



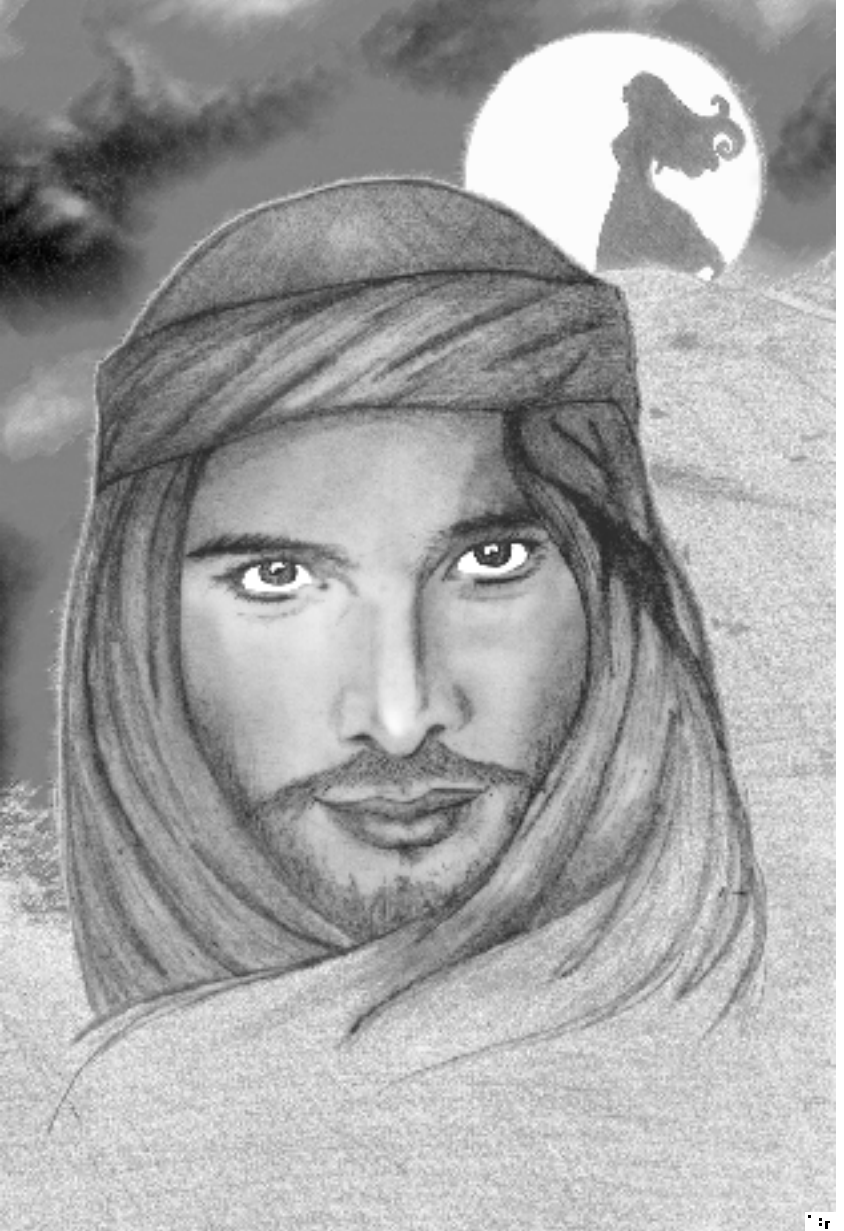
Stories from

Heaven's Library

For Young and Old

The Crescent Jewel

Part 1



Recommended age: 9 years and up. (Parts may be read by younger children at parents' discretion.)

THE CRESCENT JEWEL

Part One

“Professor, I am prepared to offer a handsome dowry for your daughter. You would live in luxury for the rest of your days.” He spoke perfect English, though he was Turkish—but not any Turk. He was a direct relation and emissary of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.*

The professor stiffened. Marrying his daughter to a heathen? No, he would never. “I cannot give my consent. My daughter will have a Christian marriage just as her mother had.”

“Please reconsider. I believe this match has Allah’s blessing, and will benefit both our people.”

Rising from the soft and richly embroidered divan, the professor curtly replied, “There is no changing my mind. I am sorry, but I cannot. Good day.”



The year was 1908. What was left of the declining Ottoman Empire was ruled by Sultan Abduhamid II. Parts of North Africa had been taken by the French, and Egypt had been taken by the British. A large part of Arabia was under the rule of wild Bedouin tribes. The Sheikh of Kuwait had signed a treaty with Britain in 1899, so a contingent of British troops remained there (though the main British base in the Mideast was Cairo). Sultan Abdulhamid II had been in power since 1876 and was greatly disliked. He persecuted religious minorities, especially the Armenian Christians, of whom hundreds of thousands were slain. A group of young military officers had decided to bring him down, and had secretly banded together in 1890. They were commonly known as the Young Turks.



The stars shone brightly in the evening sky. Sergeant McCullock and Private Ian Smith stood watch, guarding the small group of people camped out below in the Kuwaiti desert.

“My, Sergeant, it is a hot night! I

cannot fathom how people can live in countries like this. The only thing that keeps me going is the thought of a cool beer and refreshing rain. Yes, I can hardly wait till it’s time to leave this God-forsaken land.”

“Aye, I ken what you mean, Smith,” replied McCullock.

Around the camp were an assortment of people: Professor Cunningham and his beautiful daughter, Carol; Doctor Roy Tailor and his nephew, Robert Tailor; Mr. and Mrs. Liam O’Connor, an Irish artist and his wife. Then there was Juan Carlo and his sister, Consuelo; the French-Dutch professor Pierre DuCane, and an Indian coolie* they just called Raj. Besides this group, there were Captain Higgins and Sergeant McCullock, Private Smith and Private Sands, and three Bedouin guides: Zaki, Abdul and Faiz.

A strange mixture of people, all united with one goal—the past, and what it held for each of them. Professor Cunningham and Professor DuCane were both archeologists. Doctor Tailor was a student of ancient medicines and remedies and was put-

***emissary**: an agent sent on a mission to represent or advance the interests of another

***coolie**: an unskilled Asian worker

ting together a book on the subject. Mrs. O'Connor was writing about "The Middle East Today and Yesterday," and her husband, an artist, was sketching their trip. Juan Carlo was a Spanish adventurer who, along with his sister, had been on several expeditions to South America, Africa and India.

They had all met at a hotel in Cairo a month earlier and had decided to join together for this expedition.



"Oh, Carol!" came a call.

"Yes," she replied, looking up at Robert Tailor.

"Would you care to come for a short stroll around the camp?"

Carol hesitated a moment. The young Tailor had taken a liking to her, but though she tried, she could not bring herself to return the affection. However, not wanting to be rude, she replied, "All right. I'll just let Father know."

Carol walked over to the tent where her father, Professor DuCane, and Doctor Tailor were discussing various points of Eastern history.

"Excuse me, Father. Mr. Tailor and I will be taking a little stroll around the camp. Is that fine with you?"

Professor Cunningham, as usual when engrossed in conversation, hardly registered what she said.

"Yes, yes, my dear," he answered. "Of course. Off you go now."

Carol smiled. Her father was so predictable. She could ask him almost anything when he was in one of these moods, and he'd agree.

"Let's go, Robert!" she said as she approached him.

The two started off on their walk.

"Evening, ma'am," Private Sands said as they walked by him. "Are you and Mr. Tailor off for a stroll then?"

"Yes. And how is it with you, Sands?" Carol asked.

"All right, ma'am," he replied, pleased that she had remembered his name. "Don't go too far, ma'am. It's easy to get lost in these sands."

"Oh, we'll be fine," said Robert. "We're only going over to the dunes there and back around the other side."

"Fine, sir. I'm sure you will take good care of her. Just mind, you never know what can happen in deserts. Some storms come quick and unexpected, you know!"

Robert smiled and thanked him. Then he whispered to Carol, "These soldiers try to look so brave by making everything seem dangerous. They keep you in a constant state of fear and worry. Actually there is nothing to worry about. There are not many wild Bedouins here, nor religious fanatics."

Carol looked at Robert. He was a very handsome man, but she didn't care much for him. She found him cynical, always finding someone to put down—the Arabs; Raj, their Indian coolie; or poor Sergeant McCulloch, who was often the brunt of his jokes. It was for this reason that Carol found it hard to get on with him, but she made an effort to be courteous and polite.

Carol's mother had been a woman of faith, and had brought Carol up likewise. Her father had seldom been home due to the necessity to travel in his line of work, so most of her life Carol had been raised by her mother. Carol's mother had taught her to study the Bible and to live an active Christian life. The most memorable events for Carol were when she had accompanied her mother in distributing food and clothing to the poor, or helped to care for the orphans who lived on the

streets or in the poorhouses*. As they would care for the physical needs of the poor, Carol and her mother would also always be sure to give them comfort and hope from God's Word.

It had been a great shock and upheaval in Carol's life when, just a few short months ago, her mother had taken ill with tuberculosis, and died shortly afterwards. Her father had returned to organize the funeral and take care of all the financial difficulties resulting from her death. Mother had come from a rich family and had been able to support Father's trips, but now that she had passed on, things looked different. Thankfully Mother's uncle, who was a well-known lawyer, was engaged by her father to run everything and sort out the legalities.

Carol's father was under a lot of pressure to continue on a trip into Arabia. There were already a few people gathered in Cairo waiting for his return, so he proposed to send Carol to his sister Margaret in the countryside. He had been stunned when Carol refused, and had insisted on going to Egypt with him! No amount of arguing and talk of hardship could dissuade her. Although she liked Aunt Margaret, the thought of all the shallow talk, parties and meaningless days was more than she could stand. As a young woman of 19, Carol wanted excitement and adventure. No, her place was with her father.

It had been over two months now since they had left, and Carol now wondered if she had done the right thing. It was not the extreme heat or hardship that brought her this worry, but rather the endless talk of the past and searching for the old, instead of what she thought was important:

man's soul and the living.

"Look!" Robert suddenly exclaimed. "A shooting star!"

Carol looked up quickly in time to see a beautiful light shooting across the heavens as if symbolizing some coming event.

"It's a good omen. Maybe the gods have decreed that we should be together."

Carol stopped in amazement. "What? Well, I'm not so sure of that! I'll have a hand in my own future," she said. "And it won't be any astrological mysticism that decrees it!"

Shocked by her angry reaction, Robert stopped. "By God!" he said. "I never saw you like this, Carol."

"Maybe you never looked far enough. There is more to people than just looks, you know!"

"My, what have I unleashed! Look, Carol, I am most profoundly sorry. Please do accept my apologies. Please forgive me."

Carol, calming down, answered, "Yes, of course. I am sorry I was so strong. I do not usually react like that."

They both looked at each other, then continued their walk quietly.



The next morning, Consuelo came over for breakfast with Carol. They talked endlessly about the many adventures Consuelo had experienced. Carol was very fond of her despite the religious difference (Carol was Protestant, and Consuelo a Catholic). Consuelo often talked about faith and how it was her belief in God and prayer that kept her through her many dangerous expeditions.

"Carol," she said, suddenly lowering her voice to a whisper. "I saw you and

**poorhouse*: housing set up by the government for the homeless

Robert watching the stars last night. Not any romance between you two?"

"No!" laughed Carol. "Just an evening stroll for a little fresh air and exercise. Does you good, you know."

Suddenly a call interrupted the talk. "Carol! Oh, Carol!"

"Yes, Father, what is it? I'm over here with Consuelo," Carol answered.

"Good morning, Consuelo," said the professor, touching his hat. "DuCane has just found some hidden ruins just a few miles away, so we were all going to go over to check them out. Captain Higgins thought, however, that rather than moving the whole camp, maybe a few people could stay with the stuff while the rest of us go on over."

"Sounds good, Father," replied Carol.

"I was wondering if you wouldn't mind staying with young Tailor, and Raj. Private Sands and Sergeant McCullock would also stay."

"Of course, Father," she answered.

"Hmmm, good, good. Right then, so we'll see you this evening for dinner," he said as he walked away.

"I'd better get ready to go," Consuelo said. "We'll talk more later."

Carol nodded.

A few minutes later, Carol and Robert stood watching the group as they headed off into the desert.

"So Carol, what do we do now?" Robert asked.

"How about a nice game of cards, some lunch and a stroll?"

"Sounds good!" he replied.

"I'll ask Raj to prepare our lunch. You get the cards and we'll meet at my tent," Carol said.



"So, Kareem, what do you think?"

"Hmmm. Yes, I must agree she is a veritable beauty, fit for the great

Sultan's harem," he agreed, grinning.

"Shall I dispense with the white soldiers?" Ali inquired, running his finger across his throat to illustrate what he meant.

"No, no deaths," Yousuf replied. "We will take her without the spilling of blood, if Allah wills. Call the others and meet me at the ridge near the overhang."

Within twenty minutes there were six robed Bedouins lying in the sands watching the camp.

"Ah, there! Allah is with us! See! They come to us like the fly to the spider!" said Yousuf, pointing down to Robert and Carol who were walking directly toward where they lay.

"Yes, the two soldiers are stationed at the other end. We will wait. Ali, go and hide in the shadows by the curve. I will go down to the gully and hide there in the sand. Kareem, you keep the horses ready here. It will be quick and bloodless."



(A few minutes earlier:)

"Well, Carol, you are a superb player. That's the last time I'll play with you!"

"Oh, come now, Robert. I think you deliberately lost to me. I'm hopeless at card games!"

Robert smiled, "Well, I don't know what that makes me then."

Carol laughed. "Let's go for a walk now."

"Sounds good," said Robert. "I'll just let the sergeant know."

"Good afternoon, sir," Sergeant McCullock said, greeting Robert. "How are you and the lady?"

"We're fine, thank you. Just wanted to take a little stroll now. Won't be gone for long."

"Aye. Well, it seems all right. sir,

but be mindful not to go too far. You never know about these desert storms that hit you before you know it.”

“Thank you, Sergeant. We’ll keep that in mind. We’ll only be about half-an-hour to an hour. Why not come with us?”

“I’d love to, but I have my responsibilities, sir.”

“Right, good chap. I like a man of principles,” Robert quipped.

As Carol and Robert walked along the dunes they were deeply engrossed in conversation and didn’t see the figure slinking out of the shadows behind them. With one quick blow, Robert fell to the ground unconscious and a hand quickly covered Carol’s mouth, stifling a scream. Two more figures appeared from the shadows and carried her off to a waiting horse. Within a few moments, Carol was being swiftly carried away across the desert sands. ...

Robert came to his senses about 15 minutes later. Realizing what had happened, he began to call for help. Within a few moments, Sergeant McCulloch, Private Sands and Raj were there. As soon as he was able to fill in the sergeant on what had happened, Sands and McCulloch began looking for traces. It didn’t take long to find the signs of the horses and footprints.

“Yes, carried off by Bedouins to God knows what fate,” said Sands, shaking his head.



Up in the Heavenly throne room, Jesus and two angels watched the unfolding drama.

“Everything is lined up according to Your plan,” said one of the angels.

“Good. And I have instructed some special helpers to come and assist Carol for this time. They have already

been briefed on the situation,” the Lord replied.

With a motion from His hand, a stunningly gorgeous woman appeared. “My dear Esther!” Jesus said, greeting her. “Now is the time that Carol needs your help. I have called her to be a light and witness to these people, but the Tempter will try hard to stop My plan.”

“It will be an honor to help her in any way I can,” she replied.

Then a strong and young-looking man entered the room. “Ah, Joseph! I am glad you came.”

“I am happy to be of service, my Lord,” he replied.

“I chose you, Joseph, as you will be able to help Carol adapt to her conditions, seeing you once also suffered kidnapping and being taken to another land where the customs and language were foreign to you.”

“Yes, I will do my best to encourage her and help her. I know just how she feels,” he replied. Joseph recalled specifically that first sleepless night he spent with the traders en route to Egypt after being sold by his brothers—the fear, the uncertainty, the huge knot at the pit of his stomach, the not knowing what was to happen to him next.

In a blink of an eye, Joseph and Esther were hovering beside Carol as she was being carried off into the desert.



Carol endured the long ride in silence, not daring to say a word. No offers of drink or food were made until the next day. Her captors were moving fast and wanted to be out of range of any rescue parties as quickly as they could.

For four more days they traveled, with almost no stops except for a drink

of water and food and a couple hours' rest each night. On the fifth day, at twilight, they arrived at a large Bedouin camp. Carol was physically and spiritually exhausted. Her mind was running wild with all sorts of horror tales she had heard of what could become of her.

The dogs came running, barking and giving warning to the camp. Carol could see children playing, and women busy cooking or mending as she passed them by.

The horses came to a halt, and the Bedouins dismounted. After an exchange of words, Yousuf and Ali disappeared into the camp, while Kareem helped Carol off her horse and escorted her through the camp. Coming to a large tent, he motioned for her to enter.

There were reclining cushions and mats on the floor in the main section of the tent, then there were curtains and tapestries that covered the entrances to adjoining tents and rooms. Kareem pointed to one of the cushions and said something in his native tongue. Carol understood that he wanted her to sit down.

A woman entered through one of the entrances that led to the other tents, and Kareem said something to her. She nodded then left. A few moments later, two men entered the tent. One Carol recognized as one of the other Bedouins who had kidnapped her, and the other she had never seen before.

"This is the woman," Yousuf said. "What did I say? She is beautiful, is she not?"

For a brief moment, shock registered on the man's face. Then, returning to his normal composure, he spoke, "Yes, she is beautiful. I believe the Sultan would be interested in her. I will make the necessary arrange-

ments and pay you handsomely to keep her while I am gone. ... And treat her well. She should have everything she desires."

Yousuf and Kareem nodded.

"Bring some food. She must eat," he continued, motioning to Kareem who disappeared quickly to carry out his request. Kneeling down beside Carol, the man said, "You must be tired and hungry." Carol was shocked that the man spoke English—and so well, even though with a bit of an accent. But she did not reply. Her eyes flashed with the same anger that she had showed to Robert when he had given his interpretation of the shooting star.

"You must not be frightened," he continued. "My name is Ibrahim."

Carol looked into his eyes. They seemed gentle and concerned. From his looks, she guessed that he would be about the same age as her father.

"No harm will come to you. You have my word."

Carol was relieved when she heard those words. Somehow she felt he was sincere and that he meant what he said.

Kareem re-entered the tent with a woman who carried a basketful of figs, dates and nuts. She placed the basket on the floor beside Ibrahim. "Thank you," he said in Arabic to the woman, who bowed a little and then left through a curtain to an adjoining tent.

"Here, taste the food of angels," Ibrahim said, offering Carol some dates.

"Thank you," Carol spoke haltingly. Many questions began running through her mind about who this man was and what they wanted with her, but she thought it best not to ask.

Ibrahim stood up and once again began talking with Yousuf and Kareem in Arabic for some time. Then the two

left the tent. Ibrahim turned to Carol, who had by then finished eating. "You will stay here for a few weeks. I cannot tell you more. But you must rest from your long journey. You will be well taken care of, I promise. Come." The man opened the curtain to the adjoining tent, where the woman who had brought the food and three others were preparing for bed, "They will help you with what you need."

Carol nodded, then entered through the curtain. She turned to look at Ibrahim, but he was gone. The women removed their veils, and Carol saw how pretty they were, with their dark almond eyes and smooth olive-colored skin shining from oil. The women offered her clean clothes and water to wash, and pointed to some cushions on the floor where she could sleep.

After cleaning up, Carol lay down, exhausted. She watched as the women continued to prepare for bed and dim the oil lamps. She guessed that they were talking about her, as they kept looking over at her while chatting together.

Dear God, she prayed silently, help me. Show me why this happened. Why am I here? What is to become of me? Please, if it be possible, get me out of here.

Then exhaustion took over and her eyes closed as she drifted off to sleep.

That night Carol had two dreams. In her first dream, Carol was standing before Jesus and He was pointing to a group of men wearing traditional Muslim dress. He told her: "Many sheep have I in other folds. I have sent you to these, My lost sheep, to bring them to Me. Look not on their appearance nor at their customs, but look on their hearts. There are many who will come to know Me, but I need you."

Then she dreamt of Queen Esther, but in the dream, *she* was Queen Esther living in the palace of the heathen King Artaxerxes.

Shortly before dawn, Carol woke up remembering clearly every detail of her dreams.

Queen Esther was taken from her people and had to live with strangers and even marry a strange king. But the Lord was with her and didn't fail her, Carol mused.

Carol reviewed the whole story of Esther in her mind. The Lord was also quick to remind her of the story of Joseph, and Daniel and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—how they had been taken as slaves to serve in the courts of heathen kings, and how God had mightily used and protected them. This brought her some comfort and she felt a peace come over her.

Carol determined that she would no longer fear the future, but she still worried for her dear father. *Dear Lord, please be with my father and help him. Give him comfort and peace. You must have brought me here for a reason, even though it is not as I would wish. Help me and give me wisdom as You did Queen Esther, Daniel, Joseph, and even the little maid who served Naaman and his wife.*

Carol looked around the tent. It was simple and clean—carpets, cushions, tapestry, rugs, beaded screens. Looking at the sleeping women, she wondered: *Are they slaves? Or wives? Or...?* Her thoughts went to the young English-speaking man. *Strange, in a place like this.* Suddenly a movement broke her train of thought. One of the women woke up and started to dress. She looked over at Carol, smiled, and handed her a veil to put on. The other

women rose and began dressing also. *I must learn as much as I can about these people and their customs while I am here. Dear Jesus, please help me,* she prayed.



It was a sweltering hot day as Professor Cunningham and Robert Tailor sat in the British army headquarters in Kuwait. Captain Higgins was inside filing a report with his commanding officer, Colonel Crawford. They looked rather haggard and worried. Robert did not have his usual carefree attitude and was sharp-tongued with the camp personnel. In the adjoining room, Colonel Crawford was speaking:

"I see, Captain Higgins. It would seem most likely that she has been carted off to some God-forsaken hole as a slave or worse. It will take an absolute miracle to be able to trace her. How is the professor?"

"He's quite devastated, sir," Captain Higgins replied.

"Poor old soul! We can't offer much hope." Colonel Crawford looked out the window. Spotting Tailor outside, he exclaimed, "Don't like the look of that chap. Is this the man you mentioned?"

"Yes, sir. Think he fancied the lady. What happened is a bit of a shock to him and he's taken it badly."

"Hmm ... well, I suppose you need to show them in then. But what of McCulloch, how is he?"

"He took it as his fault, sir. He's a good soldier and he was responsible for her safety. Felt he failed."

"Yes, well, he'd best snap out of it soon. Not much can be done now. Not really his fault. He'll be fine in a few days. Now, show them in, Captain!"

"Yes sir!" said Higgins, saluting his officer.

Higgins soon returned, bringing in the professor and Mr. Tailor.

"Please be seated," said Colonel Crawford. "Dashed sorry about all this." Seeing the lost look in the professor's eyes, he quickly added, "We'll do all we can to get her, professor. It's not very promising, but we'll use every resource possible."

The professor, seeing the hopeless look on their faces, shook his head, then sat up straight. "Thank you, Colonel. I greatly appreciate it, but there is one thing I can do. I can pray for her! You see, my wife was a great believer in the power of prayer. It's something I neglected a lot in the past, but I aim to change that."

Colonel Crawford muttered, "Yes, hmm ... of course. It always helps to pray."

As they left the office, Colonel Crawford shook his head. "Poor man! Guess there is not much he can do but pray, eh, Captain?"



Three weeks went by. Carol spent most of her time with the women. She observed and learned much about how women were expected to behave—with modesty and meekness, as well as the religious and traditional customs they observed. It was strange not to be able to communicate with words, but she followed their gestures and seemed to get along quite well.

It was the afternoon and Carol lay resting in her tent, listening to the commotion outside and men speaking. It seemed as if some people had arrived at the camp and her stomach began to turn in knots. *Where will I be taken now?* she thought. She had not long to wait, for one of the women entered the tent and motioned for her to come. Rising quickly, she covered

herself with the black veil that had become her new attire since she arrived at the camp, and followed her to another tent nearby where a group of men were eating. They glanced at her and then returned to their meal of goat's cheese, milk and flat bread. She was escorted past them into a smaller section of the tent divided by some hanging carpets.

Inside sat three men who Carol had never seen before—and Ibrahim. Carol recognized him at once. He stood next to one of the men sitting on the floor. His name was Süleyman.—A young man, dark, handsome, dressed in fine clothes, and wearing a fez*. He was Turkish, not Bedouin.

He looks very handsome, sitting there in his flowing robes like some prince, Carol couldn't help thinking.

The two other men, an older man with a large flowing beard, and his son, Aziz, were from another Bedouin tribe and had come to do business. They had joined up with Süleyman and Ibrahim along the way for safety while traveling through the desert.

Süleyman motioned for Carol to remove her veil from her face.

The older man spoke in Arabic: "This is the one you have come for? She looks good. Yes, she will soon learn to yield and submit." He smiled a toothless grin.

Aziz, a tall, dark-skinned man with a sinister smile, devoured her with his eyes. "You chose well. She has spirit and passion. I see it in her eyes. She is worth a high price."

"Yes," Süleyman said, as he looked her over, "the woman is very beautiful!"

Aziz laughed. "Maybe you want her yourself! I see it in your eyes."

The older man also laughed.

Süleyman felt anger flood his body and turned away his gaze from the woman. "Watch your words."

The two men then rose and left the tent, leaving the young Turk and Ibrahim alone with Carol.

"You must wonder what all this is about and what will become of you?" To her surprise, Süleyman spoke in perfect English, unlike Ibrahim who spoke with an accent, which caught her by surprise.

"Yes, I do," she answered.

"Yet you show no fear, or hate, or anger," he said.

"I have my faith," she replied. Carol was surprised at how calm she felt. It was because at that moment Esther stood by her side, giving her the wisdom to speak to this man in the right way.

"Hmmm. Yes. It is good you are a woman of faith. Allah, I am sure, will pour on His blessings. Well, I will tell you this much for now—I am to take you on the next part of your journey. There are many days of travel ahead of us. There is nothing to fear. We did not go to all this trouble to harm you."

"May I ask one question?" Carol plucked up the courage to ask.

"Yes, of course," he answered.

"Where did you learn to speak such good English?"

He laughed. "That is easy enough. I learned it at Oxford, in England."

She was stunned for a moment. Then a multitude of questions came to her lips. He signaled with his hand to stop. "Now is not the time for this," he said. "For now that will have to suffice. Another time I will let you know more of both what your future holds and what

***fez:** a man's felt cap in the shape of a flat-topped cone, usually red with a black tassel hanging from the crown, worn chiefly in the eastern Mediterranean region.

you wish to know regarding myself. Our journey will be difficult, so you must rest and prepare. We will leave early tomorrow morning. You may go now.”

Carol bowed her head then left. Though she was not used to showing respect to men in this way, she felt that she should do everything she could to appease and win the favor of her captors. Joseph, who had won the favor and respect of his Egyptian masters when he was a slave, guided her and encouraged her in this area.

As Carol walked back to her tent, she felt the strange sensation that she was being watched. She turned quickly, and was startled to see Aziz eyeing her from the side of one of the tents, covered in the shadows. Lowering her eyes quickly, she walked swiftly to the safety of her quarters.

Carol laid down on her bed and prayed in her heart: *Lord, give me grace for what is to happen! Moment by moment, help me to get through this. I am so uncertain and need Your guidance. This seems to be Your will for me, so please give me the wisdom and faith. Please strengthen my faith. I feel so alone. I only have You, Lord. Please protect me and help me not to be afraid.*



There was another who had also noticed the lustful eyes of Aziz. It was Ibrahim, Süleyman’s trusted servant, tutor and friend. Ibrahim was a Kurd, and his family claimed to be direct descendants of Saladin* himself. He was proud and loyal. Ibrahim was ever watchful. These Bedouins were not his people, nor the people of his master. He did not trust them. He knew that their loyalties were to their tribe and chief,

and could easily be turned from the helping hand they now offered. As his master’s friend and protector, he took it as his responsibility to be ever on guard and keep him close in his care.

But Yousuf and Kareem, they are good men, Ibrahim thought. He could trust them. They were not as the others in the camp. They were loyal friends of Ibrahim and he could count on them no matter what. *This could be dangerous. I don’t like this Aziz! I will have to keep an eye on him*, he thought, as he watched the sinister-looking man slink back into his tent after Carol had returned to her quarters.

Ibrahim then spoke to Süleyman: “I have discussed it with Kareem and Yousuf. They both will accompany us on our journey. I feel they are quite trustworthy.”

“That’s good, Ibrahim. I fully trust your judgment in this. We leave at first light. Make sure everything is ready,” he replied.



Early the next morning, Ibrahim escorted Carol to the waiting camels and horses. They had six camels to carry their supplies and five horses for riding. Yousuf, Kareem and Süleyman were all ready and waiting.

Carol was dressed in Bedouin robes, every part of her body covered.—All, that is, but her sparkling blue eyes, which alone gave away the fact that she was not Arab. Several of the Bedouins in the camp stood nearby, watching as they departed.

Ibrahim helped Carol up on her horse, and then mounted his. Süleyman gave the signal to begin moving. With Kareem leading the

***Saladin**: Sultan of Egypt and Syria who captured Jerusalem in 1187 and defended it during the Third Crusade

way, the caravan set off into the vast ocean of sand.



It had been two days now since the caravan had left the Bedouin camp. They had been traveling hard, and had barely stopped to rest. Traveling in the desert was exhausting. Eventually they came to a shaded waterhole, which was a welcome relief to Carol. As night fell, the small group of travelers sat around the campfire. They took turns telling stories and reciting poems in Turkish and Arabic. Carol looked up into the beautiful starry sky and thought of the Psalm of David: *“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.”*

It seemed so peaceful and the voices of her captors sounded melodic in their recital. She looked at Süleyman, and just as she did, he started to quote a poem, but in English, and he turned to look at her.

“Oh, come with old Khayyam* and leave the wine, to talk. One thing is certain: that life flies. One thing is certain, and the rest but lies.”

Yes, all lies. All is vanity in the world, just as Solomon said, she thought.

“Oh make haste! Ah, love, would thou and I with fate conspire. Would not we shatter to bits and then remold it, near to the heart a desire?”

Carol felt something moving inside her emotions as she looked at Süleyman. She felt uneasy. Her heart was beating faster. Her senses seemed to be reeling. Was it the beauty of the moment? The sky? The poems? She felt almost as if she was being

bewitched. *It can't be*, she thought, rising up and moving away to the edge of the camp. *What is happening to me?*

Süleyman rose and followed her. “Are you well? The day has been long!”

“I ... I am fine. I just was feeling dizzy,” she answered, avoiding his probing eyes.

Then, looking up at him, she said, “It was kind of you to include me in your evening. And it was a beautiful poem you quoted from Omar Khayyam.”

“Ah, poems seem to sink into the soul, do they not?” he replied. “I like Khayyam’s poems of love. I have also read the works of Shelly* and Byron* while at Oxford.”

She stared at this most interesting man. *He’s well educated and seems to have traveled a lot. He must be someone important*, she thought.

Süleyman found his emotions in awl as he looked into her eyes.

Just then, Ibrahim came over and handed Süleyman a flask of water, breaking his gaze.

May Allah help me, Süleyman thought. *There is something about this woman that draws me irresistibly to her.*

Süleyman sat down again by the fire, along with Ibrahim.

“I feel something out there. Someone following us. I sense it!” Ibrahim whispered. And indeed, there was. Out in the darkness, three pairs of eyes were observing all that was happening.



“We should wait till they pass the valley of rock. There are good places there to take them unawares,” Ahmed whispered.

***Omar Khayyam** (1050?-1123): Persian poet, mathematician and astronomer

***Percy Bysshe Shelly** (1792-1822): He is praised as one of the greatest lyricists in English literature.

***George Gordon Byron** (or Lord Byron, 1788-1824): British poet acclaimed as one of the leading figures of the romantic movement. Byron was notorious for his love affairs and unconventional lifestyle. He died while working to secure Greek independence from the Turks.

"It is good. We will go ahead and lay in wait for them," replied Aziz.



The next day was long. As Carol rode under the hot sun, she thoughtfully considered her predicament. She still did not know where they were going or what was to become of her. The suspense was becoming too much to bear. *I must ask him*, she finally decided.

That evening they camped in a *wadi*. Carol mustered up the courage to approach her captor. "We have not been properly introduced. I do not know who you are or where you're from," she said.

"Then I will tell you," he replied. "My name is Süleyman.—And my father is a cousin of the Sultan."

Stunned that Süleyman was a relative of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, she asked: "But what are you doing here with me?"

"I am here to escort the new addition to the great Sultan's harem," he replied, stone-faced.

The shock was almost too much for Carol. Horror, anger and fear all tried to grab hold of her heart. She had tried to prepare herself for the worst, but somehow being faced with this reality was too much for her to handle. Thoughts of some fat ugly Sultan filled her mind. It was like a nightmare. She burst into tears.

"The British government will never stand for this," she sobbed angrily.

"True, if they knew ... but once you are inside the harem, you will never be seen. So who would know?"

Carol looked pleadingly into Süleyman's eyes. He looked away. He could not let his emotions affect him. *How could he be so cruel and unfeeling?* she thought.

Then she heard the Lord's voice in her heart: *My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts. I will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but I will make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.*

Carol struggled within herself. How could she believe those words when it seemed that it was more than she could bear? Carol quickly got up and ran a distance away. Throwing herself on the sand, she let out all the emotions that had been pent up inside of her since she had been captured. The tears flowed down her cheeks.

Unbeknownst to her, Esther was right beside her, stroking her hair. "I know just how you feel," she whispered. "But it is true! God has a plan for you. He *will not* give you more than you are able to bear."

At that moment, Süleyman was also filled with conflicting emotions. His heart was pulling him to this woman. Yet his duty was to bring her to the Sultan. But there was something else. He, too, had a strong feeling that there was danger, just as Ibrahim had felt the night before.

Unable to shake this impression, he called Ibrahim. "I want you to go and scout out the area," he told him. "Be careful."

A few minutes later, Ibrahim disappeared into the darkness.



The following morning, Ibrahim returned with news of a camp of Bedouins not more than a few miles down.

"It is Aziz and eight others with him," Ibrahim reported.

Süleyman gathered his party together to discuss what their plan should be. "We cannot hope to outfight them,"

**wadi*: Arabic for a canyon or valley

he said. "But let them think that we have parted ways. You, Yousuf, will dress as the girl, and Kareem, you will dress in my clothes. Ibrahim, you go with them and take the camels, but not through the valley. Instead, go out across the open desert where it is not easy to follow unseen. Meanwhile, I will take the woman—we will dress in Kareem's and Yousuf's clothes—and head back as though we are returning home. As soon as we are out of sight, we will double back and head for Al Basrah, and then on to Baghdad, where we will meet you again."

They all were pleased with this plan and prayed Allah would grant His blessing upon it.



Peace had come to Carol's heart. She had gotten over the initial shock of the news, and the Lord was able to comfort her by reminding her of his promises. Closing her eyes, Carol recited Psalm 23. *...Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me ...* and Psalm 27 *... The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*

Süleyman's voice interrupted her thoughts as she sat in the shade of a rock. "Carol, we must leave soon. We cannot wait," he said. Handing her Yousuf's clothes, he continued, "Here, put these on."

Carol noticed that he had changed into Bedouin clothes, and was wearing the traditional Bedouin headdress instead of his fez.

Seeing the questioning look on Carol's face, he proceeded to explain to her the situation and what they were to do.

"I will be ready in a few minutes," she replied calmly.

"Tell me," he said, sitting down next to her. "Why have you made no effort to escape?"

"What would it avail?" she said. "I do not know the country. It would be pointless. I put my trust in God. He has His hand on my life," she replied.

Süleyman was filled with admiration for this woman and her courage. She was not as those he had met while studying in England. Her faith impressed him. In the short time that he had been with her on this journey, he had often seen her in prayer. He greatly respected this, and it made him think even more highly of her.



Aziz was sitting in his tent brooding, when his servant entered. He revealed to him that the party had divided, with the two Bedouins returning to their home and the other three turning off into the open desert.

"He thinks he is so clever, does he? Ahmed, you follow from a distance. Meanwhile, we will head off across their path. If we reach the oasis before them, we can take them."

Quickly, they packed up their camp and headed out. But after two days, a head scout brought word to Aziz that a great storm was approaching. Within the hour, they were caught up in a violent sandstorm that lasted for three days. After the storm, they found they had lost all traces of the three they had been following. Angry and disappointed, Aziz turned back to head to his own lands.

"I swear by Allah that I will not let it rest here. I will yet find this woman!" he said, looking off into the distant sands.



Carol felt a mixture of emotions as she traveled alone with Süleyman.

She was filled with excitement, fear, and romance. Though she felt strangely attracted to Süleyman, she could not understand how he could be so heartless as to treat her like a piece of property that could be bought and sold.

As they traveled, Süleyman remained silent. She was the Sultan's, and he could not entertain thoughts of otherwise. It was better to keep his distance, he reasoned, for if he talked to her, then he feared his emotions would overwhelm him.

As they continued along the road to Al Basrah, suddenly a sense of danger came upon him. He dismounted and motioned for Carol to do the same. Carol looked questioningly at him. He put his finger to his lips and motioned to the nearby rocks. Quietly they made their way to the large boulders on foot, leading their horses behind them.

Süleyman took his cloak off and used it to sweep the ground round about them, removing any tracks or telltale signs. All was still and quiet. Then they could hear the sound of horses approaching their hiding place. They watched as a band of 12 men made their way past them.

"Wandering tribesmen and robbers," said Süleyman. "These roads are full of them. We must be careful."

They waited until he was sure that it was safe again, and then they continued on their journey.

Carol studied her captor as they rode together. She had heard so much about the Turks and their slaughter of the Armenian Christians. Now here she was destined to be a wife of a Turk. *How could this be God's will?* Then, as if in answer to her question, she remem-

bered again the story of Esther, and how because of her position and favor with the king, she was able to help her people and save them from slaughter at the hands of their enemies. *Is this God's calling for me? Oh, why must I always doubt? she thought. I feel so incapable and small. I just can't see how God can use me.*

Esther then spoke softly to Carol's heart, comforting her and reminding her of God's promises.

In the evening, as Süleyman and Carol sat by the fire after having eaten, Carol felt emboldened and asked: "Süleyman, you are a Muslim. You follow the teachings of your Prophet. Why then do you persecute my people, the Christians?"

Süleyman, surprised by her question, was silent. Then he spoke. "You have very complicated questions. I cannot say I know why. For many years there has been freedom within our Empire. Our sultans have always permitted freedom of faith, whether for Jews or for Christians within our land. Yet, Abdulhamid has persecuted the Armenians, it is true. I may not agree, but it is not my place to question the Sultan."

"But you see that it is wrong," Carol said.

"There is much in my country that troubles me. I see, as you mention, intolerance and hate. This is not as the Qu'ran teaches. I see greed and immorality. There is talk of rebellion. The people are not content. The future is only one of bloodshed. But who am I to change the future? I cannot hope for change," he said.

"There are many Christians, too, where I come from, who are intolerant," Carol replied. "But this is not what Jesus taught us. In the Bible,

Jesus told the story of a man who was traveling from a city called Jericho, a Samaritan. These were people despised by the Jews. ...”

Carol told Süleyman the story of the Good Samaritan. Then, finishing, she said: “The lesson Jesus wanted us to learn is that all men are our neighbors and that we need to love them regardless of religion or race.”

“This reminds me of a poem I read from one of your English poets, Leigh Hunt*, about how our love for others is important in God’s eyes,” said Süleyman. “Would you like to hear it?”

“Yes, please go ahead!” Carol replied.

“Abou Ben ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)

Awoke one night from a great dream of peace,

And saw, within the moonlight in his room,

Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,

An angel writing in a book of gold;

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,

And to the presence in the room he said,

‘What writest thou?’—The vision raised its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord,

Answered, ‘The names of those who love the Lord.’

‘And is mine one?’ said Abou.

‘Nay, not so,’

Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low

But cheerily still, and said, ‘I pray thee, then,

Write me as one that loves his fellow men.’

The angel wrote, and vanished.

The next night

It came again with a great wakening light,

And showed the names whom the love of God had blessed.

And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest!”

“It’s a beautiful poem,” Carol said.

Süleyman continued: “Our holy book, the Qu’ran, also tells us to be kind and give to those in need. This is the same as your book teaches.”

“Yes, Jesus gave us two simple commandments, to love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

Süleyman listened in quietness, then replied, “The words you speak are like words of light to my heart. They bring understanding to my mind. Tell me more of these words of Jesus. In my religion we always looked on Jesus as a great Prophet, and this is why we respect the People of the Book. For during the reign of our sultans we have generally permitted both Christians and Jews to practice their faith, with a few exceptions throughout the centuries. It is sad, but often rulers let politics, power or other corrupting influences come between them and the Word of Allah. But what can one do in such a case? Do we rebel and cause revolt in the country?”

“God has told us to obey the powers that be. Jesus lived and preached under Roman rule. They were idol worshippers and yet He did not try to destroy their authority. He showed them love. That is a weapon that few use. It has power that can destroy the empires of man. Look what happened to the Roman Empire! It was conquered through the faith and love of the Christians.”

“Hmm ... what you say is true. The

*Leigh Hunt: (1784-1859), English poet and essayist

sword is indeed weak in comparison to the Word of Allah,” Süleyman replied, in thoughtful meditation.



Some days later, Süleyman and Carol arrived in Al Basrah. They met up with some other travelers who were heading to Baghdad. They joined them for safety. While traveling with them, Carol wondered if she should tell them of her kidnapping and see if they would help her. She decided to ask the Lord about it.

Silently she prayed, *Dear Jesus, I know You have told me what has happened is Your will, part of Your plan for me. But is it Your plan for me to try and make an escape now? Should I ask these travelers for help?*

Esther reminded Carol of the verse, “Art thou called to be a servant? Seek not to be loosed.”

Carol took that to mean that she should not take matters into her own hands, but continue on with Süleyman.

That night after their meal, Süleyman asked Carol many questions about Jesus and His words from the Bible. Then he asked her about herself and her family. Carol told him of her mother’s faith and love, of the changed lives she had seen due to her mother’s prayers.

Süleyman was very interested and listened intently to her words. He felt himself being drawn to her like a moth is drawn to the candle. Carol felt that this was the moment she should offer the gift of salvation to him. *I can at least try*, she thought.

“Süleyman, Jesus is God’s Spirit of love, and He will come in to your heart and fill your life with blessings, if you want Him. All you need to do is believe on Him.”

Carol was surprised at how effortlessly the words flowed from her mouth. Little did she know that Esther was right there with her, giving her the words to say and the wisdom in how to present it so that Süleyman could relate and understand.

Süleyman, overwhelmed by the Spirit, nodded. Over the past days, the sample of her faith and courage and lack of fear had impressed him. This sample spoke to him more than any of the words she had spoken.

“Yes, I believe,” he answered. “I want the same peace and light you have. If it is this Jesus Who gives you this, then I believe.”

As he spoke those words, Süleyman felt a great peace come upon him. Looking up to the heavens, he saw a star shooting across the sky.

“Look!” he said. “A sign from Heaven!”

Carol looked up and remembered that night when she and Robert had stood in the desert sands watching a star shooting across the sky. *Was God also giving me a sign then ... that my life would soon change so drastically?* she wondered.

“Tell me more about the Bible and Jesus,” Süleyman implored, in simple sincerity.

For hours after, Carol told him about the life of Jesus, the miracles He did and the parables He told. The only Bible she had to go on was what she had memorized and could remember. How thankful she was for her mother, who had so faithfully instilled the Word into her heart as a young child!



At that moment, Joseph and Esther were rejoicing at the victory won. “That’s my girl!” Esther said proudly.

“Little do either of them know that that one decision Süleyman made to accept the Lord is the important catalyst* that will bring about the Lord’s plan for both of them, and affect many lives,” Joseph commented to Esther.

Just then, a message came through. “Good work!” Jesus said, congratulating them and the team of angels and spirit helpers on the scene. “This is cause for celebration!”

Instantly Joseph and Esther appeared in the court of the of Lord. Jesus smiled and toasted a drink: “To Süleyman and Carol, and the mission they will embark upon!”

“To Süleyman and Carol!” they chimed, raising their glasses high in affirmation.



The following morning, Süleyman was deeply distressed. He had hardly slept during the night.

“Carol,” he said as soon as he saw her, “I am much troubled in spirit. For now that I believe as you, how can I bring you to the Sultan? Yet if I let you go, my father could suffer for it. How would I explain it? I am obligated to bring you to the Sultan. I have no choice. I am confused. What should I do?”

“You must fulfill your duty,” Carol replied. “I do not hold it against you. If it is God’s will for me to become part of the Sultan’s harem, then who am I to stand against it? If it is not, then He will make a way of escape.” Carol was surprised at her words. Did she really believe that? She wanted to with all her heart.

Süleyman was a little disappointed. Somehow he had secretly hoped that she would have asked him to help her

escape. Though he did not understand quite how she could be so positive about this, he agreed. But it was difficult for Süleyman, because his heart now troubled him. He had fallen in love with Carol and could not bear the thought of her being given to the Sultan. He was being torn in agony within, yet he did not dare reveal this to her.

No, he would suffer in silence. *Did not the Sufis* say that suffering brings out the spiritual? Many poets speak of the broken heart—the suffering that brings closer communication with God. Yes, I must bear it in quietness.*



When the group of travelers arrived in Baghdad, Süleyman and Carol made their way to the place where Süleyman had arranged to meet with Ibrahim and the others.

“Ibrahim!” Süleyman shouted as he spotted his friend and faithful servant among the crowd. “Allah be praised, you have made it safely!”

“Yes, it was His will,” replied Ibrahim with a great smile. Süleyman looked at his friend. He was overjoyed to see him again. Then Ibrahim looked at Carol and said in Turkish: “Ah, you are ever radiant, like a fountain of Allah’s love!”

Carol, who on her journey with Süleyman had come to learn some Turkish, blushed.

“Be careful. The lady understands our language now,” he said in English and laughed, looking at Süleyman.

Süleyman, feeling a little discomforted, said with a sheepish look, “We could speak Kurdish.”

Ibrahim laughed again.

“But tell me, what happened to those who were following us?”

***Sufis:** Islamic sect

***catalyst:** something that brings about a process or event

Süleyman asked.

Ibrahim then related his tale in English, for the benefit of Carol who stood beside them, of what had happened after they had separated.

“Aziz followed us as we expected he would. Then a great storm fell. We were blessed by Allah to find shelter in an old ruin till the storm passed. We waited a day after the storm before continuing our journey. We saw no trace of Aziz or his men after that time. They either perished in the storm or they turned back. We have been in Baghdad these past two days.”

Süleyman listened, meditating on Ibrahim’s words. *So, Aziz is gone. The remaining journey by train will be smoother. Yes, soon we will be in Istanbul*. This was their destination and the home of the Sultan.

Ibrahim then took Süleyman

aside, and spoke. “You are my friend. There is no brother who could be closer than you. I see in your eyes the light of love. Would you betray your Sultan for love?”

“If it was the will of Allah, yes!” replied Süleyman.

“Ah, I see ... if it was the will of Allah. And do you think it is the will of Allah? Or is it your will that directs you?”

“That, my friend, is what troubles me, for I know not the answer.”

“Then,” replied Ibrahim, “leave it with Allah, for He is good and gracious. Let Him put together the puzzle.”

“And if His will differs from the Sultan’s?” asked Süleyman.

“Then you will find my sword beside you to back you,” smiled Ibrahim.

“Thank you, Ibrahim,” Süleyman said. “I knew I could count on you.”

“This woman is special, Süleyman,”



***Istanbul:** The largest city of Turkey, in the northwest part of the country. The city was founded c. 660 B.C. as Byzantium, then renamed Constantinople in A.D. 330 by Constantine the Great, who made it the capital of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire. The city was sacked by Crusaders in 1204 and taken by the Turks in 1453. Istanbul was chosen as the official name in 1930, though the Turks had called it Istanbul since the 15th century.

Ibrahim stated. "Allah has His hand on her. Fear not for her safety."

"Yes," said Süleyman. "She is special. She has a trust in God I find hard to comprehend. This Jesus of hers is different. His love is all-reaching."

"Ah yes, the great Healer, the Miracle-worker! I have met many of His followers," said Ibrahim. "The true followers are not like those we often meet who give but token obeisance. Yes, I have seen those of faith stand strong in death at the point of the sword. My cousin was saved from certain death in Baghdad by the prayers of a Christian healer. Yes, their faith is strong. There is much to learn from them."

Interrupting his train of conversation, Ibrahim pointed, "Look, here comes Yousuf from the market. Come, now is the time to eat and forget all these cares."

That evening, as the group ate together, they exchanged stories of romance and courage, as well as stories of faith and love. Ibrahim was a treasure house of stories, and Carol loved to hear them, while Süleyman loved the stories Carol told of Ruth and Naomi, King David and Bathsheba, and Samson and Delilah. Süleyman translated the stories into Arabic so that Yousuf and Kareem could understand, as well as translated the stories they told into English for Carol.

As they laughed and talked that night, Carol realized how much she had fallen in love with Süleyman. But it seemed like an impossible situation.—And she didn't know if he loved her too, though at times she was sure she could see it in his eyes when he looked at her.



Entering Istanbul, Carol thought it was quite different from Baghdad. It was

a beautiful city, bustling with life—different sights, sounds and smells than she had ever experienced before. Süleyman showed her around and explained the history behind every place they passed. On the streets there were Turks, Kurds, Albanians and many other nationalities dressed in their traditional costumes. Some men wore swords strapped to their sides, while soldiers carried rifles. Camels and donkeys with their masters walked among the crowds.

Finally they arrived at the great Palace of the Sultan—a large enclosure with many palaces and beautiful gardens. Süleyman and his family also lived there. There was heavy artillery and many armed soldiers around the palace walls, but inside it was a beautiful and exquisitely decorated place. There were dancing acrobats and jugglers, musicians and dancers, poets and singers, entertaining in halls of marble and mosaic tiles. It was unbelievable—another world to Carol who had lived in the city of London most of her life. She thought of how Daniel must have felt when living in the courts of the king, or Joseph in Pharaoh's court.

Süleyman took Carol to where the Sultan's harem was kept. Leaving her to the charge of the head eunuch of the harem, Süleyman took his leave. There could be no emotion between them at their parting, but Carol had to hold back her tears as she looked at him one last time before he left. For all she knew, it would be the last time she would ever see him again.

Inside the harem, the walls were covered with bright and intricate tapestries and carpets. There were incensed rooms smelling of heavenly aromas, rooms with embroidered curtains and

beaded curtains, silken cushions and golden and silver ornaments. Huge muscular stone-faced eunuchs stood guard everywhere.

The head eunuch escorted Carol to a private room aside from all the bustling activity, and instructed some maidservants to tend to her. She had no time to indulge in her sorrow, for the maidservants began tugging at her, and though she could not fully understand what they were saying, she understood that they wanted her to undress and wash. Slowly, she took off the dust-covered clothes she had been traveling in for the last few weeks. Her skin was caked in dirt and grime and she was happy to feel the refreshing water as she stepped into the bath.

Meanwhile, after leaving Carol at the harem, Süleyman immediately inquired of his father's whereabouts. He was informed that he was traveling with the Sultan and was due to be back within a week or two. There was nothing he could do but wait.

Süleyman retired to his quarters that evening, distressed and in despair. Nothing Ibrahim could say or do would lighten his heavy heart.



Two weeks later, Süleyman's father returned. The Sultan, however, did not, but was to stay away for another seven to ten days.

After his father had rested a little, Süleyman was summoned to meet with him in their old library that evening.

As Süleyman entered the room, he felt a little uneasy. His father greeted him. "My son, it is good to see you. Please be seated."

His eyes were piercing and unnerving. As his father began to question him about his journey and the

foreign woman, who he had told him was to be the Sultan's concubine, Süleyman stumbled over his words and was not his usual confident self. His father seemed not to notice this and did not react to his uneasiness.

After an hour—which to Süleyman seemed more like three hours—his father, seemingly satisfied, excused himself and left.

What his father did not tell Süleyman was that he had already spoken with Carol.



(Earlier that morning:)

Carol had been surprised at first that Süleyman's father spoke English as fluently as his son did, but then she remembered that Süleyman had told her he was well traveled and fluent in not just English, but five other languages. Carol found him a pleasant man, with the same handsome features and winsome smile that she loved so well in Süleyman.

"It has been most interesting to have conversed with you," Süleyman's father said at the end of their conversation, then rose to leave. "Yes, most enlightening indeed!"

Carol thought she saw the shadow of a smile form on his face as he turned to leave, but decided it was only a trick of the light. But upon leaving the room, Süleyman's father whispered something to the head eunuch.

Moments later, Carol was ushered to another part of the palace grounds and was shown into a large room with a king-sized bed, throw rugs and a divan, a dressing room and a bath, and a beautiful balcony overlooking a flower garden.

"You will be living here now," the eunuch briefly stated. "Your maidservants will be bringing your belong-

ings.” He left before she had a chance to ask what was happening, though she was quite used to following along without question by now.



(Back to the present:)

For the past two weeks, Süleyman had been in constant turmoil of spirit, his heart yearning for Carol, but his duty plain to him. Every time he thought of her, he was filled with visions of what could have been. It was as though his mind was drugged. He was intoxicated with her lively spirit, her gentle eyes, and the winsome manner in which she spoke.

After his father’s exit from the room, Süleyman prayed, “Allah, help me. What do I do?”

Getting up to leave the old library, he had a sudden urge to open the door to the adjoining room. It had been his mother’s room, though since she had passed away many years ago it had remained empty. Opening the door, he glanced around. At once he noticed that the décor had changed. He had not long to wonder, though, for through the beaded tapestry, he saw a young woman standing out on the balcony, the moonlight reflecting on her soft features. The sight of her took his breath away for a moment.

She is like an angel, he thought. *Could it be...?*



(Moments earlier:)

Carol had just finished taking her evening bath. The maidservants had brought her linens and newly acquired wardrobe that afternoon. After a light dinner, which had been served to her in her room, the maidservants had not returned. Carol still had no idea

what was happening.

Maybe this is the next step in preparing me to meet the Sultan, she thought. Carol had not seen Süleyman since she had been taken to the harem two weeks before and had almost given up the thought of ever seeing him again. But she still held on to a flicker of hope that something would happen, though she had no idea what.

As she dressed, Carol looked around at the exotic décor, which was still as fascinating to her as the day she arrived. *It’s like being a part of the ‘Arabian Nights’*, she thought, half-expecting a flying carpet to appear at any moment, or a genie to jump out of one of the many oil lamps in the room. She passed by a mirror and stopped to look at herself. She wore a purple gown embroidered at the edges, a gold chain upon her head with a small coin dangling down her forehead. Her wrists and ankles also had chains of gold. The gown was made of fine silk from China.

I look like some princess out of a fairy tale, she thought, half-laughing. Thinking of her old friends and life in England, it was still hard to imagine it was real. It was as if she had been transported into another world.

Carol walked out onto the balcony and looked at the full moon shining down, casting a silvery glow on everything. She closed her eyes and began to think of Süleyman, of the night he had quoted to her the poem, of their trip through the mountains together, of the first time they had met in the tent. ... Her heart began to beat faster as she thought of him. Suddenly, sensing there was someone near, she opened her eyes and started a little, as there, standing in front of her, was

***Arabian Nights:** a collection of stories from Persia, Arabia, India and Egypt compiled over hundreds of years. They include the stories of Ali Baba, Aladdin and Sindbad the sailor

Süleyman, dressed a beautiful turquoise robe, and his head covered in a blue turban with gold trimmings.

Süleyman felt his heart racing. He could not believe what he was seeing. *It's as if this is a dream.*

Neither spoke a word, but both felt allured as if a magnetic force was pulling them closer together. They saw in each other's eyes something that was compelling. Embracing passionately, their lips and souls were joined in one unforgettable moment together—a perfect moment of love.

Carol's eyes were sparkling and alive, inviting and irresistible.

Süleyman was overcome with emotion. "Now I understand what Shelly meant when he wrote: 'Soul meets soul on lovers' lips.'" He stroked her hair gently.

Carol clung to his breast as it heaved irregularly. "I love you, Süleyman. Every day my heart has ached, not knowing whether I would see you again or not."

"I have feelings for you that I never thought possible," he whispered. "And now Allah has brought you to me."

The night was not long enough and the day dawned too quickly for the two lovers who spent the hours in each other's embrace. All the passion and emotion that they had been suppressing until now, the words that had not been spoken, overflowed without restraint.



The following morning, Süleyman's father called for him.

"Süleyman, I have something to say to you. Please sit with me."

Süleyman was not sure what his father was going to say next, but he was more than curious to find out the answers to his questions: Why had

Carol not been given to the Sultan? What was she doing in their house? What were his father's intentions?

Süleyman's father continued, "The Sultan has just married a new wife. Carol is not obligated to be given to him. The reason the Sultan is delayed is because he is spending time away with his new wife at this moment. There is no need to even bring to his attention Carol's arrival, other than as our guest!" He raised his eyebrows, as if expecting some sort of reaction.

"Father! Why ... it ... it is the answer to my prayer."

"Ah, yes, prayers! They are very powerful, my son! Your mother was a great believer and well practiced in prayer. That is another reason I wish to speak to you, as there is something I have long wished to share with you.

"In my youth, I was well-traveled as you know, for my father was Ambassador Extraordinaire of the Sultan and was often called upon to live abroad. Due to this, I was exposed to many different ways of life and governments different from our own. This instilled in me a desire for change.

"When I lived in Greece with my father, I met your mother. She was Armenian. As there was much evil being thought of towards Christian Armenians then, we always kept this secret. We were able to save many of her people during the great persecution of 1894 to 1896. As you know, many thousands of Christians were slaughtered then, but your mother and I were able to help many escape. When she became ill and died when you were just a boy, it was a great shock to me. I lost the dearest treasure of my heart. I always wanted you to know, but I felt the time was not

right until now. I sent you to school in England so you could learn to be a help to your people, my son.

“God’s ways are different from ours. Your mother was a woman of faith. She encouraged me to use my influence in this country to help the needy, the poor and the persecuted. I could not openly confess my Christian faith, but I could put it into action by living a loving life. There is probably more I could have done if I had had more faith, but at least I have done what I could.

“Ibrahim, our faithful servant of many years, has also believed, and has been a right hand to me. These past years he has been my eyes and ears, my counselor and helper. His devotion and loyalty are without question. He took upon himself the job of watching over you and being your instructor and guard.

“I wanted you to have a Christian woman as a wife, as I did, Süleyman. This woman, Carol, she is special.

“When I was in Cairo some months ago, I had seen this woman with her father in the hotel I was staying at. The following night, Allah gave me a dream that she was to be your wife. I offered a proposal of marriage to her father, but he refused.”

“So you kidnapped her?” Süleyman asked pointedly.

“No, my son. I gave it into Allah’s hands. I thought no more of it. But one month later, the Bedouins kidnapped her to sell her. It was not by chance,

but the will of Allah that Ibrahim had been sent to this Bedouin tribe on business, and when he saw her, he realized it was the same woman I had seen in Cairo. When he reported this to me, I took this as a sign from Allah. I sent you to get her, for I thought if Allah had willed this union, then He would put the love in both of your hearts.

“But why did you tell me she was for the Sultan?”

“Would you have accepted if I told you she was for you?”

Süleyman thought for a moment. No, he probably would have never gone if his father had not assigned him the mission as business for the Sultan.

“You see, my son,” his father said. “I may be an old man but I see the twinkle in the eyes. No, my eyes do not deceive me. I see love shining bright in both your eyes! She is your bride! The one of God’s own choosing. She is for you, my son!”

Süleyman was speechless. His heart was rejoicing. His mind was awlirl.

His father got up to leave. Süleyman had much to think about. He would give him time alone.

“I am an old man, Süleyman, my time will soon be finished. I see trouble coming. There is much discontent here in this land. Süleyman, you are the future. This woman will give you what you need to bring peace in time of need. Together you could bring much to our troubled land.”

To be continued...



Stories from

Heaven's Library

For Young and Old

The Crescent Jewel

Part 2



Recommended age: 9 years and up. (Parts may be read by younger children at parents' discretion.)

THE CRESCENT JEWEL

Part Two

It was a lot for Süleyman to take in all at once, to realize that his mother was a Christian and his father also a secret believer; that Carol had never been intended for the Sultan, but for him. His emotions were in a whirl. What was he to do now? If God had a plan for his life, then what was it? These and many other questions filled Süleyman's mind.

After much reasoning within himself, Süleyman concluded: "It is enough to take one step at a time. I will take Carol for my wife—but only if she will have me. I will not force this upon her, for if it is truly the will of Allah she will choose to stay."

Having decided this, Süleyman chose to wait till the following morning to speak with Carol concerning these things.



Carol communed with her dearest Lord in her heart as she walked among the fresh blooms in the garden. She recalled the words that Süleyman had spoken to her that morning. She could hardly believe what Süleyman had said...

"Now that you are no longer for the Sultan, you are free to return to England and to your father. I will do everything I can to help you if that is your desire."

My desire... Yes, if she had been told this when she had first been captured, she would have accepted his offer without much thought. But now ... the cords of love were secured fast and she could not think of leaving the man she had grown to love dearly. ... And what of the Lord's desire? *Lord, I want Your will for me. What is it You want me to do?*

Carol recalled the rest of her conversation with Süleyman...

"What do you mean by, 'if that is your desire'?" she asked.

"I cannot hide my love for you. It burns as the sun on the desert sands. If you would be my wife I would love and cherish you as the Earth does the gentle rain from heaven."

Carol had kissed him gently, then

moved her lips to speak, but Süleyman touched them lightly with his hand.

"Do not speak, my love. I want you to think on this before you answer. I want you to make a decision you will not regret. Take as much time as you need, then come to me with your answer." Then he left, leaving Carol to her thoughts. ...

The pebble-strewn pathway Carol walked on wended past a small pond filled with fish full of exquisite colors. She looked at her reflection in the water. Not only had her outward appearance changed, but *she* had changed as well. *I don't think I could go back to living the way I did before, after all I've been through.* Visions of the young Robert Taylor filled her mind—endless card games, shallow conversation, the rigidity, the stuffiness of it all. Carol chuckled a little. There could be no comparison.

Then there was her work in the slums. Her heart went out to the young orphans, the poor and forgotten, of which there were so many in the filthy streets of London. *Lord, am I to help my own people as my mother did, or those in this land, who I know nothing about? Their culture and ways are*

so different from my own. Their religion is different. How can I help these people if I stay?

Carol thought on all that had happened so far, and the amazing coincidence that Süleyman's father had seen her in Cairo, and had even asked her father if she would be his son's bride. *My father never told me of the encounter. But now that I think of it, he did act strangely after we arrived in Cairo, not letting me go anywhere out of his sight. I thought he was just being overly protective.*

No, it wasn't a coincidence either that Ibrahim had happened to be at the right place at the right time. Yes! She could see the Lord's hand in all that had happened to lead her to this. The Lord's voice spoke to her heart: "This is your destiny. You are to be My jewel in this kingdom, to sparkle and reflect My light to those who have none. Cherish the love you have with Süleyman, for it is My love that I place in both your hearts."

Carol rejoiced. "Yes, I will be his wife. Yes! Yes!" she said over and over again as she skipped gaily back to the house.



"Michael," Jesus said, summoning the Archangel. "I want you to delay the return of the Sultan until well after the wedding of Süleyman and Carol. It would be better that he does not see Carol, or the Enemy could use him to try to disrupt the union of these two according to My plan."

"At once, Lord!" came Michael's immediate reply, as he sped off to do the Lord's bidding.

Esther beamed with happiness. Things were going well, and Carol was

very attentive to her leading and whispers. Carol thought much of the time it was her own thoughts, but they were more often than not inspired by the heavenly helpers she had guiding her, that were giving her the feelings, thoughts and words to say.

Joseph, who had been on the team up until now, took his leave, for his part of the assignment with Carol was over.



Süleyman could not express his happiness when Carol gave him her answer. "I will marry you," she said. "Your people will be my people, and I will love you and stand by you for as long as I live."

He embraced her passionately. "My love, I will give you a new name, Johara*, for you are a rare and precious jewel given to my care by Allah Himself." Süleyman gently touched her flushed cheek with his fingers, as he looked deeply into her eyes. "When I first saw you, your crystal-blue eyes sparkled like sapphires, just as they do now."

And so Carol was now Johara, the wife-to-be of Süleyman, the Sultan's cousin.



"Johara ... it's a beautiful name. It's taking a while to get used to, though," she said to herself as she finished getting dressed. Today was the day of their wedding. Last-minute preparations were underway. Guests had arrived from all over the land. The Sultan had been delayed due to unrest in another part of the country, but his brother Muhammad and the Mufti* of Istanbul, the Seyhülislâm*, would be present for this festive occasion.

***Johara:** Arabic, meaning "jewel"

***Mufti:** Islamic religious judge

***Seyhülislâm:** title for the Ottoman Empire's foremost legal authority

Johara entered a large room filled with presents of fine silks and jewels—all wedding gifts. It was unbelievable to think that she was being treated as a princess. *If my father could see me now.* She smiled to herself as she thought of what his reaction would be. *I hope he gets my letter.* Johara had wrote her father and sent it to their address in England, hoping it would somehow get to him. In her letter she did not tell him the details of where she was, nor of her marriage to Süleyman, for it seemed best not to at the time.

The door swung open, and in strode Ibrahim. He approached Johara with a low bow.

“Süleyman has sent me to inform you that the Mufti and the Sultan’s brother Muhammad have arrived, and are being entertained in the Grand Room. Your presence is requested.”

Covering her face with a veil, she followed Ibrahim to the Grand Room. As she entered, the Mufti looked up at her. From his glance, she could see that he did not approve of her, but he smiled and gave a verbal greeting as Süleyman introduced her. Afterwards, Süleyman’s father continued to converse with Muhammad and the Mufti, while Süleyman spoke quietly to Johara on the side.

“My love, I am so happy to see you. This afternoon the Mufti will give his blessing before the guests. The Sultan’s brother, Muhammad, will represent the Sultan.”

Her part during the wedding was simple. She was to remain quiet and submissive as the men handled all the talking. Unless she was addressed by someone else, she remained silent. There were plenty of servants to handle all the catering and needs for the occa-

sion, so this gave Johara a good opportunity to observe and learn.

From her vantage point in the room, Johara was able to see all the guests as they arrived. Esther and her team of guardians positioned themselves at her side, whispering to her and giving her insight into each guest as they entered the room.

Johara glanced over to where Süleyman’s father talked with Muhammad and the Mufti. A voice seemed to ring in her ears: “Watch out for the Mufti. He is a sly character and dangerous. Muhammad is as a reed blown in the breeze—today he sways this way and tomorrow the other way. Be careful of him, for as the chaff, he will fly with the winds.”

Into the room came Mustafa, a chief guard of Süleyman’s father. He was young and strong-looking. His hair was long and black, and his skin a beautiful shade of brown. He quietly made his way over and whispered something to Süleyman. As Johara watched him, she thought, *I must ask Süleyman about him later.*



That night after the wedding and ceremonial festivities had passed, and they had loved passionately, Johara lay in Süleyman’s arms. They talked and shared with each other the different feelings and visions for the future they had. Süleyman answered all her questions as she tried to find out all that would be expected of her in the days to come. Then she asked him about Mustafa.

“Ah, yes! He is from Palestine and is one of my father’s most loyal and faithful guards,” he replied. “His mother was born to Christian parents but was taken away from them while young. She later married a Turkish

soldier and Mustafa, her son, was brought up to be a Muslim. During the persecution, Mustafa helped hide his mother's uncle who was about to be executed. Mustafa was caught and imprisoned, but his uncle was able to escape to Russia through Syria. My mother knew his mother, and so she asked my father to help him. father interceded on his behalf and managed to have him released. Ever since then, he has been utterly dedicated and loyal to our family.

"He brought me news today, from some sources he cannot name. He heard rumors of a possible military coup against the Sultan. The Sultan is not very popular with the people or with the military. My father and I have avoided getting involved as, although we are related to the Sultan, we dislike his cruelty and suppression of the people. Yet, we do not support a military coup.

"It is a difficult situation to be in. Things are explosive at the moment, and could lead to civil war. Father has suggested that we travel. Since we have just been married, he has arranged for us to live in the southern coast where he has some property. We can spend our honeymoon there. Father has business to take care of in the city, and would remain here. Mustafa and Ibrahim will accompany us on our journey, and stay with us." Süleyman kissed her forehead tenderly. "Maybe this time together away from all this will help us to see God's plan for us more clearly."

For Johara, all this was confusing. All she knew was that she loved Süleyman and that God had engineered their union. But things were moving fast. *Yes, maybe time away from all of this would be good*, she thought.

"Süleyman, I feel so useless and helpless. What can I do to help? What am I meant to do?"

"Oh Johara, my jewel, you know what to do. Pray, my love, pray! For there is much that can be done through prayer," he replied.

Still laying in each other's embrace, they drifted off in to a blissful sleep.



A great darkness was about to cover the land. The reign of the Sultan had been cruel, but now a different darkness was coming. God had numbered the Sultan's days and had given his empire to the devourer. Yet in His mercy, He had put Süleyman and Johara there to be a light to the people—a beacon of His love. This was the mission the Lord had for them.

The following morning, when Süleyman had gone to take care of last-minute business before leaving, Johara made her way to the balcony of the bedroom adjacent to the old library. It was a beautiful day. The sun was warm and the cool breeze refreshing. She felt peaceful and calm as she looked out into the garden. It was abundantly covered with beautiful flowers, and she drank in its beauty.

God's creation is always so peaceful and conducive to prayer, she thought to herself. She moved over to a corner of the balcony that was secluded, and sat down to pray.

"Thank You, Lord, for a place of peace, a refuge from the confusion all around."

Johara spent the hour in prayer, committing all her thoughts, worries and questions to the Lord. The Lord was faithful to quicken some verses to her mind: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am

thy God. I will strengthen thee; I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” And, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Peace filled her soul. Opening her eyes, she looked again at the beauties of His creation.

“I do not know what will befall me or this land, but I know You are with me, that’s what You’ve promised in Your Word, Lord,” she whispered.

Now full of faith, Johara rose to begin the day, and soon was busy with all the needed preparations to leave.

Ibrahim arranged the transport, and Mustafa handpicked a dozen trusted escorts for the trip. Süleyman’s father sent a messenger ahead to have the servants prepare the house. He gave Süleyman some gold, and instructions on how to obtain more if needed.

Before Süleyman departed, he made sure his father would have all the help he would need in case of trouble. He asked Yousuf and Kareem to keep a watch on his father. He also asked that they keep him and Johara informed of any further events in the political arena.

With everything taken care of, Süleyman and Johara left Istanbul with their escort to the southern coast.



It was one month later that a messenger arrived with news from Yousuf. Süleyman swiftly made his way to the gate of their quiet villa where he had been residing with his new wife.

“What news have you?” he said, after his customary greeting.

“Sad news, sir,” he replied. “Yousuf has instructed me to inform you that your father is dead. The Sultan has been overthrown and put under house

arrest. It was a military revolt by the Young Turks. They do not seem to be seeking you out, or others of the Sultan’s family. It seems that they want only the reins of government, and wish no harm to you. Your father was slain by accident—a stray bullet hit him and he died within seconds.”

The messenger paused, seeing the grief on Süleyman’s countenance. “I beg a thousand pardons,” he said, “for being the bearer of ill tidings.”

“No, no,” replied Süleyman. “You have done your job well. If you have no other news, please be refreshed and have some food and rest. I will prepare a message for Yousuf to take back with you tomorrow.”

Though he tried not to show it, the news cut Süleyman as a wound to the heart. Retreating to his room alone, he wept bitterly. Grief overwhelmed him. He fasted the day and night in mourning for his father. Though it pained Johara to see him so distressed and she wished she could be by his side to comfort him, she sensed that he needed time alone.

The following morning, Süleyman came to her, seeking comfort.

“My dear Süleyman, my heart aches with you,” she said softly. “I knew your father only a little time but I could see the light he bore and his love and concern. I know he would not want you to suffer so. I, too, lost my mother and I know the sorrow that comes when we lose someone dear to us. But if we accept our veiled guest of sorrow, she gives us gifts of patience, understanding, wisdom, sympathy and faith. Yet if we reject these gifts, we are given instead weakness, despair and isolation. It is for us to decide which we will take.”

Knowing Süleyman’s love of litera-

ture and poetry, she quoted him a poem she had learned by heart when her mother had died, for it had brought her much comfort.

"I sorrowed that the golden day was dead,

Its light no more the countryside adorning.

But whilst I grieved, behold, the East grew red with morning.

"I sighed that merry spring was forced to go,

And doff the wreaths that did so well become her.*

But whilst I murmured her absence, lo, it was summer.

"I mourned because the daffodils were killed

By burning skies that scorched my early posies.

But while for these I pined, my hands were filled with roses.

"Half brokenhearted I bewailed the end

Of friendship that which none had once seemed nearer.

But whilst I wept I found a closer friend and dearer.

"Thus I learned: Old pleasures are estranged

Only that something better may be given,

Until at last we find the Earth exchanged for Heaven.

"Oh, my love! Your father has now exchanged this life on Earth for one in Heaven," Johara said. "He rejoices

with your mother in the ecstasies of love. Let us not cloud this with gloom. But if your sorrow seems unbearable, cast it on God and He will comfort you, He has promised. We may not understand the reason why He let this happen, but we can trust till someday we do understand."

Tears welled up in Süleyman's eyes. He hugged her tightly, his body shaking with emotion. "I need you. I feel so lost now. What is my place in all this?"

"I know God will guide you. He will not fail you, my love," she replied.



With the exception of attending his father's funeral, Süleyman retired into seclusion, cultivating his land in the southern coast. He retreated into his beloved poetry, spending the nights reading and quoting the lyric poems of Fuzuli* and Isa Necati*. But his favorites were the love poems of Omar Khayyam.

Winter passed and spring gave birth to a myriad of flowers. During this time of seclusion, Süleyman and Johara's relationship deepened as they spent time together and learned more about each other.

Mustafa and Ibrahim who stayed with them during this time, developed a deep and lasting bond with them. They would study the Bible together and discuss with Johara the many truths it contained. This gave them a closeness in spirit, and a base of strength that would be a blessing in the time to come.

Yousuf and Kareem continued to keep Süleyman well informed of the

***doff**: take off

***Fuzuli**: (1495-1536) Turkish poet and the most outstanding figure in the classical school of Turkish literature

***Isa Necati**: (died in 1509) the first great lyric poet of Ottoman Turkish literature

developments in Istanbul. The Sultan had tried to lead a counter revolt, but it failed. The victorious Young Turks installed his brother, Muhammad V, as the new Sultan and puppet of their government.

One day a messenger arrived with word from the new Sultan. The message asked Süleyman to take a place of responsibility and work with some military overseers to ensure the welfare of the southern regions. If he accepted the position, Süleyman would have to move back to Istanbul and base from there.

Süleyman brooded over the message for some time. A part of him wanted to step out into the political scene again, while yet another part of him longed to stay in the peaceful farmland and enjoy life. He had expected this, though, as his work with his father was well known and he had earned the people's respect. Yet, he was still unsure of his ability to take on such a responsibility.

Süleyman shared his hesitations with Johara.

"God will give you peace in your heart about what you should do. For if we acknowledge God in all our ways, He will direct our paths, the Bible promises us," Johara told him.

"Yes, my love, you are right, I must have His confirmation if I am to accept this position," he replied. Süleyman prayed and asked God for a sign, something that would show him whether or not he should accept the appointment offered by the new Sultan.

That night, Süleyman had a dream. Upon awaking the next morning, he told Johara, "I dreamt that there was a great drought and the people were thirsty and begging for water. I was there, with you by my

side, giving water from our own cups to those who were dying of thirst. I believe this dream is a sign from God that I should help to ease the suffering of my people. The Sultan had ruled with the rod, and the people have seen no love or mercy, but I will do what I can to make their lives better." Süleyman took Johara's hand. "With you by my side, and with God, I believe it can be done."

Johara thanked the Lord in her heart for answering and speaking to Süleyman in this way, which greatly strengthened his faith. It was as if a great weight had been taken from him. Now he would take up this call from God and reach out to his people with a heart of love.



After saying farewell to all at the house, Süleyman, Johara and Mustafa started on their trip to Istanbul to meet the new Sultan. Ibrahim was to stay back to organize the work at the farm in their absence, and would join them later.

As they traveled the route to Istanbul, Johara thought of how she had changed in the past months. *Here I am, an English girl, but now I feel more Turkish than British. I think of Ibrahim and Mustafa as my brothers.* Johara could speak the language almost fluently by now, and therefore could communicate with the local people without the need of a translator, which did a lot to help her understand and think as the people of this nation. It helped them to accept her as well.

She had been getting a little bit of news from travelers that things in Europe were not well. There was talk of war, and tensions were high. *God forbid!* she thought.

Süleyman mused aloud: "When I

was young I had determination and fire. I trusted my father and obeyed, and through this I felt confident in what I did. But now I am on my own, and the responsibility will be mine alone to bear. I see things differently now that I have become a Christian, and I feel incapable and uncertain of how I should be. Do you understand? I am not sure I express it well.”

“Yes, I understand,” she answered. “But God will work through you, Süleyman. He has given you a tender heart. When I first looked into your eyes that day in the tent, I saw love and compassion there. That gave me hope then, and will give hope to others also. That love and compassion has been put in your heart by God to share with others.”

Süleyman looked into Johara’s eyes, which were filled with trust and love, and he felt a surge of confidence and strength come over him. Her support and words of faith were just what he needed to feel the Lord’s love and faith in him.



In the throne room, Jesus had summoned Esther and Joseph for a council meeting, for as events developed, the assignments changed according to the need. Joseph had been summoned back once more—this time to help Süleyman with his administration.

“Yes, these are the years of plenty, Joseph,” the Lord told him. “Now is the time Süleyman must learn to give, to listen, to administrate in love, for the great famine comes when he will be needed greatly. You have much experience in administration, Joseph, so I’m assigning you to work with him. Esther will fill you in on what has happened during the time that you have

been away. She has done a wonderful job in guiding Johara’s thoughts and actions.”

Esther felt much joy at the Lord’s words of approval.

“I have asked Gabriel to send four angels to Yousuf and Kareem, to guide them in their journeys. Though they do not know Me as the others do, they are also a part of My plan.”

With that, Esther and Joseph took their leave from the presence of the Lord.



The next few years were ones of happiness and fulfillment for both Johara and Süleyman. Once Süleyman stepped out and obeyed the calling of the Lord, he found that his job enabled him to meet many people of great influence in the country. Through these people, Süleyman was able to bring about a lot of reforms and help the poor and needy in the southern area.

Yousuf and Kareem journeyed to Syria where they were busy with various business ventures that Yousuf had come upon during his time in Istanbul. These endeavors proved to be successful.

Meanwhile Johara, with the help of Ibrahim, had organized a small group of dedicated Christians, secret converts with whom she met regularly for fellowship and Bible reading. She encouraged them to be a sample of love and kindness and do what they could to alleviate the suffering of the poor.

At one such gathering she told them, “Inch by inch and step by step the battle for our fellow countrymen’s hearts must be fought. But you cannot expect victory in one day. Over and over again you will be tempted to give up, but resolve never to be driven back

as far as you have advanced, and you will find that after a time, your words and labors of kindness will have brought happiness to many lives, and answers to those who have been seeking.”

One day, Mustafa told Süleyman and Johara of a young officer whom he had met recently on a trip to Greece. This man had impressed him as a man of vision and initiative. His name was Mustafa Kemal. Süleyman remembered meeting him in Salonika* a couple of times when he and his father lived there. He seemed a young idealist back then also.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if we hear more of him in times to come,” said Süleyman. “Yes, I’d like to meet him again. The country needs men of vision and change!”



Because of the internal problems within the country and the lack of strong leadership, the empire was dying, and the surrounding countries were preparing to divide the carcass.

So much had happened in such a short time. Bulgaria had become independent. Italy had taken over Libya in 1912. Part of Macedonia and some of the Aegean isles, and all of Crete had been taken by Greece in 1913. Then in June 1914, it happened—the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, an event which snowballed until in August, Germany invaded Belgium and war was declared in Europe. World War I had begun.

Süleyman was often gone from home for weeks at a time, taking care of government business. Johara missed him during these times, and always looked forward to the letters

he was faithful to write her.

One morning, while Süleyman was away on one of his business trips, Johara picked up the newspaper to read that Turkey had now joined the war. The Turkish army had attacked a Russian seaport in the Black Sea, and had formally allied themselves with Germany.

“Dear God,” prayed Johara, “it has happened! It seems that now we are at war with Britain. Süleyman has been sent a commission in the army. This is becoming a nightmare! Give me faith, Lord. Help me to stand strong.”

Johara pulled out of her dresser a letter she had received from Süleyman just a few days ago. For the fourth time she read it:

Dear beloved Johara,

I hope this finds you well and in good spirits. I must admit that this journey has been difficult for me and I have missed you more than ever. I know you will be well and that Ibrahim and Mustafa will take care of you. I do not have much time just now to relate all that God has done. It has been good for my faith. I have learned to ask guidance from God, and it has been comforting to me. Some days ago, I helped a group of traveling Christians. I never revealed to them that I was a believer (as I had some companions with me), but they saw a Muslim who was ready to accept them and help them.

But now I must come to the main reason for this letter. As much as I love you and would love nothing more than to pour out my love in

***Salonika:** a city in northeast Greece, also called Thessaloniki (see map on page 21)

words to you, I must bring myself to share some other things pertaining to us.

I received a message from the Sultan informing me that most likely Turkey will go to war on the side of Germany! I have been offered a commission in the army and have been asked to report for duty. There is a contingent of German troops arriving soon, and I have been asked to join them to receive training. As much as I dislike war and killing and taking up arms against Britain and Russia, I feel there is no way I can refuse. I therefore put myself in God's hands and ask that He keep me and help me to somehow manage to avoid having to raise the sword of death.

My dear Johara, I need your prayers for I know the Lord listens to you and answers.

I am also concerned for your safety. Please be careful and stay away from showing yourself in public until I return. In times like these, you never know what may happen or who may have hostile intentions towards you.

I must end this letter now, though there is so much more I wish to tell you, my love. How I miss your lovely smile and wish you were here with me to share each moment with. I send my love and prayers to you, my dear Johara.

*Much love,
Süleyman*



One month later, Süleyman had returned from his trip, but even then, he was rarely at home as his new duties in the army kept him busy. Johara was reading in her bedroom

when she heard a knock on the door. It was Ibrahim. She had him enter.

"Excuse me for interrupting, but we have some guests at the door from the German delegation. They have come to see Süleyman Pasha*."

Süleyman was not present, so Johara told Ibrahim to have them shown into the sitting room and to serve them drinks while they waited. Quickly, she prepared herself and went down to meet them.

It had been a long time since Johara had had contact with anyone from Europe, so she was nervous. She knew a little German and French, but hoped they could communicate in English. She had asked Ibrahim to convey to them that she was sorry her German was limited, but they could speak in English.

Upon her entry, the men stood up. An older-looking officer moved forward and spoke.

"Good morning, madam. Your servant informed us that you speak English. Fortunately I am quite fluent in English. Let me introduce myself. My name is Colonel Karl Hoffman of the Kaiser's Imperial Armed Forces. This is Captain Schmidt."

Johara was impressed by the colonel. He was approximately six-feet tall, well built, with clear blue eyes that sparkled. His smile lit up his whole countenance and put her at ease. Schmidt, on the other hand, was more stout. The scar on the corner of his mouth made him look as though he was constantly sneering. His eyes were cold and cruel and made her shudder.

The colonel went on to introduce the other two men: "And these are Captain Kohl and Captain Ritter."

***pasha:** used formerly as a title given to military and civil officers in Turkey and northern Africa

They both clicked their heels together and gave a short bow. They were young, idealistic men, and she could see the eager passion of youth on their faces. These were loyal soldiers who would give their all for their fatherland.

“Lastly, let me introduce Erich von Holm,” said the colonel.

This man was quite different. He was not wearing a uniform, but was very smartly dressed, and handsome. He wore a double-breasted suit with a carnation in the lapel, and was slim and athletic in stature. He smiled and looked deep and searchingly into her eyes. She felt uncomfortable, as though he was reading her very thoughts. His gaze was penetrating and discomfiting. Then he spoke in perfect English, with an Oxford accent:

“My dear lady, it is a great pleasure to make your acquaintance. I hear you speak English, which is quite unusual, is it not, for women here? I lived in England for seven years as a student myself. I learned to speak English there.”

“I also was educated in Oxford, Herr von Holm,” she answered, returning his penetrating gaze.

Johara thought it best not to mention that she was English, especially as they were at war.

“Please, gentlemen, do not stand on my account,” Johara said, motioning to the chairs. “I am sorry my husband is not present, but he should be back in a short while. Please relax. Is there anything more you need?”

“No, thank you, madam,” the colonel answered.

Then von Holm interjected: “What more could we desire than your company?”

Johara noticed the reproofing look that the colonel gave von Holm at this remark, especially as it was tinged with sarcasm.

The colonel added: “If you have the time, we would be pleased to enjoy your company. As I’m sure it is good for us all to practice our English.”

Johara smiled. She was taking a liking to the colonel.

“Thank you, Colonel Hoffman. It has also been a long time since I have spoken with anyone from Europe. I don’t often practice my English either.”

Soon their conversation spanned a variety of subjects, from music, poetry and literature, to politics and history. The colonel was impressed with Johara and her knowledge. Both he and von Holm seemed to carry most of the conversation with her. The two young officers were not so well rounded in their knowledge of these topics, but joined in and contributed what they could. Schmidt did not enter in at all, but sat aloof with the perpetual sneer on his face. He viewed them from a distance, only entering in when asked specific questions.

“Excuse me, madam. Please do not take offense at this, but you’re not really what I was expecting in this land. I could easily envision you in a grand ball in Europe, or in the courts of some of the great palaces of Europe,” said the colonel.

“Life here must be quite dull and dreary for you,” added von Holm again rather sarcastically.

This prompted her direct reply. “My dear von Holm,” she said, “life is as a many-sided cube. One should not be so tenacious* of the one aspect of it they are familiar with that they are

**tenacious*: holding fast; stubborn

not ready to come round and view it from another angle. No day and no place are commonplace or dull, if we have the eyes to see. Everyone of us has our duties to perform. We can do them begrudgingly as would a slave, or faithfully as would a servant, or joyously because we choose to out of free will. One cannot allow the circumstances to affect them, for life is what one makes of it."

"Well said!" replied the colonel. "You speak as if you were a philosopher. You amaze me!"

"I quite agree with you," said von Holm. "I never expected such company in this land. I must admit, you are better educated than many I have met in my own land."

"Quite true," the colonel added. "You do not speak like a..." He stopped short as the door opened and Süleyman came in.

"I see my wife has kept you entertained in my absence," Süleyman said, greeting them. "I am sorry you have had to wait so long, but I did not expect you today."

"It was no trouble. On the contrary, it has been enlightening. You are a lucky man to have such a wife. It has been a pleasure to have her as our hostess. I look forward to more conversations in the future, if time permits," the colonel replied.

Johara smiled. "You are most kind, Colonel," she said, as she bowed her head respectfully. "Please excuse me."

Johara left the room, leaving Süleyman and the German delegation to discuss their business.



That evening after dinner, Süleyman told Johara the results of the meeting. He would be going with Captain Schmidt and the two young

officers for some training out of the country. Colonel Hoffman and von Holm would remain in Istanbul to oversee the arrival of more technicians and advisors from Germany.

Süleyman explained to Johara that it would probably take two to three weeks for the training exercises, and Colonel Hoffman and von Holm would possibly visit her while he was away.

"Colonel Hoffman spoke well of you. It would do well to cultivate his friendship, as he may be important to our future. He seems a man of honor and principles—a good man."

"Yes, Süleyman, I pray that God will use him for good."

"It is a strange situation, is it not, Johara, to be at war with your own people, people of the same faith!" Süleyman said thoughtfully, "I do not wish to fight, but what can I do? I am called by duty to fight for my people, my country. I cannot sit and watch my land and people destroyed. It is my duty to protect them."

"And I will do mine by praying for you until you return safely. I only hope that this will all be over soon! War brings such injustice and cruelty. I cannot bear to think of the men whose lives will be lost. It does not matter if they are English or Turkish, or German. They are all the Lord's, which makes them our brothers."

"Why God gave you to me is a mystery, Johara! You are an angel of mercy and hope." Süleyman touched her hair lightly as he admired her beauty. She was even more beautiful than the day he had first seen her.

"Oh, Süleyman," she sighed, "I will miss you so much! I feel as though a part of my heart is missing when you are absent."

She put her arms around him and he kissed her quivering lips.

"My darling!" she whispered, "I love you."



In the oil fields of Khuzistan in Persia, a group of British soldiers were preparing to protect their foreign investments. The oil field was a joint Russian and British effort, and with Turkey now joining the war, this area could be affected. Major Higgins and Sergeant McCulloch were busy putting the troops through some rigorous training. The Shah Muzaffar-al-Din had sent over a couple of detachments of Persian soldiers to be placed under the direction of the British.

"So, Sergeant, how are they doing?" the major asked.

"Ach, sir, they may ken* the land well and fight well, but they're a right undisciplined lot, a real rabble o' cut-throats if ye ask me."

"Well, Sergeant, you can but do your best. Your king and country expect it of you, so do what you can."

"Yes sir!" replied the sergeant.

Major Higgins returned to his office and sat down with Captain Henry Smith.

"How does it look, sir?" the captain asked.

"They're a rough and undisci-

plined bunch all right, but Sergeant McCulloch will get them in shape. He's a good man and well experienced in these lands. I've known him for 10 years now and you can count on him."

"I'd heard, sir, that he fell apart once in Kuwait over some kidnapping."

"Don't jump to conclusions, Captain. It's a dangerous thing to go by gossip! There *was* a kidnapping. I was there also. It was an English girl and we never did trace her. McCulloch was on duty at the time and took it real hard, but I wouldn't say he fell apart. He's a good soldier and took the responsibility to heart. He's a better man for it and I'd put my trust in him, Captain."

"Sorry, sir, I was out of line and should not have mentioned it," answered Smith.

"That's okay, Captain," Major Higgins replied. "It's a poor man who never makes mistakes. It's always safer to get the full facts on a situation and not go by hearsay. You'll find McCulloch is a good soldier and you can rely on him."

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" Higgins called out.

"Urgent message, sir! From HQ in Cairo."

"Right'o, Private Sands. Give it here then."

"Sir!" replied Sands as he handed it to the Major.

"Hmm, I see," mused Higgins as he read the message. "Well, Captain, it seems like our forces are planning an invasion of the Dardanelles*. So the



**ken*: know

**Dardanelles*: Narrow channel linking the Mediterranean sea with the Sea of Marmara, between Europe and Asia

Turks and Germans will be kept busy now ... our intelligence agents say there are rumors of possible German activity here. Some German intelligence officers were spotted by our agents in Istanbul. Von Holm, one of their top men, was seen—a dangerous chap. I met him in Oxford as a youth. Bright chap, a real ladies' man, but with a cruel, cynical streak in him. It's possible he has come here to stir up trouble. So we need to keep on the alert."

"Yes, sir," replied Smith. "Do *you* think they will try to do something here?"

"It's hard to say, but it would be a big feather in their cap if they did manage to destroy the fields or capture them. So have Sergeant McCulloch come in. We need to make sure we are not taken unprepared."

"Right'o, sir. I will ask him to report at once, sir!"



One week had passed since Süleyman had left for training abroad. Johara was relaxing and praying for Süleyman as she looked out the window of her bedroom into the courtyard below. She had been feeling discouraged that she could do nothing but wait. *I feel so helpless, for though I know I can pray, I cannot help but feel I should do more*, she thought. Then the Lord quickened to her mind a stanza by Samuel Coleridge* that her mother had taught her as a child...

*"He prayeth well, who loveth well,
Both man and bird and beast.*

*He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small.*

*For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."*

"Lord, forgive me. I love Süleyman so dearly. But I know that You will keep him in Your care. I believe that you will answer my prayers." As she continued to pray, she saw a car approaching their courtyard, flying the German flag. She continued to watch curiously as the car stopped at their front gate.

The driver stepped out and opened the back door of the car. Out stepped von Holm with a man she had never seen before. Like von Holm, he wore no uniform. Then a bearded man in Bedouin dress stepped out of the car. Something about the Bedouin seemed familiar.... Then he looked up.

Johara put her hand over her mouth and gasped—it was Aziz! What was he doing here—and with von Holm? Aziz and the other German stepped back into the car after conversing a few moments and drove off, leaving von Holm outside.

Taking a moment to regain her composure, Johara sent up a prayer for wisdom and strength. ... *And please help nothing to come of this. Help me not to be afraid.*

Immediately Esther was by her side and Johara felt a surge of courage come over her. Covering her face with a veil, she went down to meet von Holm.

"Good day, Herr von Holm. I was not expecting you," said Johara, as Ibrahim escorted von Holm into the sitting room.

"I'm sorry for the short notice, madam. I had been visiting the Suleyman Mosque* and the Hagia Sophia*. Did you know that it was built

***Samuel Coleridge:** (1772-1834) British poet and critic

***Hagia Sophia:** Built in the 6th Century as an Orthodox Church and later converted into a Mosque

***Suleyman Mosque:** (built between 1550 and 1557) a mosque widely considered to be Istanbul's finest Ottoman monument

by the Emperor Justinian*? This is a city of history and if I had time, I would love to explore it. But alas, I am a busy man.

"Well, as I was near to your place, I thought I would drop by since I had the time. It has been a week since your husband has left, and I wanted to make sure you were well."

"That is very considerate of you, von Holm, to think of me. But that is not needed. You see, I am well cared for here and quite used to my husband traveling extensively with his work."

"I can see that, madam, and I am sorry for being so presumptuous. But at least I can inform you that I heard from our officers' training team, and Süleyman Pasha is doing very well. In fact, Schmidt has said that he has great potential, and it is no easy thing to impress Schmidt."

"But there was another matter that I wish to bring up. I heard that a delegation from Germany is arriving tonight. I believe that the colonel may contact you to ask if you would entertain them here tomorrow. As I know how much work such things involve, I thought to give you a little advance warning."

"That was very thoughtful, von Holm, but why ever would they wish to visit me?"

"Why, madam, you underestimate yourself. Our guests are fresh from Germany and not experienced in the ways of the East. It would be very beneficial for them. The colonel thought you would provide good company for them after such a trip, and possibly provide some insight into the culture here."

"I see. And was that your only con-

cern? Or is there something else?"

"Well, I can see you are not the type to beat around the bush with. A matter has come to my attention, which I wanted to confirm with you."

"I see, and what would that be?" Johara replied.

"Is it true that you are not Turkish in origin but English?" von Holm said, his eyes piercing into her very being.

Johara had long expected this question, and had prepared her answer.

"Yes, it is true. I am English. My father and mother are both English, and I lived in England until I was 19 years old, at which time my mother died and I went with my father to Cairo. Since my marriage to Süleyman Pasha eight years ago, I have had no contact with my father or anyone in my country. I consider myself more Turkish than British. I am sure you can confirm from sources here that I have given everything to this land, Herr von Holm. My husband is an officer here and my loyalty is here. If that is what you wish to confirm, then please ... I have nothing to hide."

"No. Of course not. Please forgive me," he spluttered, not expecting the strong answer and conviction with which she spoke. "I did not mean to insinuate that. I just wondered why you had not mentioned it before."

"Do you feel I needed to? Does it make a lot of difference in how you view me?"

"No. I'm sorry if I caused you distress. I will take my leave now. Perhaps tomorrow I may see you again," he replied.

"Then, until tomorrow." Johara bowed slightly, then motioned to

**Emperor Justinian*: Byzantine emperor (527-565) who held the eastern frontier of his empire against the Persians and reconquered former Roman territories in Africa, Italy, and Spain

Ibrahim. "Please arrange for Herr von Helm to be taken to his next destination."

Ibrahim nodded, then escorted von Holm to the door.

"Thank you, madam," von Holm said, giving a short bow before leaving the room.

Johara sat down in her armchair. *So, he knows! I should be more watchful, for there is no telling what may happen. Dear Lord, please keep me in the tower of Your protection.*



A few hours later, a courier arrived bringing a message from Süleyman. Johara read over it quickly. It seemed

he was very busy with his training. They were preparing for a special force which would be going to Persia to stir up the Qashqa'i tribes against the British and Russians.

He mentioned also that there were rumors of German supervisors or military advisors coming to Istanbul in a few days.

Schmidt, he said, was a hard taskmaster, but very thorough in his training. He had also struck up a good rapport with the two young captains, and it was making the time quite enjoyable.

Johara smiled as she remembered the clean bright faces of the two

THE MODERN-DAY QASHQA'I:

The Qashqa'i are a nomadic people living mostly in the harsh deserts and Zagros mountains across southwest Iran. The Qashqa'i raise goats and sheep. Camels and donkeys are kept by some to carry their tents and other gear during migration, although now trucks and motorcycles are becoming more common. Generally 10 to 12 families migrate together about four months out of every year (two to three months traveling between summer and winter camps). Each of these migrating groups is part of a larger tribe within the Qashqa'i. Each group is represented by its own headmen. Until recently, this



people group was extremely isolated from the rest of the world. Improved roads and increasing settlement in villages have made the Qashqa'i more open to other cultures. A minority group in Iran, the Qashqa'i have remained independent and proud, despite government attempts to force them to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and become part of the mainstream of Iranian life. Qashqa'i women are known for their colorful clothing, which includes multi-layered skirts, bright tunics and scarves. Although the women cover their heads, they let their hair show. In Iranian cities they dress like other women, but show their colorful dress a few inches below their black chador. The women are equally well known for their weaving. Using natural dyes and wool from their sheep, they weave colorful and intricate patterned rugs. They even have looms that can be disassembled and carried with them when they are migrating.

***Nomad:** a member of a group of people who have no fixed home and move according to the seasons from place to place in search of food, water and grazing land

youths, and the fire of enthusiasm in their eyes. *Yes, their passion and drive would draw Süleyman!*

A sudden knock on the door brought her attention to Mustafa who stood waiting.

"Mustafa. Is something the matter?" she asked.

"There is a caller for you in the hall. He has a message from Colonel Hoffman."

"Thank you, Mustafa."

Johara made her way to the hall.

"Please excuse the unexpected intrusion, madam. I hope I am not disturbing you?" the messenger asked politely.

"No, you are not. It is always a pleasure to hear from Colonel Hoffman."

"He asked me to deliver this request. Tonight he has a few guests arriving from Germany and he wanted to ask, if at all possible, could he bring them over for dinner tomorrow?"

"Why, yes, of course. The colonel is always welcome in my home. How many guests will there be?"

"Seven in total."

"Please tell the colonel I'll expect him at seven o'clock."

"I am sure he will look forward to seeing you then. Goodnight."

So, *von Holm was correct*, she mused.

"Mustafa, call Ibrahim. It seems we have some preparations to make. We will have guests tomorrow."



The following evening, the guests were shown to the dining room where a buffet dinner had been prepared. The colonel, along with von Holm, greeted her. Then the colonel introduced her to the new arrivals.

"Gentlemen, this is our lovely hostess, Johara, the wife of Süleyman

Pasha, cousin of the great Sultan Muhammad V."

Turning to Johara, he introduced the guests. "Madam, this is Paul von Hinderburg, Kurt Rundstadt, Friedrich von Paulis, Karl Bulow and Erich B. Ludendorf—officers in the Imperial Army of Kaiser Whilhelm."

"Gentlemen, welcome to my home," Johara greeted them. "It is an honor to have your company. Please be seated. Ibrahim, would you please bring the guests some drinks?"

A quick nod from Ibrahim brought forward the servants, who began to offer a variety of drinks to the guests.

The evening went well. The colonel was a help to Johara and kept the conversation flowing. They covered the same topics of art, music, history and literature as the colonel and Johara had discussed at their first meeting. Then the conversation moved into the realm of politics. Johara noticed from the comments and discussion of the guests, that some, like the colonel, seemed to be men of faith. But others were more proud and cynical. They spoke slightly of people, and particularly of the area of the Middle East. They also lifted up the German race as being a superior people.

It's always the same, she thought, remembering Robert Tailor. *Whether German, or British, or wherever they come from, people always seem to divide into the same groups: those of faith and unselfishness, and the selfish proud who see themselves as superior and think only of their own glory.*

"Gentlemen," Johara said, gently interrupting the conversation, "it is not my place as a woman to profess great knowledge in politics or such, but as a woman of faith and well

studied and versed in the ways of the world, I would like to put forth that from my experience of life, no one is unimportant in God's eyes. He created each one equal, whether Christian or Jew, or Muslim. God put each one here for a purpose, and that is to fulfill His plan.

"Therefore, should we not love our fellow men, no matter what race or creed, as God does, without partiality? Surely the great commandment to love God and our neighbor as ourselves applies to all, and not just to a few."

A moment of uneasy silence followed, then one of the guests, von Hinderburg, spoke:

"Very true, madam. The colonel had said you were a philosopher of sorts, and now I see what he meant. You are not what I would have expected of a woman from this part of the world. Are you Turkish by birth?" asked von Hinderburg.

"No! You are quite right. I am English by birth. I became Turkish by marriage." Some of the guests showed surprise at those words. "But I hope this does not change your opinion of me," she said directly.

"No, of course not," said von Hinderburg quickly, a bit taken back himself. "I ... well, I ... ahem ... I never realized..." he muttered.

"I understand. I do not take exception. Let me explain, I have had no contact with either my father or anyone in England since my marriage eight years ago. I am more Turkish than British. My life is with Süleyman Pasha, my husband, and my duty is to my country of choice here. You will find no misplaced loyalties here, gentlemen."

"Yes, I believe you," said von Hinderburg. "I know sincerity when I

see it—and conviction. I had been a man of faith in my youth and your words brought back to me some truths that I have forgotten over the years. I wish my visit were longer, as I would like very much to get to know you and discuss more on these topics. But alas, I am busy tomorrow and then I will leave the following morning to Germany. But one thing I will take back with me is the memory of you as you spoke just now. I felt as though you were speaking directly to my heart like a voice from Heaven."

"Why thank you, Herr von Hinderburg, I am deeply honored by your words and I will pray for you," Johara replied with a gentle smile.

It was late in the evening, and Colonel Hoffman thanked Johara on behalf of the guests for the delicious food and pleasant entertainment that had been provided.

When the guests had all left, and Johara had bathed and prepared for bed, she sat down at her desk and pulled out some writing paper from the drawer and began to write:

My dearest Süleyman,

My heart overflows with joy and happiness at all the Lord has done for us. The colonel and some guests came over this evening for dinner, which all went well. I miss you so, my love, but though our separation is hard, I feel my love for you grow only stronger. You are always close to my heart and ever in my thoughts. Just today I had been reading a book of poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and one poem in particular expressed so clearly my feelings, I wanted to share it with you:

'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

*I love thee to the depth, and
breadth and height,*

*My soul can reach, when feel-
ing out of sight,*

*For the ends of being and ideal
grace.*

*I love thee to the level of every
day's*

*Most quiet need, by sun and
candle light.*

*I love thee freely, as men strive
for might.*

*I love thee purely, as they turn
to praise.*

*I love thee with the passion put
to use*

*In my old griefs, and with my
childhood faith*

*I love thee with a love I never
lost.*

*I love thee with the breath,
smiles, tears of all my life.*

*And if God choose, I shall love
thee better after death.'*

*Is that not a beautiful expres-
sion of love? Oh, Süleyman, some-
times I feel lonely. My heart cries
out as if it would break, for I miss
you so. But, my love, though my
heart may ache for you, my heart is
not burdened. For I know our sepa-
ration is but temporal, and God is
fulfilling His plan, His will in each
of our lives. In His time we will
again be reunited, and to that time
I look forward with joy. I pray now
the Lord will keep and protect you
with His angels of love until such a
time as we can be together as one.*

Till we meet again, my love.

Yours forever,

Johara



Time passed swiftly and it was now
three months since Süleyman had re-

turned from his training, and then left
again for distant Persia. Von Holm,
Schmidt and several other of the
Germans had gone with him. The
colonel remained and occasionally
dropped by to visit. He enjoyed his time
with Johara, and they built a bond of
friendship. Johara helped the colonel
to develop his faith once more. This
was an area he had long neglected, and
this new infusion of faith had made a
difference in his interaction with his
men as well as with the local people
in Istanbul.

The invasion of the Dardanelles in
April by the Allied Forces who had
landed in Gallipoli west of the
Dardanelles had now irreversibly
bogged down with the Allies stuck at
the bottom of the cliffs as the Turks
dominated the heights. The war on
the Western Front was also largely
stalemated* trench warfare.

The German United Force with the
Turks were doing well, and there
seemed to be hope that they would
drive the Allies back. Von Holm and
Süleyman were doing well in their ex-
pedition against the British forces in
the Khuzistan oil fields and they were
having minor successes. An all-Turk-
ish force was also attacking the
Russians in Persia at the Baku oil
fields by the Caspian Sea. Süleyman
had started an underground move-
ment among the Qashqa'i and it was
going well as a hit-and-run operation.

Von Holm was called off to Pales-
tine where he was preparing
another operation with the help of
Aziz. Rumors of the Arab force being
organized by General Allenby and
some unknown British officer
named T. E. Lawrence had been
leaked from agents in Cairo.

***stalemated**: a situation where further action is blocked; deadlock

Johara had been able to meet Mustafa Kemal, the young idealist that Mustafa had spoken of. He was now a colonel, and definitely a man of great charisma, and was gaining quite a reputation as a fighter. But she could see that burning ambition in his eyes—that desire and lust for power. *Where will it lead him? Many good men and idealists have been destroyed by this fire, this lust for power, when not balanced with God's love,* she thought.

Mustafa reported that there was a great feeling of fear among the Young Turks concerning the Armenian Christians, as they were numerous and it was rumored they were going to join with the Russians and cause a revolt to overthrow the Empire. The Young Turks were already clamping down on them in some parts of the country. Johara prayed that this could be avoided, and that God would

intervene somehow.

Then came a dark hour for Johara. Süleyman had disappeared during an operation, and it was thought that he had been taken prisoner. Johara was deeply shaken, and Mustafa and Ibrahim tried to encourage her faith.

Once it was confirmed that he had been taken prisoner, both Mustafa and Ibrahim counseled and decided that Ibrahim would join Yousuf and Kareem in Syria and make a trip into Persia to try to rescue him. Though at first Johara objected, she later became resigned to their plan for fear that something worse may happen to him.

The colonel during this time continued to visit and to encourage Johara. On the war front, it seemed that although Süleyman being taken prisoner was a major setback, the forces there were still doing well and keeping the British busy.



Many of Johara's friends and Süleyman's fellow reformers were now keeping their distance, as the Mufti, who had always harbored a dislike for Johara, had spoken openly against her since Süleyman had been reported missing. But because of the colonel's protection and favor, the Mufti refrained from taking any open action against her. Johara was grateful for the colonel, who was a pillar of strength to her at this time.



Süleyman was being kept in a prison at the edge of Persia's Dasht-e Kavir Desert. Sergeant McCullock, one of the prison guards, had formed a bond with Süleyman over the months he had been there. *Aye, for a Turk he is a good man*, thought McCullock. *He says he's a Christian—whether he is or no, he's definitely a man of principle.* Because of this, McCullock treated him well.

Süleyman was due to be transferred to another prison camp, deeper into the desert on the following day. This information had been leaked to Yousuf, who had his inside contacts. This was the time to strike, and Ibrahim, Yousuf, Kareem and a local tribesman were finalizing their plans.

"Yousuf, your contacts are sure that Süleyman is in this camp?" Ibrahim queried.

"Yes, that's right, and tomorrow is the transfer. We must strike now," replied Yousuf. "There is a good spot where they will camp tomorrow night to break their journey. If we leave now, we will have time to be ready and waiting for them."

"You are sure they will pass that way?" Kareem asked.

"Absolutely!" replied Yousuf with a gleam in his eye.

"Good! So let's finish our meal and get started," Ibrahim said.



It was two weeks later that the colonel made an unexpected call at Johara's home.

"It is always a great pleasure to see you, Colonel," Johara said, greeting him. "I hope all is well with you."

"It is," said the colonel, hardly able to contain his joy. "And I have good news for you. Your husband is safe. He has been rescued, and is now in a military camp in Syria. It seems for now he will have to remain in Damascus, but I do have a letter for you from him."

Johara's expression turned incredulous. She could hardly believe the good news.

The colonel opened his attaché case and pulled out the letter. Johara took it, and with tears in her eyes, sat down to read.

Dearest one,

My love for you grows more and more as the days go by. Please do not worry about me. While I was in prison, I was well cared for, and God's hand kept me. I had much time alone to reflect and pray. I have never felt as close to you or God as I do now.

While I was a prisoner, I developed a friendship with one of the guards, Sergeant McCullock, from Scotland. Later I found out that he is known to you—but that is getting ahead of my story. He was commissioned, along with a private named Sands and five Persian soldiers, to escort me to a new prison deep in the heart of Persia. We came to a deserted place at night where we made camp and, unbeknownst to

all—including myself—Ibrahim, Yousuf and Kareem were already hidden there. Our guide, supposedly a local tribesman, turned out to be one of Yousuf's men, and was in on the plan. They overcame the night guards and before McCulloch or the others had a chance, they were all held at gunpoint. Kareem had disarmed them all in their sleep so there was no resistance.

After they had been tied up, Yousuf took me aside to say he recognized McCulloch and Sands as having been present when you were taken. This came as a surprise to me, but as I had developed a friendship with McCulloch, I to`ld h m what had become of you. He w s dumbfounded! I told him he would be safe, and that word had been sent to a village where help would arrive to free them—but only when we would be long gone and out of their reach by the

McCulloch is a good man and I trust him. He had been a man of faith, but his years in the army had hardened him. He had become disillusioned with life, and cynical. This now gave him hope and restored to him the belief that there is a God Who watches over us. It was a great relief for him to know that all is well with you. Your disappearance had laid heavily on his shoulders all these years, as he felt responsible. I believe my capture may have been planned by God just to bring this man peace, and to restore his faith.

It seems I will be staying here in Damascus, and may be involved in operations in this area, but Ibrahim will be coming back in a few days. Yousuf and Kareem will

be staying in Jerusalem.

It is strange, is it not, how our past keeps coming into the present? I suppose they are always interconnected. Well, my love, I must end as the army courier is leaving and I do not want to miss him. Yours forever in love, Süleyman

"Oh, Colonel, thank you so much! This means so much to me!"

"I am glad to be the one to bring joy to you. You are a woman of faith, and I knew God would not let your husband be harmed. I am overjoyed, Johara, at how He has answered your prayers. I will take my leave for now, but if it is all right with you, I would love to come for dinner tomorrow."

"Of course, Colonel. I look forward with great expectation to your visit. Thank you again for being so swift in bringing me this letter."

The colonel bowed and left.

Johara read and reread the letter from Süleyman. Her heart leapt for joy. That night it was as she was floating on a cloud of happiness. The worry, tears and sleepless nights praying for her dear love were no more. Now she had the proof that God had answered to her prayers.

The news about Sergeant McCulloch was also interesting indeed, and she marveled at this "chance" encounter. It is a strange feeling to know that you do not control your own destiny, but that there is One higher Who watches and cares for you, she pondered.



At dinner the following evening, the colonel and Johara spent many hours together talking. "Colonel, How is everything with you?" Johara asked.

"Well, to be honest, Johara, I have

been despondent. War is always hard on the soul. It tears and rips at you. It takes patience and perseverance to battle on. Yes, we do seem in some areas to be making progress, but there is no end in sight. It looks like it will go on and on. I know that you, also, have had your share of despair and darkness these past months, but thankfully God has seen it good to lighten your load. Maybe in time, mine will also be lightened and this war will come to an end. Sometimes all I see are the trials and obstacles and problems that come my way daily, and I sink beneath them. There is much to complain about if we look around us.”

“Colonel, you have a difficult job being in charge of men who have to kill, who face fear and death daily. But God has placed you in a position where people respect you and look to you, and you can make a great difference in the lives of many by what you do.

“I understand how you feel overwhelmed with the problems you face. I’ve found it so much easier when I take it one step at a time, for no one ever sank under the burden of the day. It is when we add tomorrow’s burden that it becomes unbearable. ... Oh, but I am weak also as you are, and I often do not reach up to the high ideals I speak of either. ... But we can try!”

Johara reached for the wine decanter and looked at the colonel for an affirmative nod before filling his glass again.

“God gives us difficulties and problems to help us grow and become better men and women for it. I’ve found it makes it so much easier when I look at problems as challenges or as a test or exam, such as one would take in university. God is giving us an op-

portunity to prove ourselves. And when we look at our problems this way, they become blessings and bring about good in our lives.”

“My dear Johara, if only I had met you in my youth, who knows what I might have been?” The colonel smiled. “Our conversations together motivate me to become a better man.” The colonel glanced at the clock. “Oh, I have been meaning to tell you ... I have been called to go back to Germany. I am to leave tomorrow, for how long I do not know, but I hope that we will meet again.”

“I will miss you dearly, colonel. Your visits have been a source of joy to me. My prayers will be with you.”

A servant entered the room to inform the colonel his car had arrived and was waiting. The colonel said a final farewell and left.

Johara prayed:” Dear Jesus, be with him and kindle in his life a spark that will burn brightly with Your love.”



Süleyman’s duties kept him busy in Damascus. The Young Turks finally enforced a persecution of Armenians in the country, expelling them from Turkey and sending them out into the deserts of Syria. It was a dark time, and one million Armenians died of thirst in the desert or were killed by desert tribes and Kurds.

Johara and her friends tried as best as they could to help and rescue those they could. Yousuf and Kareem worked along with others to guide many out into Persia and Russia where they started new lives. This time was difficult for Johara, and dangerous. She thanked God that He had placed her in a position to be able to help many escape certain death, yet she could not understand why God

allowed such terrible persecution to happen.

Finally, in a fit of anguish and despair she cried out to God: "Why? Why, Lord? They are Your children. Why are You letting it happen?"

Opening her Bible, Johara's eyes fell on the verse, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called, according to His purpose." *Lord*, she thought, *I do not understand how this could work for good, but I will trust You, and accept by faith that it is true, until someday I do understand.*

Johara, with tears in her eyes, prayed, and continued to pray, for those who were suffering, that God would work His purpose in their lives and give each one who was going through the fire of persecution grace and faith to withstand.

Though Johara did not see the tangible results of her prayers while on Earth, her intercession was translated into help, strength and in some cases, miracles of supply and protection, for many under persecution.



At that same time, von Holm and Aziz were in Damascus, and Aziz happened to spot Süleyman at one of the bazaars. After inquiring further, he was told that Johara stayed in Istanbul. It had been a long time, but he had not forgotten her beauty or his vow to have her. Now that Süleyman was away, he saw his moment of opportunity. Along with two of his men, Aziz headed off to Istanbul. "I will have my revenge, as I swore I would," he said triumphantly.

On his arrival, Aziz went to the Mufti, whom he had met on a few occasions with von Holm. The Mufti, though he disliked Johara, was not

willing to do anything to cause her harm, as she was well respected and had powerful friends. So he resorted to another plan—kidnapping!

Johara seldom left the confines of her home, and Ibrahim and Mustafa were formidable adversaries, so Aziz came up with a plan. Using an agent of his who had formerly worked in the palace, and was known to Ibrahim, he sent a message seemingly coming from a poor Armenian who was in hiding.

When Johara discussed the matter with Ibrahim, it was decided that both Ibrahim and Mustafa would go, just in case it was a trap. Johara felt a little uneasy about the whole thing, but brushed aside the checks and warnings from Esther and her spirit guardians.

After Mustafa and Ibrahim left, Johara decided to have a bath and then dinner. Fahd, the cook, was the only one left at home. She went up to her room and undressed. As she walked to the bathroom, she looked at her naked body in the mirror and ran her fingers over her abdomen. *Strange*, she thought, *that in all my time with Süleyman I have not gotten pregnant.* It was not for lack of trying, but for some reason God withheld the blessing of the womb from her.

Johara stepped into the bath and sank down into the warm suds, her mind filled with thoughts of Süleyman.

Suddenly a noise from below startled her.

What could it be? It was unlike Fahd. Maybe he fell or had an accident. She decided to go see if all was well. Standing up, she reached out to get her towel when suddenly the door burst open, and there was Aziz standing before her, his eyes devouring

every inch of her body. She wanted to scream but stifled it and then gaining courage, she demanded, "Where is Fahd?"

"In Paradise!" laughed Aziz, grabbing her roughly and throwing a sheet around her. She managed to scream out just before he gagged her with a piece of cloth.

Meanwhile, the colonel had just arrived back in Istanbul and had decided to drop by the house to inform Johara of his return. This thought was not a coincidence, for Johara's spirit team was doing everything in their power to prevent this evil plan of the Enemy to harm her.

As the colonel walked down the driveway, he noticed the side door to the kitchen was open. *This is unusual*, he thought, and so made his way over to the door. When he pushed open the door wider, he saw Fahd lying in a pool of blood. It took only a moment to see he was past any help. His throat had been slit. Moving quietly into the hall, he pulled out his revolver from the holster and advanced cautiously.

A scream came from above. *Johara must be in trouble!* Then sounds came from the upper floor. The colonel made his way into the alcove across from the staircase and was just in time to see three men bringing Johara down wrapped in a sheet.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, one of them went out the front door, no doubt to bring some escape vehicle to the door. Then one of the men turned around and the colonel saw his face: *Aziz! What in heaven's name is going on? Isn't he one of von Holm's men?*

Aziz moved over to the door and the colonel saw his chance to strike. Raising his revolver, he fired! His shot hit

the man who held Johara, and he fell to the ground dead. Johara fainted and slumped down next to him.

Aziz turned quickly, and seeing the colonel's revolver pointed at him, he dove out the door. The colonel fired again, hitting Aziz in the shoulder. Racing to the door after him, he saw Aziz disappear into the undergrowth. He fired again and again, hitting him at least once more, but not stopping him.

The colonel returned to the house and went to check on Johara, who lay still on the floor. Then he quickly got some water from the kitchen and brought it to revive her. As he lifted her onto his knee, her sheet opened, and he saw she was naked. He could not help but admire her for a moment, then he pulled the sheet back over her. Just then, Johara stirred and moaned, opening her eyes.

She made out the form of the colonel and whispered half in a daze: "Colonel, is that you? Am I dreaming?"

"No, Johara, you are not dreaming, it is me! It seems that I arrived just in time to rescue you. It was unexpected, as I was given a commission to come back here, and then I found an old friend of mine who is a air ace. He told me there was a fast plane, a 'Fokker DVII,' leaving to bring some important items here, so I caught a ride with it. I called my driver upon my arrival, and he came and collected me and dropped me off at your gate. Well, to make the story short, I was able to spoil the plans of these brigands and save you."

"What about my kidnappers?" she asked.

"One of the men is dead, but the man who I suspect is the leader, I rec-

ognized as Aziz. He got away but not before I wounded him at least twice.”

“Aziz... he haunts me like a shadow,” she said.

“Never again, Johara, I’ll see to it as long as I live that he will never touch you.”

“And Fahd? Is he...?”

“I found him dead. I’m sorry,” the colonel answered.

Tears welled up in Johara’s eyes at the loss of her dear servant and friend. “Colonel, you are like an angel of protection to me. Thank you!” she whispered.

“Here, let me help you to your room,” the colonel offered.

Johara nodded gratefully. Picking her up in his arms, the colonel carried her to her room and laid her down on her bed.

Minutes later, Ibrahim and Mustafa came back from their mission, which turned out to be a red herring. They were shocked at what had happened and vowed never to let Johara be without at least one of them at her side.

Despite all the colonel’s efforts, no trace of Aziz was found. He disappeared, and was never seen again. Had he died of his wounds? Or had he decided to go back into the vast deserts from whence he came? No one was certain, but as for Johara, she never saw or heard of him again.



Winter came and went, and the war in the Dardanelles came to a close. The Allied forces were driven back by the Turks under Mustafa Kemal. The battle had been a costly one for the Allies, with 250,000 casualties. But the war in Europe and other parts lingered on, taking its toll on all involved. In 1917, the Allies invaded Greece, deposing King

Constantine I, who favored the Germans, since his wife was the sister of the Kaiser. The Allied forces then put Constantine’s son, Alexander, in power and started to base out of there. And so it lingered on. Then finally, in October 1918, Turkey signed an armistice*. Germany then followed in November and World War I was over.



Von Holm had departed back to Germany some six months before, and from all accounts had become a changed man. He had been badly wounded in one of his escapades in Arabia, while involved in a battle with Lawrence of Arabia. During his recuperation, it seemed he mellowed and reflected a lot on Johara and her sample. Although she never saw him again, she received a few reports from the colonel about him, and was able to see that God works in even the seemingly hardest or most cynical hearts.

The colonel also returned to Germany, and Johara did not see him again. But he was faithful in always writing to her and letting her know what he was doing and how God was working in his life.

With the end of fighting, Süleyman was discharged from the army and came back to Istanbul. The British forces moved in to help administrate the country for the next few years. Johara and Süleyman were able to meet with the now Colonel Higgins and dear Sergeant McCulloch. The Colonel mentioned he had heard her father had stopped his constant traveling, and had retired into a life of writing and giving lectures. Upon his suggestion, she decided to invite him over to visit.

**armistice*: both sides agreeing to stop fighting

It took about eight months for this to finally happen, and when it did it was a very emotional time for them both. The letter Johara had sent her father when she had first married Süleyman had never reached him, so all those years he did not even know if she was still alive. But Johara found that during this time, her father had found his faith in God, for though he'd always been a believer, it took this time of emotional disturbance, this time of loss, to make him seek the Lord and live a life of true faith. Yes, it seems God works out His plans, and this whole adventure had been one that helped many to see the truths of God's Word that all things *do* work together for good.

Süleyman and Johara decided to leave the city of Istanbul, and move down South to their farm. Mustafa and Ibrahim came with them, and helped in the work and running of the farm. Mustafa also married and began a family.

Mustafa Kemal had become a general, and was a great hero from the war. He started the political Nationalist Party and during the next several years was finally swept into power, making reforms to education, moving the capital to Ankara in 1923, and changing the alphabet to Roman from Arabic script in 1926. He helped with many reforms throughout the country and abolished the sultanate.

Yes, thought Johara as she read the many articles on Mustafa Kemal, or 'Ataturk' as he was now known, *he definitely is a man of vision, drive and force. It takes men like this to run empires and nations.* But still there was something about ambition that corrupts and slowly eats away at one's morals and faith, and he was no exception.

Süleyman and Johara occasion-

ally visited Istanbul. Süleyman did not want to get involved in the political scene, but felt his calling was to help his people in this southern part of the country. Although he had no government position, his influence throughout the land was still felt, and he was able to help bring about changes by mobilizing the many contacts and friends he had established over the years. Yes, Süleyman was a ruler, not of armies or countries, but of people's hearts.

Yousuf and Kareem settled down in Damascus, and continued the trading business there that they had begun before the war. From time to time they would pass through and visit Süleyman and Johara. It was always a time of joy and celebration whenever they would come.

This time also brought to Johara's life new challenges and blessings, for within a few months of moving south, she found herself expecting, and nine months later, gave birth to a son, Mahmud. Within the next four years, she gave birth to three more children.

Johara blossomed in childbearing, radiating love and light. An inner glow reached out and transformed her. Motherhood brought her much joy and fulfillment like she had never known.



"This mission is now complete," Jesus said, congratulating Joseph and Esther. "You have done well in helping to bring about My plan in the lives of these ones—and they will continue to fulfill My purpose as they share the light and love that I have placed in their hearts with the many they will meet within their lifetime." Looking at Johara with her children about her, Jesus smiled. "Our crescent jewel has found her calling—and her crown!"