

Li very softly, "it is like living in the skies."

"It is my Paradise," answered Hok-su-min. "Behold my most exquisite possession." Parting the curtains as he spoke, he revealed a small white and gold altar on which reposed in solitary splendor a huge jar, fretted with the marks of centuries. The old man clutched Nun Li by the shoulder. "Sealed within this jar is Life's most ancient gift, Memory. It is bound within strange perfume, the dust of years, and shall remain so until the day comes when I shall release it." "My grandson, think what a wealth shall be mine!" "All the secrets of the world from time immemorial shall pass before my eyes, and the splendors and beauties of far countries shall be known to me. I shall hold the key to knowledge. It shall be mine to unlock the doors of the past ages to the world."

Nun Li walked softly through the fragrant garden in the cool stillness of the evening. The crushed breath of a myriad of flowers, like old wine made him reckless. A carved dragon fountain in its misty whiteness loomed before him, and he made his way to the stone bench beside the dark pool. Hok-su-min's garden was very beautiful tonight, Nun Li thought. The yellow moon, which shimmered over head, and the full sweet notes of the nightingale's song wounded him with beauty. From somewhere in the distance came the faint singsong of the celestial chanters. Deep in reverie, Nun Li was oblivious to all but the enchanted garden, when the sharp, clear tinkling of a silver-throated bell brought him, startled, to his feet. "Tea," he thought, running in answer to his summons.

Hok-su-min was enjoying his tea in the Scarlet Room and offered his grandson a cup of the poppy-scent-

ed beverage as the boy entered. "This is the supreme nectar, Nun Li" he said. "I partake of it every night before retiring. It brings happiness through forgetfulness. Drink with me."

Nun Li lifted the steaming cup to his lips and drank deep. A pleasant warmth stole over him, and his round cheeks glowed. Life seemed very good to Nun Li. The gentle listness of the air was making Hok-su-min drowsy and his head nodded. But Nun Li's perceptions seemed doubly clear. He finished the poppy-scented tea, while fantastic thoughts crammed through his consciousness. Aghast at their audacity, he looked slyly at his grandfather. Hok-su-min lay before him, asleep. Within his sleeve was the key to the Blue Room which held the precious jade jar. The old man had said that it would remain there unsealed until the golden hour of his life. "But, when would that be," Nun Li asked himself. His grandfather was an old man and had not long to live. Surely he must have experienced his perfect hour and either forgotten or not recognized it. He would die soon, perhaps, that very night in his sleep and then the secrets of the ancient jar might be lost forever! Nun Li had made up his mind. He drew the key from Hok-su-min's sleeve. The next moment he was running through the carpeted halls. Everything in the palace was hushed.

He reached the black and gold door and after fumbling, inserted the key in the lock. The door swung silently back, and he entered the blue draped room. Its only light, the yellow moonbeams streaming through the window blended well with the soft blue sheen of the hangings. Nun Li glided across the room to the little white and gold altar and stood