

ست | Six
قصص | stories
للأطفال | for children

and for language learners

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Foreword

This collection of stories has been laid out for learners of Modern Standard Arabic, while – we hope – being suitable for use as they were intended, as story material for children. The text on the right-hand side of each two-page spread is a translation of the original Arabic on the left, and while care has been taken to ensure that the top and bottom of each English and Arabic page correspond with each other, individual paragraphs and lines on the page may not.

The short vowels *fatha*, *kasra* and *damma*, as well as the *sukoon*, are given on less common words the first time they are met – except for *fatha* before ا, *kasra* before ي and *damma* before و, as in لا, يقول, في. In addition, the final vowel of each word has generally been left out so that the reader can infer it from the sentence structure.

Translators' footnotes have been given in the English version. These have been made where there is an interesting remark on the original Arabic text to be made, or where the English translation is not reasonably literal, or where the Arabic has been added to or totally replaced with something more congenial to English story-telling convention. One example of the last group is the common lack of any intro-

ductory phrase, such as 'Once upon a time', to stories, as at the beginning of *The Flying Bus*. Another example, where generally a note has *not* been made, is the tireless preference for the verb قال in Arabic dialogue; in many such cases a phrase has been substituted which may be more colourful to the English ear.

سانتوش الهندية



يُحْكِي أَنَّ تاجِرًا غَنِيًّا كَانَ يَرْتَحِلُ مِنْ بَلَدٍ إِلَى
بَلَدٍ، لِلتِّجَارَةِ بِالسَّجَاجِيدِ، وَالبُسُطِ الْإِيرَانِيَّةِ. وَكَانَ
لَهُ زَوْجَةٌ يُحِبُّهَا كَثِيرًا، وَيَصْحَبُهَا مَعَهُ فِي أَسْفَارِهِ.
وَكَانَ يَمْتَطِي فِي تَنْقُلَاتِهِ هَذِهِ الْخُيُولَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ
الْأَصِيلَةَ، وَيَتَّبِعُهُ عَدَدٌ مِنْ أَتْبَاعِهِ وَخَدَمِهِ، يَمْتَطُونَ
الْجِمَالَ، وَيَحْمِلُونَ مَعَهُمُ الْأَبْسِطَةَ، وَكَلَّمَا نَزَلُوا فِي
بَلَدٍ أَمَرَ فَأَخْضَرَ لَهُ وَلَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَحْسَنَ الْمَطْعُومَاتِ

Santosh the Indian

There is a story which tells of^a a rich merchant, who used to travel among far-off lands selling carpets and Persian rugs. He had a wife whom he loved very much, and he used to take her on his travels. And on these travels of his he would ride real Arab horses, followed by a number of his followers and servants on camels, carrying the rugs with them. Every time they spent the night in a country, he had only to say the word, and whatever he ordered would be brought to him and to those with him.^b They tasted the most wonderful dishes

^aLiterally, 'it is told that...'

^bLiterally, 'he ordered and it was brought to him'.

وَأَلَدَّ الْمَشْرُوبَاتِ الْمَعْرُوفَةَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْبَلَدِ. وَهَكَذَا
تَمَّتْ لِهَذَيْنِ الزَّوْجَيْنِ حَيَاةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ.

ثُمَّ مَرَضَتْ زَوْجُ التَّاجِرِ حِينَ وَصَلُوا فِي تَجْوَالِهِمْ
بِلَادَ الْهِنْدِ، فَلَمْ تَعُدْ تَسْتَطِيعُ الْإِسْتِقْرَارَ عَلَى صَهْوَةِ
جَوَادِهَا الْجَمِيلِ، لَشِدَّةِ مَرَضِهَا، وَتَزَايُدِ ضَعْفِهَا،
بَلْ كَانَ هَذَا الضَّعْفُ يُقْعِدُهَا حَتَّى عَنِ السَّفَرِ فِي
مَحْمِلٍ مُرِيحٍ، خَوْفًا مِنْ إِهْتِزَازِهِ. وَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَتَذَوَّقُ

الْأَكْلَ وَالشَّرْبَ مَهْمَا كَانَ، وَلِهَذَا اضْطُرَّ التَّاجِرُ
إِلَى أَنْ يَتَوَقَّفَ عَنِ السَّفَرِ، وَيَبْقَى فِي تِلْكَ الْبِلَادِ
مُؤَقَّتًا. وَكَانَ الزَّوْجُ الْوَفِيُّ يُلَازِمُ فِرَاشَ زَوْجَتِهِ فِي
فُنْدُقٍ مِنَ الْفَنَادِقِ وَلَا يُفَارِقُهَا، وَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهَا فِي
حَاجَةٍ إِلَى رَاحَةٍ أَكْثَرَ، اسْتَأْجَرَ دَارًا كَبِيرَةً جَمِيلَةً،
وَأَثْنَهَا بِأَحْسَنِ الْأَثَاثِ، لِيُقِيمُوا فِيهَا حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ
لِزَوْجَتِهِ بِالشِّفَاءِ.

وَبَعَثَ التَّاجِرُ فِي طَلَبِ الْأَطِبَّاءِ مِنْ هُنَا وَمِنْ
هُنَاكَ، وَأَعْلَنَ أَنَّهُ مُسْتَعِدٌّ أَنْ يَدْفَعَ الْمَالَ الْكَثِيرَ

and tastiest drinks of that country. And in this way the couple led a splendid life.

Then one day the merchant's wife fell ill as they were returning from a journey in India. She was so ill she found she could no longer stay upright on the back of her beautiful horse; in fact, her weakness was such^a that she could not even use a comfortable sedan chair, for fear of vibrations.^b And she would take no food or drink whatever; and as a result the merchant was obliged to halt their journey and stay in that country for the time being. And this loyal husband stayed near his wife's bed in a hotel^c and never left her. And when he saw she needed even more rest, he rented out a fine, large house and filled it with the best furniture so that they might stay there until such time as God would allow her to get better.

The merchant sent for doctors from every place for miles around,^d and announced that he was prepared to pay a great deal of money

^aLiterally, 'her weakness debilitated her so much...'

^bمحمل happens to mean both 'sedan chair' and 'stretcher'.

^cLiterally, 'in a hotel of hotels'.

^dLiterally, 'sent a request of doctors from here and from there'.

لأَيِّ طَبِيبٍ يُوفِّقُهُ اللَّهُ لِشِفَاءِ زَوْجَتِهِ. وَاخْتَلَفَ
 الْأَطِبَّاءُ فِي تَشْخِصِ دَائِهَا، وَكُلٌّ مِنْهُمْ نَصَحَ
 لَهَا بِتَنَاوُلِ وَصْفَتِهِ الْمُشْتَمَلَةِ عَلَى أَدْوِيَةِ مُرَّةٍ
 يَصْعُبُ تَجَرُّعُهَا، وَاتَّفَقُوا عَلَى أَنَّهَا فِي حَاجَةٍ
 إِلَى تَنَاوُلِ نَصِيبٍ كَافٍ مِنَ الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ
 فَاسْتَدْعَى التَّاجِرَ أُمَّهَرَ الطُّهَاءِ، فَهَيَّئُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ أَلَذَّ
 الْمَأْكَلِ الْخَفِيفَةِ الْمُشْهِيَةِ، وَلَكِنَّهَا مَعَ ذَلِكَ عَافَتْهَا
 جَمِيعاً، وَفَشَلَ الزَّوْجُ التَّاجِرَ الْمُخْلِصَ لِأَهْلِهِ فِي
 تَحْسِينِ صِحَّتِهَا، مَعَ سَخَائِهِ وَبَذْلِهِ الْمَالِ الْوَافِرِ
 فِي هَذَا السَّبِيلِ. وَازْدَادَتْ زَوْجُهُ ضَعْفاً، وَاصْفَرَّ
 لَوْنُهَا، أَمَّا الزَّوْجُ فَقَدْ أَخَذَهُ الْقَلَقُ الشَّدِيدُ، وَأَقْبَلَ
 عَلَى شَرِيكَةِ حَيَاتِهِ يُسَلِّبُهَا وَيُخَفِّفُ مِنْ آلَمِهَا وَهُوَ
 يَطْوِي فِي نَفْسِهِ حُزْناً عَمِيقاً لِمَا تُقَاسِي مِنْ أَوْجَاعٍ
 وَأَلَامٍ أَعْجَزَتِ الْأَطِبَّاءَ الْمَشْهُورِينَ.

to any doctor who, by the grace of God, might cure his wife^a. But the doctors differed in their diagnoses of her illness, and each of them advised her to take his own prescription, which included bitter medicines which were hard for her to swallow. Where they did agree was that she was in need of food and drink,^b and so the merchant sent for the most skilled cooks, who prepared for his wife the tastiest, lightest, most appetising dishes: but even with these, she rejected everything. Her husband the merchant, the most loyal of family men, failed to improve her health despite the money he generously spent on her.^c His wife just got weaker, and her skin took on a yellowish pallor.

As for her husband, he was now prey to intense anxiety,^d and he approached the partner of his life in order to amuse her and alleviate her pains, while himself enfolded in deep sadness at the pain and anguish she was suffering which so baffled the most eminent doctors.

^aLiterally, 'any doctor to whom God might grant success in curing his wife'.

^bLiterally, 'And they agreed that she was in need of consuming a sufficient amount of food and drink'.

^cLiterally, 'The loyal-to-his-family merchant husband failed to improve her health, despite his generosity and spending a lot of money in that purpose.'

^dLiterally, 'intense worry seized him'.

وفي أحد الأيام رَفَعَت المريضة رأسها تشكو
شِدَّةَ الْعَطَشِ قائلة : « اسقوني شَيْئاً يَرُدُّ إِلَيَّ
صِحَّتِي وانتعاشي . » فَسَرَّ الزوج من هذا الطلب ،
وأمر فأخْضِرَ لها كأس من عَصِيرِ الْفَوَاكِهِ الْمَوْجُودَةِ
في ذلك الْفَصْلِ . ولكنها ما كانت تُدْني الكأس
من فمها وتتناول منها جُرْعَةً واحدة ، حَتَّى مَجَّتْهَا
مُمْنَعَةً من إتمامها .

وأغتم الرجل كثيرا لحال عزيزته ، وطلب أن
يُعلنَ في طول البلاد وعرضها ، أَنَّهُ يُقَدِّمُ صُرَّةَ كَبِيرَةٍ
من الذَّهَبِ ، لِأَيِّ شَخْصٍ يُهَيِّئُ لزوجهِ سَائِلًا
طَيِّبَ النِّكْهَةِ ، يُطْفِئُ عَطَشَهَا وَيَشْفِيهَا من عِلَّتِهَا .
وأقبل الناس من كلِّ صَوْبٍ ، في أيديهم أعْزُ
أنواعِ الْمَشْرُوبَاتِ وَأَطْيَبُهَا وَأَغْلَاهَا .

وكان على مَقَرَبَةٍ من المدينة الَّتِي يُقيم فيها
التاجر ، ضاحِيَةٌ ريفِيَّةٌ ، في أحد أطرافها كوخ
صغير لِأُسْرَةٍ هِنْدِيَّةٍ مُكَوَّنَةٍ من فتاة شَابَّةٍ ، اسمها

Then one day the invalid raised her head and complained of an intense thirst^a. 'Give me something to drink,' she said. 'It will do me all the good in the world.'^b

Her husband was pleased with this request, and ordered to be brought to her a cup of juice made from what fruit was available in that season. Barely had the glass touched her lip and she had taken a single sip, however, but she vomited it up and could not finish it.

The merchant was very disappointed,^c and caused it to be announced throughout the land that he would give a great bag of gold to anyone who might provide his wife with some pleasant-tasting drink which would quench her thirst and cure her illness.

And so people arrived from the four corners of the kingdom, and in their hands were all the fanciest types of drink, the tastiest and most expensive.

Now just outside this city where the merchant's wife lay on her sick bed,^d there was a rural village^e; and tucked away on one side of it was a little cottage belonging to an Indian family, made up of no more than a young girl,

^aLiterally, 'complained about an intensity of thirst'.

^bLiterally, 'it will bring health and recovery back to me.'

^cLiterally, 'very discouraged with the state of his darling'.

^dArabic: 'where the merchant lived'.

^eLiterally: suburb, area.

سانتوش، وأمّها العجوز. ولم يكن لسانتوش وأمّها إلاّ هذا الكوخ وأثاثه القليل، ثمّ قِطْعَة أرض صغيرة بِجَنْبِ الكوخ تَزْرَعَانَهَا، وَتَكْسِبَانِ مِنْهَا قُوْتَهُمَا.

وكان في أرضهما نبات جميل له أوراق طيّبة الرائحة، يَنْبُتُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ ثُمَّ يَكْبُرُ فَيَعَطِّرُ الْمَكَانَ، فَكَانَتْ سانتوش تَجْمَعُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ كَمِيَّةً مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَوْراقِ، وَتُجَفِّفُهَا فِي الشَّمْسِ، ثُمَّ تَغْلِي قَلِيلًا مِنْهَا فِي إِبْرِيْقِ الشَّاي، فَيَتَصَاعَدُ مِنْهُ عِطْرٌ طَيِّبٌ جَدًّا، وَتَتَنَاوَلُ هِيَ وَأُمُّهَا مِنْهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ كَأَسَا أَوْ كَأَسِينَ، فَيَنْعَشَانِهِمَا، وَيَبْعَثَانِ فِيهِمَا النِّشَاطَ وَالْإِرْتِيَاحَ، وَلِذَلِكَ كَانَ اسْمُ هَذَا النَّبَاتِ عِنْدَهُمَا : «مُنْعِشَ الْأَرْوَاحِ».

وَاتَّفَقَ أَنْ كَانَتْ سانتوش تَتَمَشَّى فِي بَعْضِ الْمُرُوجِ الْمُجَاوِرَةِ، فَرَأَتْ رَجُلًا غَرِيبًا مُسْتَطَرِّقًا، ظَنَّتْ أَنَّهُ ضَالٌّ طَرِيقَهُ، فَأَقْبَلَتْ نَحْوَهُ لِتُرْشِدَهُ،

Santosh, and her aged mother. All Santosh and her mother owned was the cottage and a little furniture, as well as a small patch of land next to the cottage which they cultivated and got their food from.

On their land there was a pretty plant growing wild^a with attractive, aromatic leaves, and as it grew it gave its scent to the place. Every day Santosh would go out and gather a quantity of these leaves, dry them in the sun and then boil them up in the tea kettle,^b out of which would rise a quite lovely aroma. She and her mother drank a cup or two of this drink every day and found themselves refreshed and radiant with energy and comfort. And so they called this plant of theirs the 'soul-refresher'.

Santosh was out rambling one day^c on the moors that lay near the village, when she saw an unfamiliar man walking along. She supposed he must have lost his way, and so she approached him with the thought of offering him directions.

^aLiterally, 'it grew of itself'.

^bIn the Arab world tea is normally made by putting the leaves in the kettle with the cold water and then boiling them together.

^cInstead of 'one day', the Arabic text begins this sentence with 'it happened that...'

ولكنه سَبَقَهَا فَقَصَّ عَلَيْهَا قِصَّةَ التَّاجِرِ مُفْصَّلًا،
فَأُطْرِقَتْ سَانْتُوشُ تَتَأَمَّلُ.

فسألها الرجل : « ما بالك مُفَكَّرَةٌ ؟ » قالت :
« في جوارنا نبات يُغْلَى فيكون لِعَصِيرِهِ أَثَرٌ سَرِيعٌ
في تَقْوِيَةِ الْقَلْبِ وَإِنْتِعَاشِ النَّفْسِ، فَتَعَالَ مَعِيَ إِلَى
حَيْثُ كُوخُنَا، لَأُسْتَشِيرَ أُمِّي فِي حَمَلِ مِقْدَارٍ مِنْ
هَذَا النَّبَاتِ إِلَى مَرِيضَتِكُمْ، فَلَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ فِيهِ
شِفَاءَهَا. »

وَتَبِعَهَا الرَّجُلُ حَتَّى بَلَغَا الْكُوخَ، فَقَصَّتْ عَلَى
أُمِّهَا قِصَّةَ الْمَرِيضَةِ، فَشَجَّعَتْهَا أُمُّهَا عَلَى الْمُضِيِّ
فِيمَا عَزَمَتْ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَمَرَتْ ابْنَتَهَا أَنْ تَدْعُوَ الْمَرِيضَةَ
لِلْخُرُوجِ إِلَى الرِّيفِ فِي هَذِهِ الْحُقُولِ الْخَضِرِ،
حَيْثُ الْهَوَاءُ الطَّلَقُ وَالْمَاءُ الْعَذْبُ. وَمَا هِيَ
إِلَّا بَعْضُ سَاعَةٍ حَتَّى فَرَّغَا مِنْ تَحْضِيرِ كَمِيَّةٍ
كَافِيَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا النَّبَاتِ الْمَجْفَفِ، وَسَارَتْ سَانْتُوشُ
وَالرَّجُلُ فِي أَثَرِهَا وَمَعَهَا آيَةُ الشَّاي تَسْتَعْمَلُهَا
فِي شُرْبِ هَذَا الْعِقَارِ. فَلَمَّا أَدْرَكَا مَنْزِلَ التَّاجِرِ

But when he saw her^a he stood in front of her and told her in some detail all about the merchant and his wife.^b

Santosh bowed her head and pondered.

‘What are you thinking?’ the man asked.

‘Where we live,^c’ Santosh replied, ‘there is a plant which you can boil up, and its juice has a speedy effect of strengthening the heart and refreshing the soul. Come with me to our cottage and we can see what my mother thinks about taking some of the plant to your sick lady. Perhaps God will bring about a cure.’

The man followed her until they arrived at the house. Santosh told her mother the all about the merchant’s wife, and her mother encouraged her to do whatever she thought best. She told her daughter to invite the invalid to come out into the country, into the green meadows where there was open air and the water was sweet.

It was almost an hour before they had finished preparing enough of the dried plant. Santosh set out, the man following where she led, and with her she bore a vessel used for drinking the brew^d.

When they reached the merchant’s house

^a Arabic text lacks ‘when he saw her’.

^b Literally, ‘told her the story of the merchant’.

^c Literally, ‘in our area’.

^d Literally, ‘for drinking this medicine’.