

VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

Chapter 38
BWARE OF RAISUL.
"That Raisul!" continued El Isa Beth el Ain. "He is without conscience, heart, soul or bowels of compassion. Raisul fears neither man, nor beast, nor fend, nor Allah himself. Raisul is a devil incarnate, and would spit upon the beard of the Prophet."
"Hey, Lady Mother," fawned Jules. "Let's talk about Raisul, shall we?"
"I am talking about Raisul."
"No!"
"And I say, beware of Raisul. Placate him, consider him, and please him in everything. For, before long, he will rule this Castle and this town of Mekrazzen and this Country of the Gun—and, some day, he will rule Morocco."
"Even now, when orders are given, the voice is the voice of the Kaid but the words are the words of Raisul. And Zainub, his mother, has influence with him—much influence. If the Kaid ceased to indulge Raisul, to obey Raisul; if the Kaid thwarted him in any matter upon which he had set his heart, and Raisul decided that his father had lived long enough, Zainub would put it in his coffee, or his wine."
"Checherasade, my son, you're getting morbid. These things positively are not done now a days. You're old-fashioned, absolutely Victorian."
"I have dwelt in the dark rooms of this Castle for a quarter of a century, my son, and I . . ."
"What a change, darling. You want a weak end at Brighton."
". . . and I know what I know. Listen to me, Jules, my son, that your days may be long upon the earth, and those of your dear father, my husband and lord, also. I say to you now, and I say to you daily, even though you come to hate the sound of my voice.
"Raisul rules; beware of Raisul; offend him not; obey him, please him and placate him."
"And why all this fuss, just now, my mother?"
"My son, never be a knave, but sh, ten thousand times, I say, never be a fool. Listen. This Raisul, your cousin, the son of my brother, is not only the greatest of knaves but so clever that he thinks all other men are fools. He thinks you are a fool. He made a fool of you last night. He made you drunk."
"Well, that amused me more than did him," smiled Jules Mallign. "Did it?" inquired his mother dryly. "Well, he made you drink, for your father, watching, saw. And in that, my son, you were a fool."
"I certainly gathered in a head and a mouth my love, and that was a foolish thing to do."
"That is nothing . . ."
"Oh, is it?"
"Nothing, and less than nothing. You were a fool in that you let Raisul make a fool of you. You let Raisul get the upper hand and take the higher ground. It is not for sultans to make visiers drunk, and mock them and despise them, and get the better of them."
"It is for visiers to make sultans drunk and bend them to their will; obtain mastery and influence and power over them; make sultans sign what visiers have written; make sultans say what visiers think; it is for visiers to guide them and lead them and drive them and ride them, as the weakest man can ride the strongest stallion, or the swiftest camel."
"Let not this Raisul make you drunk again, or ill will come of it—great ill in great matters, as well as little ill in little things."
Lady El Isa Beth el Ain paused in the torrent of her speech and in her fanning of her son.
"A little ill hath already befallen," she said quietly.
"If you call this head 'a little ill' . . ."

"I don't call it even that, my son. A far, far worse ill than that befall; for that pale English girl, your wife, insulted and angered Raisul, our master; Raisul, in the hollow of whose hand lie the fortunes of your father and yourself and me."
"What?" cried Jules, suddenly sitting upright on the divan.
"Yes, you may well ask. Now you are taking some notice of what I say. Through your drinking this befall. Had you been with your wife, as you should have been, it would never have happened. Not only did she insult and anger and thwart Raisul, she actually threatened him."
"What, think you, is the fate of those, and of the family of those, who thus offend great powerful sheikhs and kaid and sultans?"
"What happened?" asked Jules Mallign.
"Oh, you know what Raisul is. Can't leave any girl alone. Not that they want him to leave them alone. That Sara! You keep her out of Raisul's way."
Jules Mallign laughed.
"He's a great lad," he said again.
"Yes, and he'll be a great sultan some day—and you can be a great prime minister, visier, chief councillor . . ."
"Keeper of the king's conscience—and treasury—what?" laughed Jules. "The latter would be more worth keeping."
". . . yes, Governor of a great Province, a fat province, yielding twice the taxes that the governor has to send to the treasury," continued El Isa Beth el Ain. "All dependent on the countenance and favor of this Raisul—some day. And meanwhile, your wife must quarrel with him, insult him, threaten him. Would you believe that she came and asked me to lend her a knife to etch in him? Think of it!"
"But what happened?"
"Why a certain fool got drunk in front of the man whose respect he should keep. Got so drunk and incapable that his own father said it would be wrong to take him to his wife's apartment and let her behold his shame. Thus was his wife left alone with none to protect her, or to give her good counsel, or to keep her out of mischief. So she got into mischief. She insulted and angered and threatened her husband's patron and employer, the source of his wealth, his honor and his future greatness."
"Will you tell me what happened, before I . . ."
"I am telling you. The fool's wife—a far bigger fool—unmindful of her husband's happiness and welfare, behaved according to her folly."
"I suppose you mean young Raisul went to give her a cousinly good-night kiss, and overdid it, and got his face smacked?"
"It is all very well to put it like that. It's all very well to make little of it, but it's a very serious matter—as you'll find out, my son. All very well to say, with a laugh, that Raisul got his face smacked; but people of Raisul's sort don't like having their face smacked, and they are apt to return a smack with a thrust—of a knife; or with a blow—of a bullet; or with a jerk—of a noose."
"Morbid! Old-fashioned! Victorian!" laughed Jules.
"So don't get drunk again, my son," continued his mother, "or if you must, see that your wife is in a safe place—where she cannot cause mischief and danger."
"It's news to me, my mother, that Margaret is much of a mischief-maker, or given to pursuing young men and leading them on, for the fun of turning them down—at the psychological moment."
"I did not say that your wife pursued Raisul. Do not put false accusations against your wife into my mouth, my son. I did not say that she led him on. I said that she insulted and enraged him. I said that she threatened him."
"Threatened to do what?"
"She threatened to shoot him."
"To shoot him? What for?"
"What for? To get her husband, and her husband's father, and mother put to death, I should think. What do you suppose would be the result of Zainub's hearing of the mere threat—the threat to kill her son? And here, when you are back again, and Zainub's fears and suspicions dead, your own wife threatens to kill Raisul. To kill her son Raisul, whose heir you are!"
Jules' mother succeeds in impressing him with her story, tomorrow.

BY PHYSICIANS HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO EXAMINE applicants from that county for admission to the 1933 citizens' military training camp here, it was announced today by camp authorities who will work under the direction of Brigadier-General Stanley H. Ford. They are Drs. Gordon MacCracken and Ernest A. Woods, Ashland; Drs. E. A. Dodson, Edwin R. Durso, Wm. W. P. Holt, A. F. Walter Kresse and B. C. Wilson, Medford, and Dr. Dan E. Standard, Phoenix. The Jackson county doctors are among 116 physicians who have agreed to help this year. So general and hearty was the response that there are some examining physicians in every county in Oregon and in the five southwestern Washington counties which comprise the camp area; and the medical men named here as well as the others have been complimented by the authorities for their willingness to aid in this national defense work. Without their co-operation, it was explained by Lieutenant Thomas J. Cross, camp adjutant, Jackson county boys would be greatly inconvenienced in getting their preliminary physical examinations and often might be sent home after coming to camp for want of examination in the beginning. The physicians are serving without compensation.

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JACKSON CO. DOCTORS VOLUNTEER SERVICES FOR C. M. T. C. EXAMS

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