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The Three Princes And The Princess Nouronnihar

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Once upon a time there was a sultan in India who had three sons: the princes Houssain, Ali and Ahmed. The sultan also took care of his niece, princess Nouronnihar. She was the most beautiful and sweetest of all the princesses.

When Nouronnihar had the right age for a marriage, all three princes wanted to marry her. The sultan couldn't give all of his sons permission. But choosing between the princes he could also not. That's why the sultan created a plan.

'You know that I love everything rare and special,' the sultan spoke to his sons. 'I will all send you to a far away country. Who comes home with the most special thing, shall marry Nouronnihar.'

Prince Houssain, the eldest son, left for the kingdom of Visnagar. There he saw the most beautiful merchandise he had ever seen in his life. There were many merchants who loudly were selling their merchandise. There was one merchant who was trying to sell a simple rug for as much as forty gold coins.

'Why are you asking such a ridiculous amount of money for a simple rug?' asked Houssain to the merchant.

'It's not what you think it is,' answered the merchant mysteriously. 'This carpet will bring you wherever you want to go within seconds.'

'That would be remarkable,' said Houssain. 'If that is true, then that would mean that I have found the most unique and most valuable thing I could imagine. But how do I know you are not fooling me?'

'I will show you,' said the merchant. 'Tell me where you are staying and I will take you there on the rug.'

Houssain took a seat on the rug with the merchant and as soon as he told him his address they were at the front door.

'Unbelievable!' yelled Houssain, 'this is the most strange thing I've ever seen. I will buy it from you and will give you forty gold coins.'

Pleased with himself he took the rug. Now Nouronnihar would definitely become his wife. Hussain was convinced of it. But he had to wait for the moment where

all three brothers would meet and return home with their purchases together.

In the meantime prince Ali, the middle son of the sultan, was on his way to Persia. He was walking through a neighbourhood where gems, gold- and silverware, brocade, silk and other precious merchandise were offered. His eye fell on a young man who was swinging around with an ivory tube and asked forty gold coins for it.

‘Why do you ask so much money for something that doesn’t seem to be worth it, especially when you compare it to all the other gorgeous merchandise here?’ asked Ali to the young merchant.

‘Nothing is what it seems sir,’ said the young merchant. ‘This tube is very special. The sides are made of glass. You can look through it and see up close whatever you want to see.’

Prince Ali thought he was being fooled, but the young merchant gave him the ivory tube and let him watch through the glass. Prince Ali thought about his father, the sultan, and saw him through the glass sitting on his throne. And after that he thought about his beloved Nouronihar. He saw her laughing with friends. He longed to see her again and he was sure he would marry her when his father would see what a special item he brought.

‘How much do you want for the tube?’ he asked the young merchant.

‘My boss makes me ask forty gold coins for it,’ he answered.

Prince Ali paid the young merchant and took the ivory tube to the place where he was supposed to meet his brothers.

The youngest prince, Ahmed, took the road to Samarkand. In a big bazaar he found a merchant with a plastic apple in his hand. The merchant held the apple up high and yelled: ‘Forty gold coins for this unbelievable, special apple!’

The young prince started laughing. ‘Why do you ask such an absurd price for a plastic apple?’ he asked the merchant.

‘Well sir, this isn’t just a regular plastic apple,’ the man answered. ‘This apple possesses healing powers and will cure any sick person who smells the apple.’

‘How is that possible?’ asked the prince.

‘The apple is made by a doctor who was a master in healing all kinds of terrible diseases. That doctor dropped dead and he didn’t have the apple on him. He left his family with little money. Now his poor wife wants to sell the apple. With forty gold coins she doesn’t have to live in poverty anymore.’

‘How can I be sure I’m not being scammed?’ asked the young prince.

At that moment a mob of curious people had gathered around the prince and the merchant. One of them yelled: 'I have a friend who is terribly ill. He lives nearby. Let's try the apple on him.'

And that's how the prince went to the home of a terribly sick man with a stranger and a merchant. The merchant held the apple under his nose and the man miraculously recovered. 'Forty gold coins in exchange for your apple?' asked the prince and he paid the merchant with a big smile on his face. 'With this apple I can rejoice myself in a beautiful future with the beautiful Nouronnihar,' he said happily to himself. 'No one has ever seen something so remarkable.'

Then the day came for the brothers to meet in the place they had discussed. Houssain told them about the fast, flying rug that he had bought. Ahmed told them about the special quality of his ivory tube. The brothers badly wanted to look through the tube and to their horror they saw Nouronnihar lying in bed, terribly ill. Ahmed took out his plastic apple and told about the special gift.

The three brothers didn't hesitate for a minute, took a seat on the rug and quickly flew to the bedroom of their beloved princess. Ahmed held the apple to her nose, after which she rubbed in her eyes and it seemed she had just awoken from a deep sleep. The brothers told her about their journey and the special items they had brought. Then they were called to their father, the sultan. He was very much impressed by the gifts of his sons.

Although Ahmed thought that his gift had saved the princess and that made him the most suitable suitor, the sultan didn't agree. 'If your brother Houssain didn't have the rug then you would have never got here on time to save my sweet niece. And if you didn't have the ivory tube then you would've never known how sick she was. So it is thanks to all three of my sons that the princess is saved from death.'



Now the sultan still had to choose a son to marry the princess. Since the gifts were all worth the same, he had to come up with something new. And this is what he did. His three sons each got a bow and arrow. The son who would shoot his arrow the furthest, would get his permission to marry the beautiful Nouronnihar.

So the brothers went to a big plain. Houssain shot his arrow very far, but Ali shot his arrow further. Then it was Ahmed's turn. He shot his arrow far, far away. So far that no one saw where the arrow went. Ahmed thought he was the lucky winner. But the sultan didn't agree. The sultan thought they had to find the

arrow to make the case clear.

So the sultan decided in Ali's favor and the wedding was celebrated a few days later with much splendor.



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