



Arabian Nights, in 16 Volumes: Vol. IV

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Notorious for the delight he took in tweaking the sexual taboos of the Victorian age-as well as the delight he took in the resulting shock of his bashful peers-British adventurer, linguist, and author CAPTAIN SIR RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON (1821-1890) is perhaps best remembered for his unexpurgated translation of the Eastern classic The One Thousand and One Nights, more famously known today as The Arabian Nights. Originating in Persian, Indian, and Arabic sources as far back as the ninth century AD, this collection of bawdy tales-which Burton was the first to bring to English readers in uncensored form-has exerted incalculable influence on modern literature. It represents one of the earliest examples of a framing story, as young Shahrazad, under threat of execution by the King, postpones her death by regaling him with these wildly entertaining stories over the course of 1,001 nights. The stories themselves feature early instances of sexual humor, satire and parody, murder mystery, horror, and even science fiction. Burton's annotated 16-volume collection, as infamous as it is important, was first published between 1885 and 1888, and remains an entertainingly naughty read. Volume IV includes:

- "Ni'amar Bin Al-Rabi'a and Naomi His Slave Girl"
- "The Sweep and the Noble Lady"
- "The Mock Caliph"
- "Ali the Persian"
- "The Lover Who Feigned Himself a Thief"
- "Caliph Al-Maamum and the Strange Scholar"
- "The Man of Al-Yaman and His Six Slave-Girls"
- "The Man Who Stole the Dish of Gold Wherein the Dog Ate"
- "The Woman Whose Hands Were Cut Off for Giving Alms to the Poor"
- "The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through a Dream"
- "The King's Daughter and the Ape"
- and many others.

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James Turco:

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