

Maxim Udovichenko



The stargazer's servant



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More than a thousand years ago, in what is now the territory of modern Mauritania and partly of its neighboring States, was located a rather powerful and militant Caliphate. The ruler of this Caliphate had at his court a personal magician, astrologer and soothsayer. The astrologer was an expert in different areas of secret knowledge, and he was highly esteemed by the ruler. In his «Book of Knowledge», he wrote down all that was of magical practices and of nature observation in detail, which came to him by inheritance from other great magicians. The Caliph's astrologer had a very inquisitive and dexterous servant, who also led his book and was going to give it to his worthy successor. Of course, the book of the servant was nothing like the great astrologer's «Book of Knowledge», but nevertheless... In our days, by a strange coincidence, both books fell into the hands of completely different people...

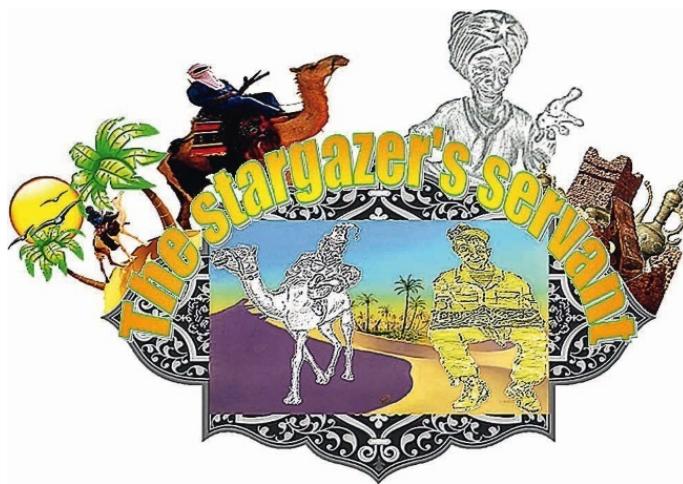
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Chapter one

Al-Majnun the Dexterous





City of Aoudaghost, frontier territory, possession of Caliph Abdallah-ibn-Yasin from the Almoravids dynasty, year 1056, (presently known as the city of Tegdaoust, Eastern Hodh in the province of the republic of Mauritania).

"Al-Majnun!! Where are you? You slacker! Let Allah, the Almighty and Merciful, shorten your abominable days!" Cried, the exasperated rider, dressed in a black turban, embroidered with golden seven-pointed stars and crescents. The blue satin robe on his shoulders was, richly decorated with golden ornaments.

"Here I am! Oh, great Stargazer of the Caliph and the wisest of the soothsayers, the Honorable Al-Farukh-Ibn Saudi" Answered the dwarf with a big nose that vaguely resembled an elongated squash.

The high spiked astrologer's hat, pulled over his bulgy ears, was embroidered with seven-pointed stars and crowned at the top with a sleazy string attached to a tiny rusty bell. From under the hat, the outer world was observed by a thievish look of sleek black eyes that expressed unconditional allegiance.

His sunburnt black bearded appearance, belonged to those ageless, unchanging men, who might be thirty, forty, who might of any age, and one would have never guessed it, and only after a thorough look at him, one would say that this chap had for sure fairly reached the years of discretion. Clumsily moving the flaps of the large tent aside, with a drawling groaning he tried to get outside, but awkwardly fell twice at a time, being traitorously caught by the long sleeves of his black Bedouin

¹ Al-Majnun (مجنون) – in Arabic – the crank, a little touched.

robe. Behind the large tent's thrown off flaps, a very pleasant young Berber woman's² face flashed distinctly.

"Here it is, 500 mithqals³, a bag of gold dust and three golden dinars⁴! You are to buy 20 slaves, 10 camels, suitable for a long journey through the desert, 30 muds⁵ of wheat, 30 sheep and goats, spices, water, vegetables and herbs enough for a 40-day journey! We will depart tomorrow at dawn!" said Al-Farukh, throwing heavy and massive sacks on the dust, before Al-Majnun. Al-Majnun bowed in respect. His master unexpectedly, in swarms of dust, and saying – "you will find me in my tent!", disappeared, exactly in the same sudden way as he had popped up.

"I listen to you and obey! Oh, great astrologer of the Caliph," said Al-Majnun, addressing to the place, where just a few seconds ago the voice of his master was heard.

Having humped the heavy bags on his back, Al-Majnun wandered along the road towards the town. The ancient road was hedged by solid masses of shady acacia trees. The hot Saharan sun, passing through the thick tree branches, cut through the clouds of dust, swallowed up from herds of sheep and camel caravans of local traders, and was very strongly reminiscent of the biblical "pillars of light illuminated the path to weary strangers".

"It is necessary to get a move on! "Al-Majnun thought out loud, lumping along the dusty road with his peaked sandals *creased* at the top.

² Berbers – people who lived in the Libyan Sahara, which way back when Greeks named Berbers, that is "barbarians", pulled through from the Roman legionaries, and had to go deep into the desert to conduct their free nomadic life full of depravations. Berber tribes – Zenato, Sanhadja and Godalla, have appeared at the Atlantic coast of the Sahara in II century. In oases they dug wells, planted date palm trees and sowed sorgo. And today, those Saharawi, which are engaged in agriculture, conduct the genealogy from these tribes.

³ Mithqal – is a monetary unit in the form of a gold coin, commonly used at that time. According to far-fetched survived documentary records, for one gold mithqal, it was possible to buy 10 sheep. Whereas trained woman slave in the city of Timbuktu cost 25 mithqals. (The city located rather near to Aoudaghost, in the north of the central part of Mali, a bit less than at 13 km to the north from the river Niger). Nowadays the capital of the self-proclaimed Islamic state Azawad.

⁴ The Gold dinar – is a monetary unit. The gold dinar of that time was a very weighty piece of metal, with 4.729 grams of pure gold....

⁵ The mud – was an ancient measurement unit for volume of weight, used in Aoudaghost at that time. One mud equaled to 1,5 litters of liquid or 2 kg. of grain.



Al-Majnun on the way to the town.

"The master is serious as never! Last time he promised to transform me into a toad, for that small nuance... what I had done in the local market... absolutely nothing... I just seduced the daughter of a local date's seller. And now if I'm not dilatory enough in running his errands, he will surely fulfil the promise" – reflected Al-Majnun, dragging the heavy load.

On having approached the town gates, his attention was attracted to a procession, of Caliph Abdallah's mounted warriors, who looked very busy indeed. They were promptly moving ahead through the crowd of merchants, travelers and townspeople.

"Listen! Listen! Those who have ears will hear!" Yelled the first rider in the black turban decorated with gold, «Sovereign of true believer, The Commander of the faithful, the merciful Caliph Abdallah (Let *Great* Allah strengthen him with the support and will surround him with His *grace* and merciful deeds) starts a military campaign in Maghreb lands, to proselytize unfaithful in a veritable faith! (Let Allah Almighty help him in his merciful attempts and save him for his tender heart!)

"For those who heard this proclamation!" continued the rider with the black turban", The merciful Caliph Abdallah orders you to bring a tenth part of your income, in acknowledgement and approval of acts of his merciful hands!! Those who refuse to bring a scanty payment, will face the inevitable death!!!" The last phrases of the rider vanished in a deafening roar of pipes from the Caliph's musicians. The Caliph's warriors discourteously wrested money, jewelry and valuable

goods from hands of scared merchants, travelers and citizens. Goods and treasury were piled into the creaking carts, and moved away together with hastily herded cattle, horses and camels.

Having learned that Al-Majnun was the servant of the great Al-Farouk-Ibn-Saud, the Caliph's warriors didn't take any payment from him and let him through to the town unchallenged.

Passing along familiar streets, smothered in greenery from the acacias, date palm trees twined up with wild grapes, Al-Majnun turned at the mosque on the street leading to the market.

Meanwhile, in Caliph's Abdullah Ibn Yasin palace.

A tall, gaunt man of about 50s, his wrinkled brown face looked dry and scaly. The droopy moustache and a bushy black beard gave his appearance a hue of a determined character. His high blue turban was adorned with gold and sapphires; the black brocade garment was richly decorated with gold threads.

Caliph Abdullah, the ruler of the tribes and peoples of a vast territory, which ran from Spain to the borders of the Kingdom of Ghana, was. Concentrated, he was deliberating on something, listening to his military leader Yahya-Ibn-Omar. Overseeing the assembled subordinates through the dark, with the shining quickness of a robin's eye, he occasionally made some consequential comments. The military leader was a real shorty one, with long arms and big round head embosomed with dappled red beard through which one could distinguish a chubby face of a middle age man of very martial appearance.

He slowly outlined the plan of the upcoming campaign, trying as much as possible to bring everything in detail.

The Aoudaghost palace, belonged to a comer of the leaders of the black tribes Soninke⁶, powerful Empire of Ghana, just two years ago, and was richly decorated with gold and precious stones.

The Palace walls abounded with painted and gilded frescoes and surahs from the Koran. The precious stones used in Arab mosaics, boggled the imagination.

A little garden with golden fountain in the middle, surrounded by palm trees and plants, full of beautiful birds, melodiously twittering amid the tree branches and plant leaf's, filling up the throne-room with a soothing romantic setting, it looked like the "Garden of Eden" or a marvelous oasis in the desert.

Carved in high relief on its golden groundwork, with elephants, giraffes and camels, the fountain gently threw out its waters with a pleasant murmur scattering the splashes in thousands of diamond sprays playing in the sun, accidentally or, on purpose attracting the birds to a bath. All that background created an indescribable atmosphere of Eastern luxury, tranquility and coolness.

"Oh, great Commander of the faithful!" the military leader Yahya-Ibn-Omar⁷ continued his speech, "by the grace of Allah Almighty and Merciful, we cannot immediately move to the great Maghreb city of Sijilmasa⁸, without rein-forcing our army with our allies' horsemen warriors. From Aoudaghost, the Caliph's army will move out to the city of Timbuktu.

⁶ The Soninke (also called Sarakole, Seraculeh, or Serahuli) are a Mande people who descend from the Bafour and are closely related to the Imraguen from Mauritania. They speak the Soninke language, a Mande language. They were the founders of the ancient empire of Ghana c. 750-124 °CE. Subgroups of Soninke include the Maraka and Wangara. After contact with Muslim Almoravid traders from the north around 1056, Soninke nobles of neighboring Takrur were among the first ethnic groups from Sub-Saharan West Africa to embrace Islam. When the Ghana empire dispersed, the resulting diaspora brought Soninkes to Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau.

⁷ It is worth noting, however, that at the time of events the=Imora-vids military leader Yahya-Ibn-Omar had managed to create a numerous and well-rehearsed army. Their main force was infantry, armed with javelins in the front ranks and pikes behind, formed into a phalanx and supported by camelmen and horsemen on the flanks.

⁸ Sijilmasa (also Sijilmassa, Sidjilmasa and Sigilmassa) was a medieval Moroccan city and trade entrepot at the northern edge of the Sahara Desert in Morocco. The ruins of the town lie for five miles along the River Ziz in the Tafilalt oasis, near the town of Rissani. The town's history was marked by several successive invasions by Berber dynasties. Up until the 14th century, as the northern terminus for the western trans-Saharan trade route, it was one of the most important trade centers in the Maghreb during the Middle Ages.



At the Caliph's palace. The higher talk on the War Campaign.

When we reach Timbuktu⁹, the city ruler Moussa-Ibn-Khalid will graciously give us 10 thousand-foot warriors and 5 thousand mounted worriers from the tribe of the Messufa¹⁰, for our military campaign. Having replenished water and food supplies in Timbuktu, we proceed to the town

⁹ Timbuktu – (timbAk'tu:); French: Tombouctou [tabuk'tu]; Koyra Chiini: Tumbutu), formerly also spelled Timbuctoo and Timbuktoo, is a city in the West African nation of Mali situated 20 km (12 mi) north of the River Niger on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. The town is the capital of the Timbuktu Region, one of the eight administrative regions of Mali. It had a population of 54,453 in the 2009 census. Starting out as a seasonal settlement, Timbuktu became a big and prosperous settlement early in the 12th century. From the 11th century and onward, Timbuktu became an important port where goods from West Africa and North Africa were traded. After a shift in trading routes, Timbuktu flourished from the trade in salt, gold, ivory and slaves. In its Golden Age, the town's numerous Islamic scholars and extensive trading network made possible an important book trade: together with the campuses of the Sankore Madrasah, an Islamic university, this established Timbuktu as a scholarly center in Africa. Several notable historic writers, such as Shabeni and Leo Africanus, have described Timbuktu. These stories, not without reason, fueled speculation in Europe, where the city's reputation shifted from being extremely rich to being mysterious. It became part of the Mali Empire early in the 14th century.

¹⁰ Messufa – are black nomadic people and desert dwellers.

of Atar¹¹, and from Atar, well smack down our blades on the heads of the Maghreb infidels, "– the military leader explained the details of the plan to Caliph.

"Your plan is undoubtedly successful, Yahya ibn Omar, but what will the *Great*- Al-Farouk-Ibn Saud say, who the gracious and merciful *God* has entrusted the gift to recognize his will by signs and stars," said the Caliph, referring to the tall greyish man, with straight delicate face features. The man of indefinite, but surely aged above fifty, with a black turban, embroidered with seven-pointed golden stars and crescents, looking very calm. His blue satin robe on his shoulders was richly decorated with gold ornaments.

"Oh, the Great Commander of the Faithful! The plan of Yahya-Ibn- Omar is truly perfect ..." he posed for a moment, tracing the gaze of the audience.

"But the stars say that the campaign is doomed to endless battles against the infidel's superior forces of the!" Posted Al-Farouk-Ibn-Saud, and the glance of his intelligent, sharp piercing, black eyes expressed uncovered concern.

"So, you are predicting defeat?" asked the Caliph, losing his patience and rising from his throne.

"Oh, Grand Commander of the Faithful! I cannot predict anything, I've got a little ability to reveal the secret of Allah's Almighty and Merciful will, that He sends in signs and stars", said Al-Farouk, bowing in reverence.

"I had completely different intentions! I was going to lead the campaign and reach the Maghreb city of Fes, where as I know, by the Will of *God* the merciful, my teacher and mentor Abu-Imran-Moussa, has recently arrived", said Caliph, thoughtfully looking into the water splashes of the fountain which fancy sparkle in the rays of the hot desert sun.

"Oh, great Caliph!" Continued Al-Farouk, reverently bowing to the Lord.

"I understand how important it is for You to see Your great teacher and mentor Abu-Im-ran-Moussa. However, the signs of Allah the Almighty and Merciful, that I have read indicate that, for You, oh great and wise ruler of the faithful, it is vitally important to stay with part of the forces in the city", said Al-Farouk, bowing reverently.

"You *are* a brave man, Al-Farouk! By methods known only to you, in a very inexplicable way, you've been managing to read the Will of Allah the Highest and Merciful in the signs and stars", thoughtfully pronounced Caliph Abdullah, addressing the great astrologer.

"I will follow the Will of Allah the Highest and will remain in city, and the army will be led by the honorable commander Yahya-ibn-Omar", the Caliph announced his decision, bringing the high talk on the War campaign to a close.

"We Listen to You and obey! Oh, *Great* Commander of true believers!" *Answered* the attendees, realizing that the final decision was taken and the discussion on the War was over.

¹¹ Atar (Arabic: Berber for mountain) is a town in northwestern Mauritania, the capital of the Adrar Province and the main settlement on the Adrar Plateau. It is home to an airport, a museum and a historic mosque, remained from 1674. As of year 2000 it had a population of 24,021.

1.1 The little tricks of Al-Majnun



In the meanwhile, Al-Majnun has been hanging around the city market long enough, between the noisy rows of merchant stalls, who insistently and on surplus, suggested buying their commodities. To draw away merchant's attentions, he ostentatiously demonstrated his deep unconcern to the goods laid on the stalls. Walking along the rows, every now and again, throwing lecherously- furtive glances at the girls and women, he surreptitiously grabbing a cluster of bananas quickly hiding it in his habit.



At the market. Al-Majnun at his habitual business: chasing girls and stealing dates and bananas from the sacks of gaping merchants.

Despite the master's order, he could not resist the temptation and hanged bumbling behind a Berber-woman, in a flashy desert gown, tight in the waist, which exaggeratedly protrudes, as its broad magnificently voluptuous curves. Following the beautiful Berber-woman, Al-Majnun did not notice, as he crossed the noisy market area and appeared on the edge of the date palms wood groves.

In the middle of the Woods, was a small sun burned grass meadow, where on the braiding sacks, the pieces of salt¹² of different sizes where gently laying. Each piece has been carefully set up opposite the gold bars and gold dust¹³ bags. Without a moment hesitation, with the words "the master has many of that stuff, and I have not a bit of it!" Exclaimed Al-Majnun and deftly threw in one of his bags a couple of pieces of salt and a couple of bars of gold.

¹² Salt, digged out and brought to Aoudaghost, as a rule, from the salt mines of Taghaza (also Teghaza) an abandoned salt-mining centre located in a salt pan in the desert region of northern Mali. It was an important source of rock salt for West Africa up to the end of the 16th century. The obtained salt was brought on sale by the messufa, in the most cases, black slaves of berbers-sanhadzha.

¹³ "Silent trade", also called silent barter, dumb barter ("dumb" here used in its old meaning of "mute"), or depot trade, is a method by which traders who cannot speak each other's language can trade without talking. Group A would leave trade goods in a prominent position and signal, by gong, fire, or drum for example, that they had left goods. Group B would then arrive at the spot, examine the goods and deposit their trade goods or money that they wanted to exchange.

Despite the heavy burden on his shoulders, a sudden joy appeared in the soul of Al-Majnun, as well as an inexplicable ease at his feet. Sandals with curved tops, barely touching the ground, rapidly carried him back to the market.

Climbing the high wall separating the market from the rest of the town, Al- Majnun suddenly heard loud screams behind him.

"Stop, stop the thief! He has stolen my salt!" Shouted the black Messufa, dressed in a long brown coat, trying on the run, to choose a good position for throwing the javelin.



Al-Majnun flings off pursuers.

"That scoundrel stole my gold!" Shouted the berber-sanhaja, wearing a blue turban and bright orange brocade pants, waving a curve bedouin sword, furiously striving to get ahead and to be the first to over-take the robber.

Marvelously dodging the javelin, which, with a cracking sound, smashed against the wall next to his foot. Al-Majnun jumped on the ground dissolving into the market noisy crowd.

On the rush, he knocked down passers-by but when he rolled a cart loaded with watermelons and melons over, he unexpectedly felt that he was flying. On having made a dizzying somersault, he suddenly landed at the door of a familiar shop. It was the shop of an old acquaintance of Al-Majnun – the local brocade seller, who was fortunately sitting next to his shop.

Instinctively thrusting into the hand of the merchant, a small bag of gold dust, that he had hidden in the pocket of his robe in advance, Al-Majnun disappeared behind the door of the shop.

"Mustafa! Quickly bring me Indigo¹⁴ and noble Soninke clothes!" Said Al-Majnun, gasping for new air almost before the phrase was finished.

"Al-Majnun! But the golden dust that you gave me is not enough even for one turban!" Exclaimed dazedly the brocade merchant, examining the bag liner.

"I square up with you as soon as I'll be dressed! Oh, and the most important clause... – you have not seen me here! For that clause you will receive another little payment!" Answered Al-Majnun, pushing his magic hat, astrologer robe and sandals with curved tops in the linen sack.

Taking a view of Al-Majnun from all sides, Mustafa marked amazing resemblance to the nobleman Soninke. Blue turban with a silver clasp in the form of a crescent in combination with a brown robe and blue brocade bloomers, very suited to the newly acquired, bluish black face color, hands and feet, stressed the distinction of the origin of his owner.

Having paid the merchant, Al-Majnun, in his newly acquired guise, went outside to carry out Al-Farouk's orders.

Hardly could he managed to make seven or ten steps from the shop as he suddenly stumbled upon his pursuers. "Look, Master!" Screamed out loud the black Mesufa to his Berber-sanhaja, – "This is him! This is beyond all doubts him!" Cried the black Messufa, pointing the tip of his javelin at Al-Majnun.

"You don't say so! Silly slave! (Let the Allah Almighty and Merciful tame your long and useless tongue!) The man who stole my gold was the Berber, in a big black cap and a black dressing gown! And who do you think is that? Look at him! You see the black grandee of a prominent Soninke, and he is dressed in a blue turban, a brown dressing gown and moreover in blue brocade pantaloons!" Said, said the Berber-sanhadja indignantly.

"Rather look for the thief! And don't irritate me with your silly conjectures!" Added the Berber, trying to spot the black peaked cap with stars in the raging market crowd.

Bargaining for a handful of grain, Al-Majnun, made all the necessary purchases. He loaded the portly and very fattened camels with water skins, pottery jars with grain and bales with food, and having fed and given water to the newly acquired black slaves, Al-Majnun directed his caravan to the town's gates.

"Did Al-Farouk guess my "small pranks" in the market?" Reflected Al-Majnun, driving the camels and cattle, and from time to time shouting at the black slaves.

The hot Saharan sun was slowly sloping to the horizon, painting the smooth blue surface of the Saharan sky in tender pink hues.

Al-Majnun suddenly remembered how once, long ago, he was a Katib¹⁵ and at the same time the Charge d'Affaires for the Emir¹⁶ of the city of Mema.¹⁷

¹⁴ Indigo powder had a distinct black hue. Today is widely used by Sahara tribes to protect the skin from the direct sunrays.

¹⁵ Katib – from Arabic – record clerk, writer.

¹⁶ Emir of the city – from Arabic – city administrator.

¹⁷ Mema is a region in Mali, Africa. A plain of alluvial deposits, it is situated north of Massina; west of Lake Debo and the Inner Niger Delta. Historically, Mema was one of the smaller Soninke states; it was also at one time a province of Ghana.

1.2 The stargazer's magical mysteries



He worked hard and for his work was granted with 4 thousand mithqals but decided to receive the same sum twice. He could not have thought up anything better then to complain to the Emir that the money had been stolen from him.

The Emir of Mema was so touched by Al-Majnun's story that, on the next day, with no delay, he called on the Supreme judge of the city, Abu-Al-Daud, and threatened him with the death penalty if he couldn't deliver the one who had stolen the money from the desolate and disadvantaged, but very willing and laborious Al-Majnun. The judge Abu-Al-Daud had very thoroughly searched for the thief but had found no one, because in the city there were no thieves.

Then the judge went to Katib Al-Majnun's house and severely interrogated his servants, threatening them with death. Eventually one of Al-Majnun's women slaves, had to confess, under the judge's pressure, saying: "Nothing had been stolen from him, but he has put the money in the sack and covered it up with sand under the tree." She showed the place and the judge extracted the money and brought it to the Emir, reporting all the history.

The Emir was angry at Al-Majnun and had to hunt him from the city to the country of nonbelievers, and people eaters.

Al-Majnun stayed with the men-eaters for 4 years, then by personal request of the caliph's astrologer, had been returned back to the city and placed in Al-Farouk's service.

The black man-eaters had not eaten Al-Majnun only because of the white color of his skin, insomuch as their strong tribal belief claimed that as if eating the whites was extremely harmful since they were not ripened, black on the other way, in their view, were quite ripened....

Travelling down memory lane and mulling over on the misadventures, and about kindness and knowledgeability of the great astrologer and soothsayer, Al-Majnun did not notice, as the city was gently wrapped by the lowering twilight.

After a while the full moon on a clear and cloudless sky, surrounded by a myriad of stars shined the caravan's way.

Having reached the tent of Al-Farouk, he unloaded camels, tied on the cattle, arranged slaves on lodging for the night in the palm grove, not forgetting to distribute mats and allowing making fire. Finished with all the necessary procedures, he counted the quantity of water skins, sacks and jars, as well as the bags with the rests of gold dust and went in direction of his master's tent.

Pushing aside the tent's edge and calling for Al-Farouk, surprisingly discovered that the tent was empty.

"Where could he be? After all, if his horse is here then..." Al-Majnun speculated, skirting the palm grove and striking into the wilderness.

Having climbed on the sand dune, Al-Majnun grow numb with the scene that suddenly broke upon him. A fiery circle in the light of the moon and the stars glowed with the pictograms and magical characters with engraved mysterious symbols, that looked as though they had grown out of the sand. The stars whirled in a round dance over the glowing circle, creating a skied cover that bore a resemblance to the "Stellar Tabernacle".

In the center of the circle was Al-Farouk, and before him, hanging in mid-air, was an opened book with glowing letters of unprecedented language, previously seen by anyone. The book pages turned over by itself, thus Al-Farouk wrote down something, continuously pronouncing some conjurations in the strange language.



Scared Al-Majnun observes the Stargazer in the Stellar Tabernacle.

He attentively kept watching over the events from under a big pile of stones, Al-Majnun suddenly heard the loud and indignant shouts of his master, – "How could it be?! What!!? More than nine centuries are to elapse?! How does it come, the heritor will be found in 941 years from now!! What!! How is it possible there will be two of them!!? What does that mean, one will come from the North, and another...What?! A half from the North, and a half from the East!!?" cried, exasperatedly the Great astrologer.

"What...?! My book containing all the ripest products of human wisdom, all the works, ancient and modern, which testify the presence and the rule of the Creator, the most precious knowledge of all my predecessors, will belong to swindlers and scoundrels!!!? What...?! My priceless book of inherit wisdom will be used to kill cockroaches, and to cut a salty fish on it!!? Who is that, what's his name...L e o p o I d!!?".

The loud indignation shouts of Al-Farouk were dissolved in the night desert, having responded, as it seemed to Al-Majnun, from somewhere out of the farness depth of the sands, with a slightly audible echo, carrying the words, – "That is the Will, that is the Will

As soon as the last faintly distinguishable sounds of echo died away, getting lost somewhere in between the starry sky and magnificent sands of the ancient Sahara, instantaneously, both the book and a fiery circle with magic signs disappeared, leaving the great astrologer of the Caliph alone with the great and silent desert.

"Now, it's *necessary* to hurry for sure!" muttered Al-Majnun under his nose, dexterously rolling down from a steep sandy slope.

1.3 Al-Majnun contemplations



However, whether the Caliph's great astrologer might have guessed about the existence of the other book, which his servant Al-Majnun secretly wrote for his inheritor, one should have very much doubted. Being in the country of black men eaters and awaiting to be eaten one day, he had begun drawing. Furtively getting a load of tribal cave drawings and taking from local jungle nature its rich, subtle and elaborate forms, he little by little, had risen from nature to drawing animals and human beings. Every time pursuing to catch something new from nature, something terrific, he found the process of drawing arduous and exhilarating.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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