

two bodies at one stroke, but now Noorna bin Noorka entered the hall, veiled and in the bright garb of a bride, with veiled attendants about her, and the people opened to give her passage to the throne of the King. So she said, "Delay the stroke yet awhile, O Head of the Magnanimous! I am she claimed by Shagpat; surely, I am bride of him that is Master of the Event, and the hour of bridals is the hour of clemency."

The King looked at Shagpat, perplexed; but the eye of Shagpat gazed as into the distance of another world. Then said he, "We shall hear nought from the mouth of Shagpat till he is avenged, and till then he is silent with exceeding wrath." Hearing this, Noorna ran quickly to a window of the hall, and let loose a white dove from her bosom.

Then came there that flash which is recorded in old traditions as the fourth of the flashes of thunderless lightnings, after the passing of which, hundreds of fakirs that had been awaiting it saw nothing further on this earth. Down through the Hall it swept; and lo! when the Kings and the people recovered their sight to regard Shagpat, he was, one side of him, clean shorn, the shaven side shining as the very moon!

Surely from that moment there was no longer aught mortal in the combat that ensued. For now, while amazement and horror palsied all present, the Genie Karaz, uttering a howl of fury, shot down the length of the Hall like a black storm-bolt, and caught up Shagpat, and whirled off with him into the air; and they beheld him dive and dodge the lightnings that beset him from upper heaven, catching Shagpat from them, now by the heels, now by the hair remaining one side his head. This lasted a full hour, when the Genie paused a second, and made a sheer descent into the earth. Then saw they the wings of Koorookh, each a league in length, overshadow the entire land, and on the neck of the bird sat Shilbli Bagarag cleaving through the earth with his blade, and he sat on Koorookh as the moon sits on the midnight. There was no light save the light shed abroad by the flashes of the blade, and in these they beheld the air suffocated with Afrites and Genii in a red and brown and white heat, followers of Karaz. Strokes of the blade clove them, and their blood was fire that flowed over