was eloquent in the ears of the young clergyman, and for some minutes after the prince had turned away he stood on the threshold following with his eyes the retreating figure and invoking the blessing of heaven upon a man so excellent in counsel.

For several hours the prince walked alone in unfrequented streets. His mind was full of concern. What to do with the diamond—whether to return it to its owner, whom he judged unworthy of this rare possession, or to take some sweeping and courageous measure and put it out of the reach of all mankind at once and forever—was a problem too grave to be decided in a moment. The manner in which it had come into his hands appeared manifestly providential, and as he took out the jewel and looked at it under the street lamp its size and surprising brilliancy inclined him more and more to think of it as of an unalloyed and dangerous evil for the world.

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"I had always heard that you were brave," replied the officer, "but I was not aware that you were wise and plucky. You speak the truth, and you speak it with an accent that moves me to the heart. This would be indeed a place of trial."

"We are now," said Florizel, "in the middle of the bridge. Lean your elbow on the parapet and look over. As the water rushes below, so the passions and complications of life carry away the solidity of weak men. Let me tell you a story."

"I receive your highness' commands," replied the man.

And, imitating the prince, he leaned against the parapet and disposed himself to listen. The city was already sunk in slumber. Had it not been for the moonlight, the scene would have been a picture of death.

At last, though still uncertain in his mind, he turned his steps toward the small but elegant mansion on the riverbank which had belonged for centuries to his royal family. The arms of Bohemia are deeply carved over the door and upon the tall chimneys, passengers have a look into a green court set with the most costly flowers and a stock, the only one in Paris, perches on the gable all day long and keeps a crowd before the house. Grave servants are seen passing to and fro within, and from time to time the great gate is thrown open and a carriage rolls below the arch. For many reasons this residence was especially dear to the heart of Prince Florizel. He never drew near to it without enjoying that sentiment of homecoming so rare in the lives of the great, and on the present evening he beheld its tall roof and mildly illuminated windows with unforgotten relief and satisfaction.

As he was approaching the postern door by which he always entered when alone a man stepped forth from the shadow and presented himself, with an obeisance. In the prince's path.

"I have the honor of addressing Prince Florizel of Bohemia?" said he.

"Such is my title," replied the prince. "What do you want with me?"

"I am," said the man, "a detective, and I have to present your highness with this billet from the prefect of police."

The prince took the letter and glanced it through by the light of the street lamp. It was highly apologetic, but requested him to follow the bearer to the prefecture without delay.

"In short," said Florizel, "I am arrested."

"Your highness," replied the officer, "nothing, I am certain, could be further from the intention of the prefect. You will observe that he has not granted a warrant. It is mere formality, or call it, if you prefer, an obligation that your highness lays on the authorities."

"At the same time," asked the prince, "if I were to refuse to follow you?"

"I will not conceal from your highness that a considerable discretion has been granted me," replied the detective, "with a bow."

"Upon my word," cried Florizel, "your effrontery astounds me. Your self as an agent I must pardon, but your superiors shall surely smart for their misconduct. What, have you any idea, is the cause of this impolite and unconstitutional act? You will observe that I have as yet neither refused nor consented, and much may depend on your prompt and ingenious answer. Let me remind you, officer, that this is an affair of some gravity."

"Your highness," said the detective humbly, "General Vandeleur and his brother have had the incredible presumption to accuse you of theft. The famous diamond, they declare, is in your hands. A word from you in denial will most amply satisfy the prefect. Nay, I go further, if your highness would so far honor a subaltern as to declare his ignorance of the matter even to myself I should ask permission to retire upon the spot."

Florizel up to the last moment had regarded his adventure in the light of a trifling, only serious in the consideration. At the name of Vandeleur the horrible truth broke upon him in a moment. He was not only arrested, but he was guilty. This was not only an annoying incident—it was a peril to his honor. What was he to do? What was he to do? The rajah's diamond was indeed an accursed stone, and it seemed as if he were to be the last victim of its influence.

One thing was certain. He could not give the required assurance to the detective. He must gain time.

"His hesitation had not lasted a second."

"Be it so," said he, "let us walk to the prefecture."

The man once more bowed and proceeded to follow Florizel at a respectful distance in the rear.

"Approach," said the prince. "I am in a humor to talk, and, if I mistake not, now I look at you again, this is not the first time that we have met."

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"The officer was overwhelmed. "Your highness returns good for evil," said he. "To an act of presumption he replies by the most amiable confession."

"How do you know," replied Florizel, "that I am not seeking to corrupt you?"

"Heaven preserve me from the temptation," cried the detective.

"I," said Florizel, "returned the prince, "it is that of a wise and honest man. The world is a great place and stocked with wealth and beauty, and there is no limit to the rewards that may be offered. Such a one who would refuse a million of money may sell his honor for an empire or the love of a woman, and I myself, who speak to you, have seen occasions so tempting, provocations so irresistible to the strength of human virtue, that I have been glad to tread in your steps and recommend myself to the grace of God. It is thus, thanks to that modest and becoming habit alone," he added, "that you and I can walk this town together with untroubled hearts."

"Not long after the marriage of Francis Scrymgeour and Miss Vandeleur was celebrated in great privacy, and the prince acted on that occasion as groomsmen. The two Vandeleurs surprised some rumor of what had happened to the diamond, and their last diving operations on the river Seine are the wonder and amusement of the idle. It is true that through some miscalculation they have chosen the wrong branch of the river. As for the prince, that sublime person, having now served his term, may go, along with the Arabian author, topey turvy into space. But if the reader insists on more specific information I am happy to say that a recent revolution hurled him from the throne of Bohemia in consequence of his continued

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INTERESTING FACTS

When people are contemplating a trip whether on business or pleasure, they naturally want the best service obtainable as far as speed, comfort and safety is concerned. Employees of the Wisconsin Central Lines are paid to serve the public and our trains operated so as to make close connection with diverging lines at all junction points.

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Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.17 to \$1.20; gray \$1.15 per cental.

Barley—Feed, \$2.10 per ton; \$2.10 brewing rolled, \$2.25 per ton.

Milwaukee—Linn, 82c; middlings \$2.7; shorts, \$2.3; chop, \$1.8.

Hay—Timothy, \$20 to \$21; clover, \$17.

Poultry—Fancy creamery, 20c to 22c; large, 17c to 18c per pound.

Eggs—Fresh, 16c to 17c.

Cheese—Full cream, twins, 16c to 17c; Young American, 17c to 18c per pound.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 12c to 13c per lb; hens 13c to 14c, roosters 10c to 12c; broilers, 6c to 7c, fryers, 14c to 15c, ducks 13c to 14c, geese 8c, turkeys, live 17c dressed 18c to 19c per lb.

Hogs—Gross, heavy, \$6.50 to \$7; light, \$4.75 to \$5; dressed, 8c to 9c per pound.

Veal—Small, 7c to 8c; large, 7c to 8c per pound.

Beef—Gross top steers, \$4.50 to \$5.50; Hops—19c to 20c per pound.

Wool—Valley (60 to 65c); Eastern Oregon, at 14c; mohair, 35c at 80c per sack.

Potatoes—30c to 40c per sack.

Onions—40c to 50c per cental.

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down to the fact that your hands before we begin to eat."

Away ran the tortoise, his mouth watering at the thought of the good things he had seen. At noon he had washed his hands, he started back again across the patch of burned grass. But as he ran along on all fours he soon found that the burned grass made his hands as dirty as they were before. "I cannot go to dinner with black hands like these," he thought. So he returned to wash them a second time. Then again he attempted to cross the burned grass, but with no better success than before. After washing his hands for the third time he sat down to consider how he was to return to the tortoise's home without getting his hands black. The only way seemed to be to follow the banks of the river until he reached the end of the burned patch. This he set out to do and at last, tired and hungry, reached the home of the tortoise.

When he got there, he found, to his astonishment, that the tortoise was just eating the last piece of food. "Hello!" exclaimed his host. "Where have you been all this time? I waited a long while for you; but, as you did not return, I thought that you must have been dissatisfied with the food that you saw and so had gone back to your own home again. Now I have eaten it all myself and have nothing left in the house to offer you. I hope you will not feel any more hungry when you get home than I did when I returned from your home yesterday." Then the tortoise went off, much annoyed at the tables had been so cleverly turned on himself.

Filling a Large Contract.

"Do you always practice what you preach?" asked the third deacon of the long winded minister.

"I do, my brother," said the long winded minister solemnly.

"Well," said the third deacon, with a sigh, "I don't wonder, then, that you don't seem to get any time to make pastoral calls."

A number of cases of smallpox are reported from the lower St. Louis country, Lane county and one death has occurred. The county court has appointed a quarantine officer, who will endeavor to prevent a spread of the disease.