

PARVANA

I

The Aboul mountain and the Muttin heights,
Back to back majestically stand,
Bearing on their shoulders, in stately might,
Higher than Djavakhh another land.

It is said that there, like an eagle in pride,
In the bosom of the blue sky, smiling,
In his Parvana palace white,
Sat those grand highlands' king.

The king of Parvana had a fair daughter,
No roe of such great beauty,
Had ever been seen by any hunter,
Hunting in the highlands of Muttin.

She adorned, with her childhood lively,
Her father's old age and his mountain heights,
And the aged monarch lived happily
With his sweet flower in blissful delight.

But still before her lay the greatest day;
When that day arrived, in his happiness,
The monarch dispatched many envoys gay,
To every palace and every fortress.

«Where is that valiant man — if there be one —
Worthy of my beautiful daughter?
Let him mount his horse, come with his weapon,
Show his bravery and take his fortune.»

II

Bearing weapons, in armour suits,
Mounted upon horses savage,
Arrived all Caucasian youths
And crowded before the stage.
In front of the palace building
Of the aged Parvana king,
Girth and ready, are now waiting
For the contest to commence.
All the multitude that has come,
And gathered at Parvana, wait
To see who is the lucky man
That will win this pretty maid.

The trumpet sounds, and in causters,
 The courtiers and the maids appear,
 Now steps out the monarch's daughter
 And the white-haired king with her.
 The father like a gloomy cloud,
 The girl, sweet moon; together
 Moon and cloud are emerging out,
 Embracing each the other.
 At this sight all the people sighed,
 As if beholding a dream sublime,
 All the brave youths were petrified,
 Transported to a higher clime.

— Look at these valiant princes,
 These broad-chested youths, my dear,
 Now, the struggle will commence
 They'll compete before you here.
 One of them will his strength display,
 Another the grace of his arm;
 A third his swiftness on the way,
 A fourth in horserace his charm.
 And when the contest ends at last,
 The strong and the weak are known,
 When in arrays go marching past
 The noblemen brave, you then pick
 The first among the victors,
 And at him your apple cast,
 That the whole world may wonder and gaze
 At your luck and be amazed.»

So saying, the monarch raised his hand,
 Signalling to start the struggle,
 While the daughter stood ready,
 In her hand a red apple.

— Perhaps, sire, a youth, vile and rude,
 Defeats one, who's weak yet good;
 But him never, ne'er shall I choose,
 As my heart's love and my spouse.»

— Ay, Parvana's pretty Fairy,
 What is your heart's desire?»
 To her the valiant youths hurry,
 Again and again inquire,

«Is it silver, gold or treasure,
 Precious gems or diamond?
 Even stars from the skies azure
 We'll bring down at your command.»

— What care I for gold and silver,
What care I for diamond?
Neither from my valiant lover,
Is it stars that I demand..

What I require is sacred fire,
That is only what I demand.
Who'll get the fire that I require
He is the youth whom I want.»

Thus spake the maid and hastily,
The youths in confusion hie,
Mounting their horses, valiantly
To th' earth's four corners they fly,
That they may find the sacred flame
By which the maid's love to earn,
But the years passed and the years came,
Yet the youths did not return.

III

— Father, why returned not any
Of the youths with love-desire?
Perhaps they have forgotten me, T
Will not bring the sacred Fire.»

— No, my lass, they will be here,
This year they'll get the fire;
The way of the brave is everywhere
With bloody battles dire.

Who knows, may be they have to cross
Dark lands and black waters;
May be they have to snatch the fire
From seven-headed monsters!»

And another year is passing by,
The virgin watching day-by-day;
— Father, when will the horseman fly
Along that mountain way?

Always I see in dreams at night,
My hero, my future knight
Flying towards me full of desire,
But vanishes before day-light.»

— My precious daughter, he'll arrive,
The fire isn't easily brought,
Many a time the soul that strives
To get it, is himself burnt out.»

And thus passed yet another year,
The virgin watching every day,
But no traveller did ever appear
On any mountain way.

85-261
192-98

— Oh, father, may be there is no —
 Unquenchable fire in this world;
 Oh, how my heart is fading now,
 Sad is this life, sad and cold.

The white-haired king no more speaks,
 He is gloomy and silent,
 With a bowed-down head, he thinks,
 And black thoughts his soul torment.

IV

And thus many years passed by,
 The monarch's doleful daughter
 Gazed and gazed at the mountains high,
 At the lonely roads passing thither;
 She lost all hope ... her heart brake,
 And so much did she weep and moan,
 That from her tears was formed a lake,
 Covering the fort and the town.
 They all vanished and she with them.
 Now at that very mournful sight,
 The Parvana lake is rippling,
 Pure as the tears of a child;
 And beneath its limpid waters,
 To this day they show to us
 The fortress of the aged king
 And the buildings glorious.

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They say that those night-flies fair
 Which in the darkness of night,
 Whenever they see a fire glare,
 Where'er a light is in sight,
 They gather and revolve around,
 Madly dash into its flame,
 They say they are the love-burnt youths
 Who in their haste have sprout wings,
 And turned to flying moths.
 And still wherever they see a flame,
 Dash into it impatiently.
 Everyone tries to be the first,
 Each endeavours to take the fire,
 To gain, by it, his heart's desire.
 And thus incessantly burn
 The Parvana youths in turn.

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