

英語文學注釋讀物

THE THREE SISTERS

(Stories from the Arabian Nights)

三姊妹

商務印書館



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(天方夜談故事選)

夏雪芬 注釋

商 務 印 書 館

1959 · 北京

本書簡介

“天方夜談”又名“一千零一夜”，是阿拉伯民族世代口傳的民間故事，到1600年左右，形成比較完整的總集，并賦予了一個美麗的緣起，說是一個波斯國王為了報復他的王后與人私通，而命令臣下每日送入宮內一個美女作后，第二日即行處死。他的宰相的女兒自動請求入宮，給王講了非常動聽的故事，第二天天亮正講到緊張階段，王下令暫緩處刑，這樣一直繼續了一千零一夜，王覺悟到自己過去的殘暴，而取消了原來的命令。在這些故事中，諷刺、諷刺、揭露了封建統治者的殘暴、虛偽、腐朽，表現出阿拉伯人民的正直、智慧、幽默感和高遠的理想。這些故事曾譯成了各國語言，為世界人民所喜讀。高爾基曾說：“天方夜談非常完美地表現出東方各國人民美麗幻想的不可遏止的力量。”（全集25卷，87頁）

天方夜談的英譯本有各種，以文字簡易言，當推斯科特（Scott）譯本。本書選錄了斯譯本中的“三姊妹”、“神燈”和“阿里巴巴”三篇，就其中一些單詞、短語和比較難解的語句作了扼要的注釋，作為初學英語者和自學英語者的課外或自修讀物。

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The Story of the Three Sisters

There was an emperor of Persia named *Khoonaw*.¹ He often walked *in disguise*² through the city, attended by a trusty minister, when he met with many adventures. On one of these occasions, as he was passing through a street in that part of the town inhabited only by *the meaner sort*,³ he heard some people talking very loud; and going close to the house whence the noise proceeded, perceived a light, and three sisters sitting on a sofa, conversing together after supper. By what the eldest said, he presently understood the subject of their conversation was wishes: "For," said she, "since we have got upon wishes, mine shall be to have the sultan's baker for my husband, for then I shall *eat my fill*⁴ of that bread which *by way of excellence*⁵ is called the sultan's: let us see if your *tastes*⁶ are as good as mine. "*For my part*,"⁷ replied the second sister, "I wish I *was*⁸ wife to the sultan's chief cook, for then I should *eat off* the most excellent dishes; and, as I am persuaded that the sultan's bread is common in the palace, I should not want any of that; therefore you see," addressing herself to her eldest sister, "that I have a better taste than you."

The youngest sister, who was very beautiful, and had more charms and wit than the two elder, spoke *in her turn*:¹⁰ "For my part, sisters," said she, "I shall not limit my desires to such *trifles*,¹¹ but *take a higher flight*¹²; and since we are upon wishing, I wish to be the emperor's *queen consort*.¹³ I would make him father of a prince, whose hair should be gold on

1. [khuu'fat]. 2. 便服 微服. 3. 贫贱的人家. 4. 吃饱. 5. 由于它的精美. 6. 志趣, 爱好. 7. 至于我. 8. was = were. 一般假定式中小称人称与数皆用 were. 9. 吃的一部分. 10. 轮到她时. 11. trifles ['traiflz], 小事. 12. 要飞得高一些, 意即我的愿望要大一些. 13. queen consort ['kuen so:t] 王后.

one side of his head, and silver on the other; when he cried, the tears from his eyes should be pearl; and when he smiled, his *vermilion*¹ lips should look like a rose-bud fresh blown."

The three sisters' wishes, particularly *that*² of the youngest, seemed so *singular*³ to the sultan, that he resolved to gratify them in their desires; but *without communicating his design to his grand vizier*⁴, he *charged him only*⁵ to take notice of the house,⁶ and bring the three sisters before him the following day.

The grand vizier, in executing the emperor's orders, would *but just*⁷ give the sisters time to dress themselves to appear before him, without telling them the reason. He brought them to the palace and presented them to the emperor, who said to them, "Do you remember the wishes you expressed last night, when you were all *in so pleasant a mood*."⁸ Speak the truth; I must know what they were?"

At these unexpected words of the emperor, the three sisters *were much confounded*⁹. They cast down their eyes and blushed. Modesty, and fear *lest they might have offended the emperor*¹⁰ by their conversation, kept them silent. The emperor perceiving their confusion, said, to encourage them, "Fear nothing, I did not send for you to distress you; and since I see that is the effect of the question I asked without my intending it,¹¹ as I know the wish of each, I will *relieve you from*¹² your fears. You," added he, "who wished to be my wife shall have your desire this day; and you," continued he, addressing himself to the two elder sisters, "shall also be married to my chief baker and cook."

The *nuptials*¹³ were all celebrated that day, as the emperor had resolved, *but in a different manner*.¹⁴ The young-

1. *vermilion* [ve'miljən] 朱红色的. 2. *that* = the wish. 3. 不同尋常的, 奇妙的. 4. 沒有把自己的打算告訴首相. 5. 只是命他. 6. 留心(記住)這一家. 7. *but just* = only. 8. 心情那麼愉快時候. 9. 感到非常惶惑, 手足無措. 10. *lest... might...* 惟恐她們冒犯了(得罪了)皇上, 連接詞 *lest* 常用在 *fear* 或 *apprehension* 等語之後, 等於 *that*, 其後所用的 *tense* 為過去時虛擬語氣 (*should, might*). 11. *it* 指皇帝問話, 引起三姊妹惊慌這件事. 12. 解除. 13. *nuptials* ['nʌptʃəlz] (通常用複數) 婚禮. 14. 用不同的方式.

gest sister's¹ were solemnised with all the rejoicings usual at the marriages of the emperors of Persia; and those² of the other two sisters according to the quality and distinction of their husbands;³ the one as the sultan's chief baker, and the other as head cook.

The two elder felt strongly the disproportion⁴ of their marriages to that of their younger sister. This consideration made them far from being content,⁵ though they were arrived at the utmost height of their late wishes,⁶ and much beyond their hopes.⁷ They gave themselves up to⁸ an excess of jealousy, and frequently met together to consult how they might revenge themselves on the queen.⁹ They proposed a great many ways,¹⁰ which they could not accomplish,¹¹ but dissimulated¹² all the time to flatter¹³ the queen with every demonstration of affection and respect.

Some months after her marriage, the queen gave birth to¹⁴ a young prince, as bright as the day; but her sisters, to whom the child was given at his birth, wrapped him up in¹⁵ a basket and floated¹⁶ it away on a canal that ran near the palace, and declared that the queen had given birth to a little dog. This made the emperor very angry.

In the meantime, the basket in which the little prince was exposed¹⁷ was carried by the stream towards the garden of the palace. By chance¹⁸ the intendant of the emperor's gardens,¹⁹ one of the principal and most considerable officers²⁰ of the kingdom, was walking by the side of this canal, and perceiving a basket floating, called to²¹ a gardener who was not far off, to bring it to shore that he might see what it

1. sister's=sister's nuptials. 2. those = the nuptials. 3. 按照她們丈夫的身份和品級. 4. 不相稱, 懸殊. 5. 大為不滿. 6. 雖然她們已達到了她們最近願望的頂點. 7. 大大超出了她們的希望以外. 8. 她們使自己完全陷入... (直譯為: 專心于, 獻身子). 9. 向皇后報復. 10. 方法. 11. accomplish [ə'kɒmplɪʃ] 實行. 12. dissimulated [di'sɪmjuleɪtɪd] 掩飾真情. 13. flatter ['flætə] 奉承. 14. 生(小孩). 15. 把他包好放在...里. 16. 任...漂流. 17. 被遺棄 (指小孩). 18. by chance 偶然. 意外地. 19. 守園吏. 20. 顯要的官. 21. called to (a man) 喊人, 呼人.

contained. The gardener, with a *rake*¹ which he had in his hand, drew the basket to the side of the canal, took it up, and gave it to him.

The intendant of the gardens was extremely surprised to see in the basket a child, which, though he knew it could be *but just*² born, had very fine features. This officer had been married several years, but though he had always been desirous of having children, *Heaven had never blessed him with any*.³ He made the gardener follow him with the child; and when he came to his own house, which was situated at the entrance into the gardens of the palace, went into his wife's apartment. "Wife," said he, "as we have no children of our own, God hath sent us one. *I recommend*⁴ him to you; *provide him a nurse*,⁵ and take as much care of him as if he were our own son; for, from this moment, *I acknowledge him as such*.⁶ The intendant's wife received the child with great joy.

The following year the queen consort was brought to bed of⁷ another prince, on whom the *unnatural*⁸ sisters had no more *compassion*⁹ than on his brother; but exposed him likewise in a basket, and *set him adrift*¹⁰ in the canal, pretending this time that the sultanness was *delivered of*¹¹ a cat. It was happy also for this child that the intendant of the gardens was walking by the canal side who *had it carried*¹² to his wife, and *charged her to*¹³ take as much care of it as of the former; *which was as agreeable to her inclination as it was to that of the intendant*.¹⁴

The Emperor of Persia was more enraged this time against the queen than before, and *she had felt the effects of*

1. rake [reik] 耙子. 2. but just = but a moment ago. 3. 上帝未曾賜給他一個孩子. 4. recommend = to give in charge 委託. 5. 給他僱一個保姆, provide 的原意為供給. 6. I acknowledge him as such (= as our own son) 我認他作我們自己的兒子. 7. = was delivered of 生(小孩). 8. 沒有人性的. 9. 憐憫心, 同情心. 10. 讓他隨波逐浪地漂去. 11. 生(小孩). 12. 把她帶給. 13. 囑咐她, 委託她. 14. 這非常合她的意就像合她丈夫的意一樣, which 指前面兩句而言.

his anger, if the grand vizier's remonstrances had not prevailed.¹

The next year the queen gave birth to a princess, which innocent² babe³ underwent the same fate as the princes her brothers; for the two sisters being determined not to desist from their detestable schemes⁴ till they had seen the queen their younger sister at least cast off,⁵ turned out,⁶ and humbled,⁷ exposed this infant also on the canal. But the princess, as well as the two princes her brothers, was preserved from death⁸ by the compassion and charity of the intendant of the gardens.

To this inhumanity the two sisters added a lie and deceit,⁹ as before. They produced a piece of wood, of which they said the queen had been delivered.

Khoonoo-shaw could no longer contain himself¹⁰ at this third disappointment. He ordered a small shed¹¹ to be built near the chief mosque, and the queen to be confined in it,¹² so that she might be subject to the scorn¹³ of those who passed by; which usage,¹⁴ as she did not deserve it, she bore with a patient resignation¹⁵ that excited the admiration as well as compassion¹⁶ of those who judged of things better than the vulgar.¹⁷

The two princes and the princess were, in the meantime, nursed and brought up by the intendant of the gardens and his wife with all the tenderness of a father and mother; and as they advanced in age,¹⁸ they all showed marks of superior dignity,¹⁹ by a certain air²⁰ which could only belong to exalted birth.²¹ All this increased the affections of the intendant and

1. 要不是首相劝阻住的话,她早就感到皇帝动怒的厉害了(直译为:要是首相的劝阻没有佔上峰的话...) remonstrances [ri'monstrənsiz]. 2. 无辜的. 3. babe [beib] 嬰兒, 赤子. 4. 不打消她們可惡的陰謀 desist [di'zist]. 5. 被拋棄, 被休掉. 6. 被逐出. 7. 被降低身份, 被賤視. 8. 得免于死. 9. 做了这件不人道的的事情后,她們还撒了一个謊,并代以假物. 10. 忍耐, 克制自己. 11. shed [ʃed] 小屋. 12. 幽禁(拘禁)在內. 13. 可以受到詛咒, 恥笑 subject ['sʌbdʒɪkt]. scorn [skɔ:n]. 14. 这种待迂 usage ['ju:zɪdʒ]. 15. patient resignation ['peɪʃənt rezɪg'neiʃən] 默默無言的順从(試比較: 逆來順受). 16. 使...又贊美又同情. 17. 普通的老百姓(含有鄙視之意), vulgar ['vʌlgə]. 18. 逐漸長大. 19. 高貴的品質, superior dignity [sju'piəriə' dɪgnɪti]. 20. 根據一種說不出來的風度、氣派. 21. 高貴的出身. exalted [ɪg'zɔ:ltɪd].

his wife, who called the eldest prince *Bahman*,¹ and the second *Perviz*,² both of them names of the most ancient emperors of Persia, and the princess *Perie-zadeh*,³ which name also had been borne by several queens and princesses of the kingdom.

As soon as the two princes were old enough, the intendant provided proper masters to teach them to read and write; and the princess their sister, who was often with them, showing a great desire to learn, the intendant, pleased with her quickness, employed the same master to teach her also. Her *emulation*,⁴ *vivacity*,⁵ and wit made her in a little time as great a *proficient*⁶ as her brothers. At the hours of recreation, the princess learned to sing and play upon all sorts of instruments; and when the princes were learning to ride, she would not permit them to *have that advantage over her*,⁷ but went through all the exercises with them, learning to ride also, to bend the bow, and *dart*,⁸ the *reed*⁹ or *javelin*,¹⁰ and oftentimes outdid them in the *race*,¹¹ and other *contests of agility*.¹²

The intendant of the gardens was so overjoyed to find his *adopted children*¹³ so well *requited the expense he had been at in their education*,¹⁴ that he *resolved to be at a still greater*,¹⁵ for as he had till then been content only with his lodge at the entrance of the garden, and kept no country house, he purchased a *country seat*¹⁶ at a short distance from the city, surrounded by a large *tract*¹⁷ of *arable land*,¹⁸ meadows, and woods, and furnished it in the richest manner, and added gardens, according to a plan drawn by himself, and a large park, stocked with *fallow deer*,¹⁹ that the princes and princess might *divert themselves with hunting*²⁰ when they chose.

1. Bahman [ba:mən]. 2. Perviz ['pa:viz]. 3. Perie-zadeh [peri-'za:de]. 4. 好胜心. 5. 活泼, 有生气. 6. 多才多艺的人. 7. 在这方面胜过她. 8. 投掷(标枪、箭、短矛). 9. 箭、蘆箭. 10. 标枪, 矛. 11. 赛跑, 赛马. 12. 比敏捷的竞赛. 13. 养子. 14. 报偿他们为他们的教育所付的代价. 15. resolved... greater (expense) 决定付出一个更大的代价. 16. 别墅, 別墅. 17. 广阔的地面. 18. 耕地. 19. 白斑而毛底淡黄的鹿. 20. 打獵取乐, divert [di'vɔ:t, dai-] oneself 取乐...

When this country seat was finished, the intendant of the gardens went and cast himself at the emperor's feet, and after representing his long service and the *infirmities of age*,¹ which he found growing upon him, begged permission to *resign his charge*² and retire. The emperor *gave him leave*,³ and asked what he should do to recompense him. "Sire," replied the intendant of the gardens, "I have received so many obligations from your majesty and the late emperor your father, of *happy memory*,⁴ that I desire no more than the honour of being assured of your continued favour."

He took his leave of the emperor, and retired with the two princes and the princess to the country retreat he had built. His wife had been dead some years, and he himself had not lived in his new abode above six months, when *he was surprised by so sudden a death*⁵ that he had not time to *give them the least account of*⁶ the manner in which he had saved them from destruction.

The Princes Bahman and Perviz, and the Princess Periezadeh, who *knew no other father than the intendant of the emperor's gardens*,⁷ regretted and bewailed him as such,⁸ and *paid all the honours*⁹ in his funeral obsequies¹⁰ which love and filial gratitude¹¹ required of them. Satisfied with the plentiful fortune he had left them, they lived together in perfect union, *free from*¹² the ambition of distinguishing themselves at court,¹³ or aspiring to places of honour and dignity, which they might easily have obtained.

One day when the two princes were hunting and the princess had remained at home, an old woman, a *devotee*,¹⁴ came to the gate, and desired leave to go in to say her prayers, it being then the hour. The servants asked the princess's

1. 年老 (而致的) 体衰。 2. 辞职, charge 的原意为责任。 3. 允许了他。 4. 过世的 (直译为: 给...许多快乐的回忆的), 这是加在已故人姓名上的颂词。 5. 他为突如其来的死亡所攫 (试比较: 暴死)。 6. 哪怕是稍为告知他们一些。 7. 除了守国吏他们不知道还有一个父亲。 8. 哀悼和痛哭他像他们的父亲一样, such = their father。 9. 表示了一切敬意, 尽了一切礼仪。 10. funeral obsequies ['fju:nərəl 'ɒbsɪkwɪz] (复) 葬礼。 11. 子女的感恩。 12. 没有, 無。 13. 在朝廷扬名的热望(野心)。 14. 信徒者。

permisson, who ordered them to *show her into the oratory*,¹ which the intendant of the emperor's gardens had taken care to *fit up*² in his house, for want of a mosque in the neighbourhood. After the good woman had finished her prayers, she was brought before the princess, in the great hall, which in beauty and richness exceeded all the other apartments.

As soon as the princess saw the *devout*³ woman, she asked her many questions upon the *exercise of devotion*⁴ which she practised, and how she lived: all which she answered with great modesty. Talking of several things, at last she asked her what she thought of the house and how she liked it?

"*Madam*,"⁵ answered the devout woman, "if you will give me leave to speak my mind freely, I will *take the liberty*⁶ to tell you, that this house would be incomparable if it had three things which are wanting to complete it. The first of these three things is the speaking-bird, so singular a creature, that it draws round it all the singing-birds of the neighbourhood, which come to accompany his song. The second is the singing-tree, the leaves of which are so many mouths, which form an *harmonious concert*⁷ of different voices, and never cease. The third is the yellow-water of a gold colour, a single drop of which being peured into a vessel properly prepared, it increases so as to fill it immediately, and rises up in the middle like a fountain, which continually plays, and yet the *basin never overflows*."⁸

"Ah! my good mother," cried the princess, "how much am I obliged to you for the knowledge of these curiosities! They are surprising, and I never before heard there were such wonderful rarities in the world; but as *I am persuaded*⁹ that you know, I expect that you should *do me the favour*¹⁰ to inform me where they are to be found."

"*Madam*," replied the good woman, "I am glad to tell you, that these curiosities are all to be met with in the same

1. 領她到小禮拜堂去, oratory ['oreteri] 私人用的禮拜堂. 2. fit up 准备, 設備. 3. 虔誠的. 4. 祈禱的礼仪. 5. madam ['mædəm] 對女人的尊稱, 此處作: 小姐. 6. 冒昧. 7. 悅耳的合奏 concert ['kɒnsət]. 8. 池塘里的水永遠不會溢出. 9. 我深信 persuaded [pə'sweɪdɪd]. 10. 請惠予.

spot on the confines of this kingdom,¹ towards India. The road lies before your house, and whoever you send needs but follow it for twenty days, and on the twentieth let him only ask the first person he meets where the speaking-bird, singing-tree, and yellow-water are, and he will be informed." After saying this she rose from her seat, took her leave, and went her way.

The Princess Perie-zadeh's thoughts were so absorbed in her desire to obtain possession of² these three wonders, that her brothers on their return from hunting, instead of finding her lively and gay, as she used to be, were amazed to see her pensive³ and melancholy,⁴ and weighed down by some trouble.⁵

"Sister," said Prince Bahman, "what has become of all your mirth and gaiety⁶? Are you not well? or has some misfortune befallen you? Tell us that we may give you some relief."⁷

The princess at first returned no answer to these inquiries; but on being pressed by her brothers, thus replied, "I always believed that this house, which our father built us, was so complete that nothing was wanting. But this day I have learned that it wants⁸ three rarities, the speaking-bird, the singing-tree, and the yellow water, so that if it had these no country seat in the world could be compared with it." Then she informed them wherein consisted the excellency of these rarities,⁹ and requested her brothers to send some trustworthy person in search of these three curiosities.

"Sister," replied Prince Bahman, "it is enough that you have an earnest desire for the things you mention to oblige¹⁰ us to try and obtain them. I will take that charge upon myself,¹¹ only tell me the place, and the way to it, and I will set out¹² to-morrow. You, brother, shall stay at home with our sister, and I commend her to your care."¹³

1. 在这个国家的边境上 confines (通常用复数). 2. to obtain (=get, take) possession [pe'zefən] of 拿到, 占有. 3. 若有所思的. 4. 憂郁的. 5. 因煩惱而心事重重. 6. 你的快活到哪儿去了? 你怎么不快活了? mirth = gaiety. 7. 解除你的一些 (痛苦, 煩悶, 憂慮). 8. 缺少. 9. 这些珍品的妙处在那里. 10. 使...有責任, 使...有义务. 11. 这件事由我来做好了. 12. 出發. 13. 把她託付給你照顧.

Prince Bahman spent the remainder of the day in making preparations for his journey, and informing himself from the princess of the directions which the devout woman had left her. The next morning he mounted his horse, and Perviz and the princess embraced him, and wished him a good journey. But *in the midst of their adieus,*¹ the princess recollected what she had not thought of before. "Brother," said she, "I had quite forgotten the perils to which you may be exposed. *Who knows whether I shall ever see you again!*"² *Alight,*³ *I beseech*⁴ you, and give up this journey. I would rather be deprived of the sight and possession of the speaking-bird, singing-tree, and yellow-water, than run the risk of never seeing you more."

"Sister," replied Bahman; smiling at the sudden fears of the princess, "*my resolution is fixed,*"⁵ and you must allow me to execute it. However, as events are uncertain, and I may fail in this undertaking, all I can do is to leave you this knife. It has a peculiar property. ~~It~~ when you pull it out of the sheath it is clean as it is now, it will be a sign that I am alive; but if you find it *stained with blood,*"⁶ then you may believe me to be dead."

The princess could *prevail nothing more with Bahman.*⁷ He bade adieu to her and Prince Perviz for the last time, and rode away. When he got into the road, he never turned to the right hand nor to the left, but went directly forward towards India. The twentieth day he perceived on the road side a very singular old man, who sat under a tree some small distance from a *thatched house,*"⁸ which was his *retreat from the weather.*"⁹

His eyebrows were as white as snow, as was also his beard which was *so long as to*¹⁰ cover his mouth, while it reached down to his feet. The nails of his hands and feet were grown to an immense length; a flat broad *umbrella*¹¹ covered his head. He wore no clothes, but only a *mat*¹² thrown round his body.

1. 在他們話別之際, adieus [ə'dju:z] 告別. 2. 誰知道我是否能再見到你們. 3. alight = get down 下(馬)來. 4. 懇求, 請求. 5. 我的決心已下. 6. 被血染污, blood [blad]. 7. 說服不了 Bahman. 8. 茅草屋 thatched [θætʃt]. 9. 躲避風雨的地方 retreat [ri'tri:t]. 10. 長得... 11. 雨傘 umbrella [am'brele]. 12. 蓆子.

This old man was a *dervise*,¹ for many years² retired from the world, and devoted to contemplation,³ so that at last he became what we have described.

Prince Bahman, who had been all that morning expecting to meet some one who could give him information of⁴ the place he was in search of, stopped when he came near the dervise, alighted, in conformity to the directions⁵ which the devout woman had given the Princess Perie-zadeh, and leading his horse by the bridle, advanced towards him, and saluting him, said, "God prolong your days, good father, and grant you the accomplishment of your desires."

The dervise returned the prince's salutation, but spoke so unintelligibly that he could not understand one word he said: Prince Bahman perceiving that this difficulty proceeded from the dervise's hair⁶ hanging over his mouth, and unwilling to go any farther without the instructions he wanted, pulled out a pair of scissors he had about him,⁷ and having tied his horse to a branch of the tree, said, "Good dervise, I want to have some talk with you: but your hair prevents my understanding what you say: and if you will consent, I will cut off some part of it, and of your eyebrows, which disfigure⁸ you so much that you look more like a bear⁹ than a man."

The dervise did not oppose the offer; and when the prince had cut off as much hair as he thought fit, he perceived that the dervise had a good complexion,¹⁰ and that he did not seem so very old.

"Good dervise," said he, "if I had a glass I would show you how young you look: you are now a man, but before¹¹ nobody could tell what you were."

The kind behaviour of Prince Bahman made the dervise smile, and return his compliment. "Sir," said he, "whoever you

1. dervise 疑为 dervish ['dɜ:vɪʃ] 之誤, 伊斯蘭教苦行僧. 2. 許多年, for 可略去不說. 3. 致力於潛修冥索. 4. 告訴他. 5. in conformity [kən'fɔ:mɪti] to (or with) the directions (复) (确实确实) 按照这指示 (去做). 6. 毛髮, 此处指: 鬍子. 7. 在他身边, 手头. 8. 使不像人样. 9. bear [beə] 熊. 10. complexion [kəm'plekʃən] 面色, 气色. 11. 在此之前.

are, I am obliged by the good office you have performed,¹ and am ready to show my gratitude by doing anything in my power² for you. Tell me *wherein* I may serve you."³

"Good dervise," replied Prince Bahman, "I am in search of the speaking-bird, the singing-tree, and the yellow-water. I know these three rarities are not far from hence, but cannot tell exactly the place where they are to be found; if you know, I *conjure*⁴ you to show me the way, that I may not *lose my labour*⁵ after so long a journey."

The prince, while he spoke, observed that the dervise *changed countenance*,⁶ held down his eyes, looked very serious, and instead of making any reply, remained silent: which obliged him to say to him again, "Good father, tell me whether you know what I ask you, that I may not lose my time, but inform myself somewhere else."

At last the dervise *broke silence*.⁷ "Sir," said he, to Prince Bahman, "I know the way you ask of me; but the danger you are going to expose yourself to is greater than you may suppose. A number of gentlemen of as much bravery and courage as yourself have passed this way, and asked me the same question. I can assure you they have all perished, for I have not seen one come back. Therefore, if you *have any regard for your life*,⁸ take my advice, go no farther, but return home."

"Nothing," replied Prince Bahman to the dervise, "shall make me change my intention: whoever attacks me, I am brave and well armed." "But they who will attack you *are not to be seen*,"⁹ said the dervise; "how will you defend yourself against invisible persons?" "It is no matter," answered the prince, "all you can say shall not persuade me to *forego*¹⁰ my purpose. Since you know the way, I once more conjure you to inform me."

1. 我很感激你所做的好事。 2. 尽我的力量, 在我的能力范围之内。 3. 我可以为你做什么 *wherein* (=in what). 4. *conjure* [kən'dʒʊə] 恳求。 5. 枉费精力。 6. 变了脸色。 7. 打破寂静 (开始说话)。 8. 顾到你的生命。 9. 是看不见的。 10. *forego* [fɔ:'gəʊ] (通常作 *forgo*) = go without 放棄, 断念。

When the dervise found he could not prevail upon¹ Prince Bahman to relinquish² his journey, he put his hand into a bag that lay by him and pulled out a bowl,³ which he presented to him. "Since you will not be led by my advice,"⁴ said he, "take this bowl; when you have mounted your horse, throw it before you, and follow it to the foot of a mountain. There, as soon as the bowl stops, alight, leave your horse with the bridle over his neck, and he will stand in the same place till you return. As you ascend you will see on your right and left a great number of large black stones, and will hear on all sides a confusion of voices,⁵ which will utter a thousand injurious threats⁶ to discourage you, and prevent your reaching the summit⁷ of the mountain. Be not afraid; but above all things,⁸ do not turn your head to look behind you; for in that instant you will be changed into such a black stone as those you see, which are all youths who have failed in this enterprise.⁹ If you escape the danger of which I give you but a faint idea,¹⁰ and get to the top of the mountain, you will see a cage, and in that cage is the bird you seek; ask him which are the singing-tree and the yellow-water, and he will tell you. I have nothing more to say, except to beg you again not to expose your life, for the difficulty is almost insuperable."¹¹

After these words, the prince mounted his horse, took his leave of the dervise with a respectful salute, and threw the bowl before him.

The bowl rolled away unceasingly, with as much swiftness as when Prince Bahman first hurled¹² it from his hand, which obliged him to put his horse to the gallop¹³ to avoid losing sight of it, and when it had reached the foot of the mountain it stopped. The prince alighted from his horse, laid the bridle on his

1. prevail upon (or with) 說服. 2. relinquish [ri'lin'kwɪʃ] = forgo 放棄. 作罷. 3. 碗. 4. 既然你不願听从我的勸告. 5. 一片混亂的叫喊 confusion [kən'fju:ʒən]. 6. injurious threats [in'dʒuəriəs θrets] 有害的恐嚇人的話. 7. summit ['sʌmɪt] 頂. 8. 第一是, 首先是. 9. enterprise ['entəpraɪz] (冒險的) 事業. 10. 大略 (直譯為: 模糊的概念). 11. insuperable [in'sju:pərəbl] 不能克服的. 12. hurled [hɜ:ld] 投, 擲. 13. 使他不得不讓馬快跑.