

## ABOU'L ALA MAHARI

## SURA THE FOURTH

The horrible night, gigantic and dark did spread its wings like a huge black bat,  
 And the boundless wings covered everything — the caravan, the plain and the endless  
 From east horizon to horizon west, with gloomy clouds the skies were now full, [path.  
 No trace did remain of the stars or moon, darkness covered all, it alone did rule.  
 The terrible gales, like steeds fierce and wild, without bridle were racing all around,  
 Whistling all the while, mixing with the clouds the dust and the earth from the scorched  
 ground;  
 The sinister gales were roaring, howling, screaming loud in thousand diverse sounds,  
 It did seem as if wild beasts were howling in the agony of their mortal wounds.  
 In the narrow gorges the storms rolled on, twisted in forests of virgin palm-trees,  
 They were so wildly and sadly wailing, as a broken heart does when all hopes cease.  
 "Go on caravan against the tempests, walk invincibly to th'end of the Earth,"  
 Thus was speaking now Abou-Mahari, the sublime poet in depth of his heart.  
 "Crack upon my head, ye gales fierce and wild, and ye whirlwinds do crack upon  
 With open forehead I stand before you, do strike at it, I am not afraid. [my head,  
 I shall not return to filthy cities where miscellaneous passions writh and seethe,  
 The bloody cities where atrocious man kills his kind with sword, tears with nail and teeth.  
 You my homeless head, you did quench the fire of your father's home, there you'll  
 return no more;  
 Woe to him who has a home of his own, he's tied there as a dog at his owner's door.  
 Assault ye, o gales on my father's home, demolish, ruin its foundation,  
 And spread its dust all over the Earth, the endless path is my habitation,  
 The love of my heart loneliness alone, the skies over my head are my father's tent,  
 And the caravan is my companion, my resting place is the path without end.  
 You enchanting path forever hidden, fore'er bewitching, my fatherland new,  
 Take me, take my heart that weeps forever, to where human face I shall never view.  
 Among men always you've to be on guard, ready, sword in hand — whoever you  
 meet,  
 — Whether they be your friends or your enemies, — so that you'll not be torn,  
 crushed under their feet.  
 Take away, save me from friends who like thirsty mosquitoes follow you alway,  
 Pursue you while your body still has blood, and when you're dried up, leave you go  
 away.  
 Who has been the cause of my profound wounds? O, my friends only, intimates my  
 dear  
 Who with their kisses did open my heart, did bite me then with their lips insincere.  
 Thousand lies are at the source of kisses of human beings, kisses of a friend,  
 By which are hunted secrets of your heart, you're changed to a slave, before them to  
 And what is a friend or an acquaintance? — A traitor is he, a malignant thief. [bend.  
 In my own soul died a heaven of love, and a brilliant sun of Hope and Belief.

What are intimates, friends of your bosom? They're slanderers, misers, pursuers of  
your pace;  
The dogs which know you, do not bark at you, but men who know you do bark in  
your face."

And the severe gales, like enormous gins, on Abou-Lala's hideous countenance  
Were bursting; making mockery of him, teasing him, trying to check his advance;  
Pulling his turban, hanging from his hems, and in the eyes of Abou-Mahari  
Spreading handful of the desert dust and cutting the thoughts his mind did carry.

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