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MALAY VENGEANCE.

A TRUE TALE.

In one of those numerous islands in the Indian Ocean, known as the Malay Archipelago, dwelt a young man named Soopol Roy.

Soopol was handsome, brave, and generous; but he possessed a portion of that fiery impetuosity which almost universally characterises his countrymen: easily excited, and partaking, while it lasts, of a species of blind and ferocious insanity.

In the immediate neighbourhood of his own dwelling resided an aged man and his only child, a maiden of surprising loveliness. At a feast given by her father to celebrate her natal day, Soopol beheld, for the first time, the fair and gentle Zelia. He became deeply enamoured; and love, in his fiery breast, was of a character with his every emotion.

He lost no time in making his passion known to its object. He vehemently protested the warmth of his love, and declared that without her life was no longer desirable.

'Yes, beautiful Zelia,' he exclaimed, drawing at the same time his *crease*, and wildly flourishing it over his head, 'this dagger shall drink my life's blood unless you smile upon and reward my love.'

Poor Zelia was so terrified at his violence that she trembled and turned pale. Scarcely would her limbs support her; she staggered to a seat, and covering her features with her hands, burst into tears. Soopol surveyed her for a moment in silent surprise; at length he found words to express the anger and disappointment that possessed him.

'Is it so?' he said in sullen gloom; 'you hate, you would avoid the sight of me—am I so hideous an object?—or does, indeed, some favoured lover reign in that heart?—Ha!' he continued, and passion tinged the dark bronze of his features with sallow lividness; 'I will find him.' He clutched his *crease* with a firm grasp, and ground his teeth with violence: 'I will find him, and he shall account to me for thus crossing my path.'

Zelia a little recovered, her maidenly pride was wounded at his words, and summoning all her firmness into her voice and manner, she thus addressed Soopol:—'You are uncourteous and bold; the friend of my father should, methinks, have been the last to offer outrage to his child.'

'Outrage! outrage!' exclaimed Soopol quickly; 'what! to lay bare the passion that consumes me, and to ask a return!'

'This is wild and useless talk,' said Zelia, 'and I but demean myself in listening farther.'

She turned to depart; Soopol grasped her by the arm: 'Nay,' said he, 'you leave me not thus—I will be heard—say, speak, does not some other—'

Zelia interrupted him indignantly: 'Unloose thy hold,' said she; 'my father shall hear of this violence; his arm is not yet so nerveless that it will not be upraised in his child's defence.'

At that moment Jehanpore entered. There were no need of words to explain the scene. The indignant expression of Zelia's countenance, her confusion and alarm, as well as the passion-convulsed features of Soopol, at a glance made him acquainted that some difference of no ordinary nature existed between the two. His paternal feelings and his pride became aroused. Stepping towards Soopol, he demanded to know the reason of his violence to Zelia. Soopol gave a hurried account of what had passed, vehemently reproaching Zelia for what he deemed her weak rejection of his suit.

Jehanpore heard him with impatience. 'And who art thou?' said he; 'that thou shouldst thus thrust thyself into people's houses, and play the bully in them—get thee hence—no child of mine shall mate herself with one of thy temper.'

Soopol became inflamed to the highest; rejected and treated with contumely by both father and child, his rage vented itself in fearful maledictions on their heads. 'Never doubt,' said he, beating the air frantically with his outstretched arms, 'I will avenge me dearly for this scorn!'

Jehanpore heard him with a smile of scorn. 'I heed not thee nor thy threats,' said he, leading away his daughter; 'once more I bid thee hence, and if thou goest not, my slaves shall beat thee forth.'

'Insolent dotard!' exclaimed the infuriated Soopol, raising his arm, and striking the old man a violent blow on the chest. Zelia shrieked aloud, and at the same instant the weapons of Jehanpore and Soopol sprung from their scabbards.

'Son of a slave!' said the former, aiming a blow at the heart of the young man, 'thy blood must wash out the indignity thou hast offered to my person.'

A deadly combat ensued: rage animated the bosoms of the combatants, and deeply muttered oaths accompanied each blow, as though to augment their wild ferocity. Zelia made the house echo with her cries, while she alternately appealed to her father and then Soopol.

Jehanpore had raised his arm to inflict a blow, when his more active antagonist darted suddenly on him, and ere the arm of the old man had descended, he had plunged his weapon to the hilt into his heart. Jehanpore's weapon fell from his grasp, and with one long groan he fell to the earth and expired.

His wretched daughter, seeing that dismal spectacle, threw herself on the bloody corpse, clasping it to her bosom with filial tenderness, and bedewing his ghastly features with her warm tears. Soopol stayed but a moment to gaze upon his own terrible work, and then fled abruptly from the house. But the kinsmen and domestics of the murdered man, attracted to the spot by the cries of Zelia, now came and tore her from the corpse.

'Trouble not yourselves for me!' exclaimed she; 'if ye are men, pursue the murderer and avenge the death of this poor old man—even now he fled from the house—it is the villain Soopol.'

'Soopol!' exclaimed a dozen in a breath.

'Ay, Soopol!' exclaimed Zelia; 'but while ye are talking here he will escape.'

The whole party immediately hastened after him. Soopol perceived their approach, and he quickened his pace; but the furious Malays speedily overtook him—they hemmed in their victim on every side, and twenty creases were simultaneously thrust into his body.