

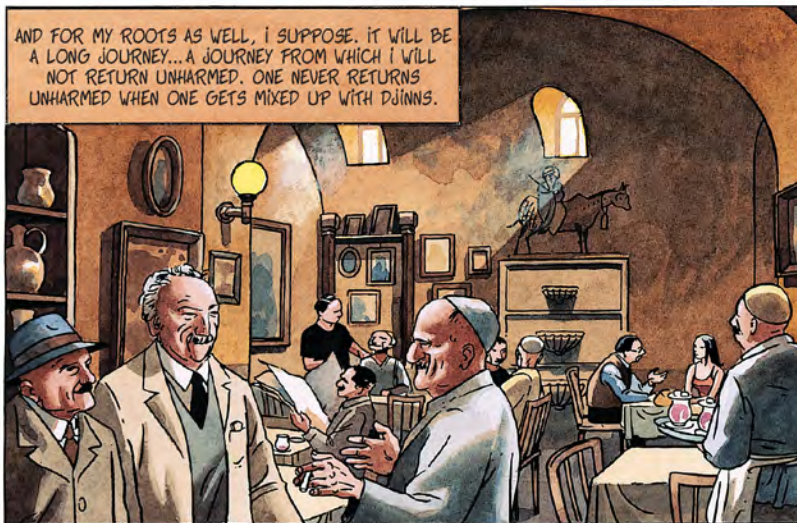
AUTHOR'S NOTE

Everything begins with the body, everything leads back to the body.
Bodies exposed in the harems, bodies torn apart on the field of battle.
Coveted bodies, abandoned bodies.

In 1912, Turkey chose the wrong side. It aligned with Germany
in the Great War that was to follow. The former Ottoman Empire descended
into ruin, and the Turkish economy passed officially into the control of foreigners.
Toward 1895, the weakening of the last sultans allowed the emergence of the Young Turks,
a nationalist movement. A notable member of the group, Enver Pasha, became
minister of war in 1914. When the sultan called for a holy war against the Allies, the fatal
die had been cast for the destruction of the old empire. Then, when Turkey finally withdrew from
World War I (the Armistice of Moudros in 1918), the Young Turks survived by fleeing to Germany.
Years of stagnation followed. Turkey had to wait until 1923 for a former military inspector
from the Anatoli province, Mustafa Kemal, to return dignity to his country.

Those are a few points of history that underlie our story.
We are evoking the end of an era, of a spirit, those of the last sultans.
And we are concerned with a mythology attached to their names: that of the harems.
They were a place of seduction. They were refined and they were cruel,
places where power had no effect unless it went hand in hand with desire.
Nonetheless, the game is subtle. Who, for example, holds the power? Master or slave?
Genies, or djinns, would say that it is they who hold the power, for they exist purely of spirit—
even if that spirit hides within the body of a desirable woman.
In our tale, a couple ventures upon a risky path of body and spirit.
This three-way love story was chronicled in its time
by Tanizaki in literature and Liliana Cavani in cinema.
But now, let's embark on a journey together . . . Bronze doors swing open,
a woman's voice beckons you in song.
Everything is but a mirage.

—Jean Dufaux







WHY, YOU... !

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A THIEF! HOW DARE YOU?

DARE TO SAVE YOU FROM WASTING YOUR TIME? TIME IS PRECIOUS TO ME, TOO. THIS PHOTO COULD GET YOU ON THE RIGHT TRACK.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE--IN FACT, I COULDN'T CARE LESS. BUT I CAN HELP YOU.



THE MAN IN THE PICTURE... THAT'S SULTAN MURATI, ISN'T IT?



THE BLACK SULTAN. YES.

DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM?

I CAN REPEAT WHAT'S IN THE HISTORY BOOKS. BUT I THINK YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE...



I'LL COME GET YOU AT YOUR HOTEL TONIGHT.

WEAR SOMETHING NICE.

WE'RE GOING TO MADAME FAZILA'S BROTHEL.

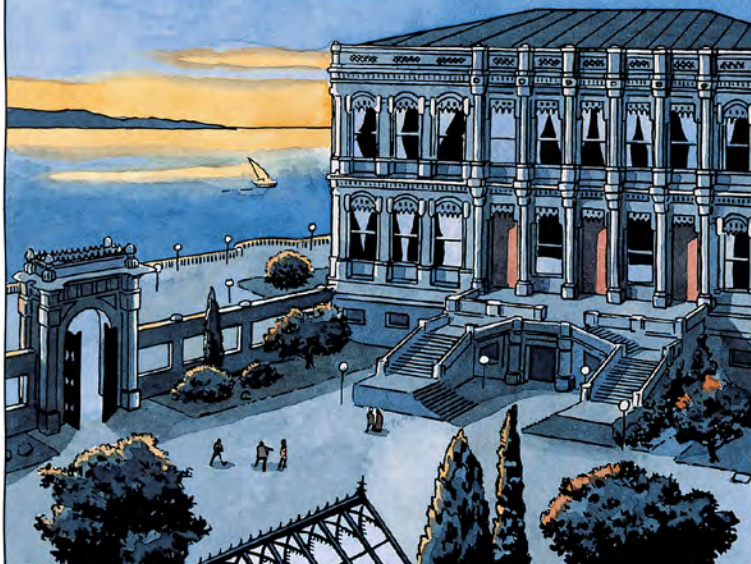


BUT...!



WHO TOLD YOU WHERE I'M STAYING?!

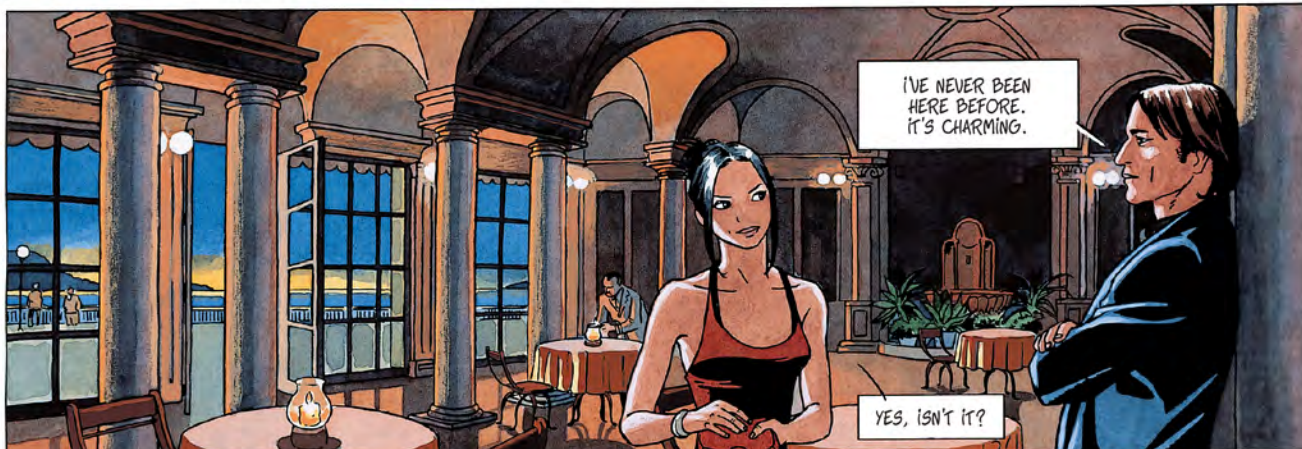
I WAS WORRIED. I SHOULD HAVE SLAPPED HIM AND TOLD HIM TO GET LOST. INSTEAD, THAT SAME NIGHT, IN MY HOTEL ROOM...



I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND MYSELF WAITING FOR HIM. AND WHEN THE TELEPHONE RANG, I ANSWERED...

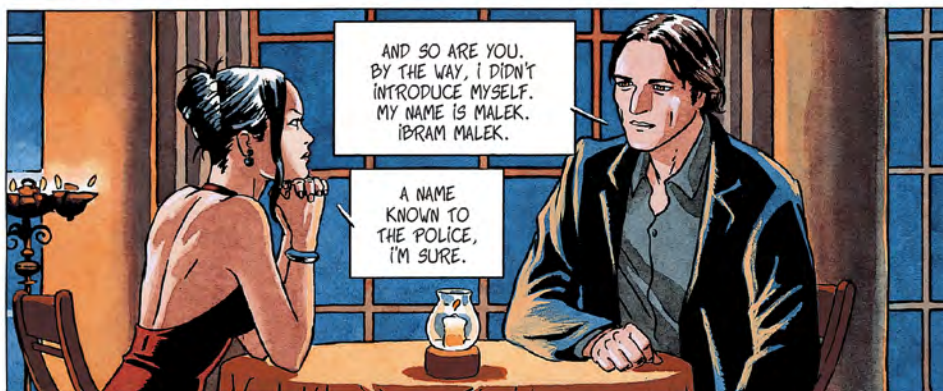


I'M READY...
I'LL COME
DOWN.



I'VE NEVER BEEN
HERE BEFORE.
IT'S CHARMING.

YES, ISN'T IT?



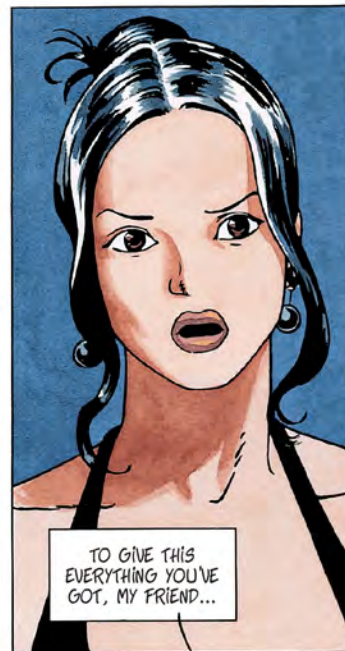
AND SO ARE YOU.
BY THE WAY, I DIDN'T
INTRODUCE MYSELF.
MY NAME IS MALEK.
IBRAM MALEK.

A NAME
KNOWN TO
THE POLICE,
I'M SURE.

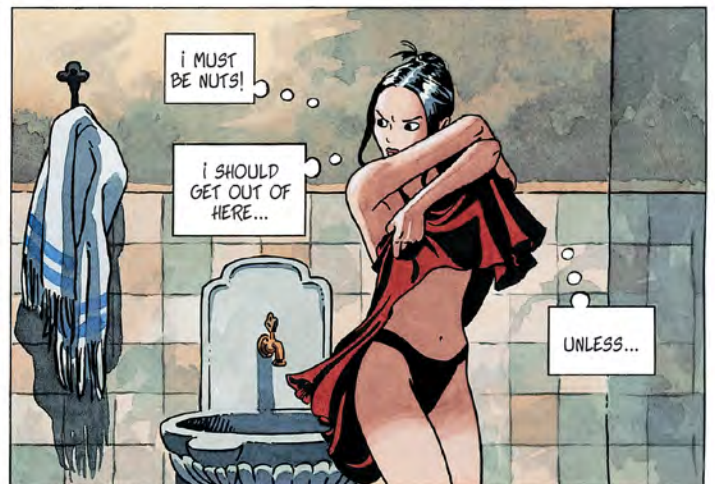


THE POLICE AND OTHERS...
ARE YOU READY?

READY FOR WHAT?



TO GIVE THIS
EVERYTHING YOU'VE
GOT, MY FRIEND...





WHAT
A SUPERB
NIGHT.



I ALMOST FEEL LIKE WE'RE IN A STAGE SET.
OUR HOST SEEMS TO HAVE THOUGHT
OF EVERYTHING TO MAKE THIS
A PERFECT EVENING.

PERFECT?



THERE'S JUST ONE THING
MISSING. THE PERFECT
THING TO FINISH OFF
A WONDERFUL MEAL:
A MAGNIFICENT DESSERT.
JADE'S SECRET RECIPE.

JADE?



MY FAVORITE. IF YOU WISH,
SHE HERSELF CAN SERVE US
HER WONDERFUL CREATION,
BUT I MUST WARN
LADY NELSON...

ME?



JADE'S
PRESENCE MIGHT
DISTURB YOU.

AT THIS HOUR
OF THE NIGHT,
JADE HIDES NONE
OF HER MYSTERIES.



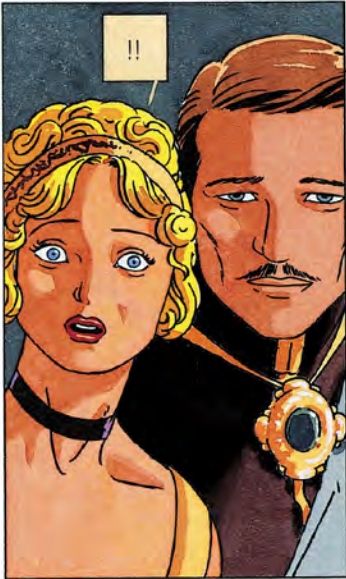
GOOD HEAVENS. I HAVE NO
OBJECTIONS. DO YOU, HAROLD?

I'M
WITH YOU,
MY DEAR.



IN THAT
CASE...

CLAP
CLAP



!!

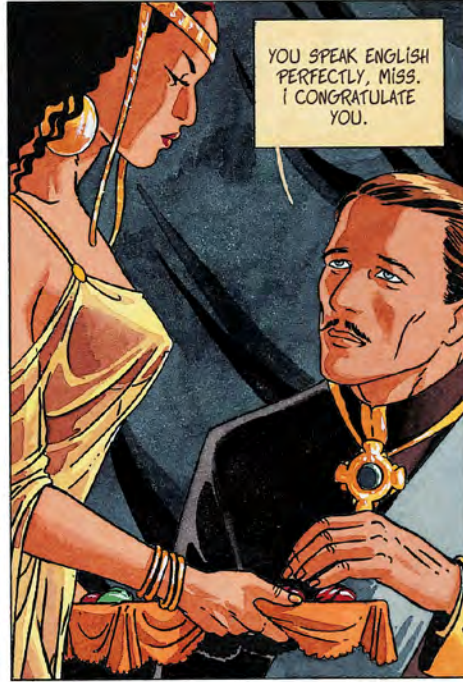


SHE...
SHE IS...

ABSOLUTELY
MAGNIFICENT.
I SHARE YOUR
OPINION.



LADY NELSON,
I RECOMMEND
THE GREEN ONES.
THEY ARE LESS
BITTER THAN
THE OTHERS...

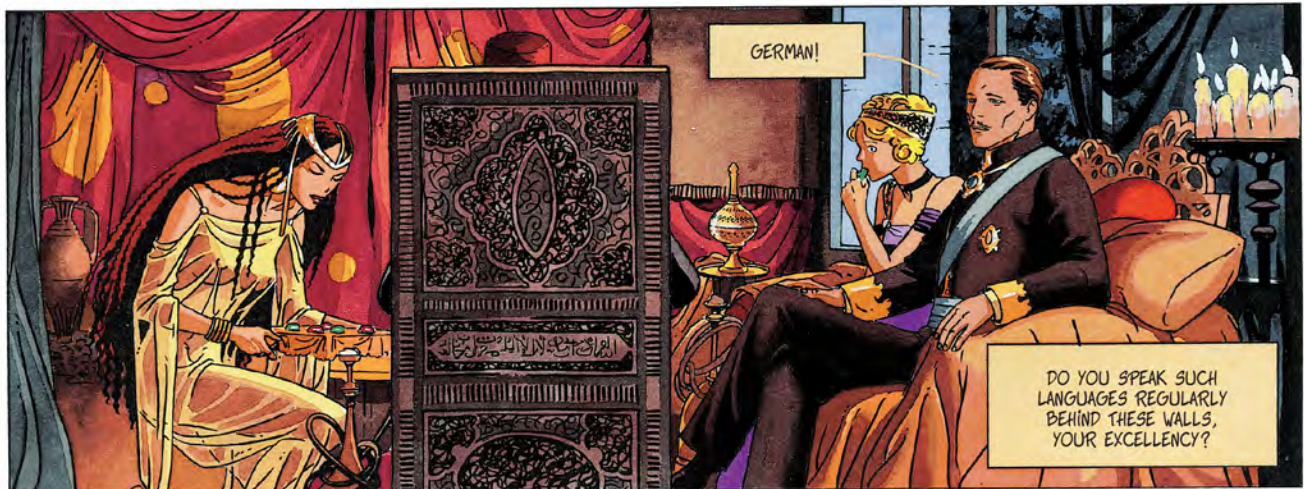


YOU SPEAK ENGLISH
PERFECTLY, MISS.
I CONGRATULATE
YOU.



JADE SPEAKS
SEVERAL
LANGUAGES
FLUENTLY.

ARABIC, ENGLISH,
AND RUSSIAN,
FOR EXAMPLE,
AS WELL AS
GERMAN.



GERMAN!

DO YOU SPEAK SUCH
LANGUAGES REGULARLY
BEHIND THESE WALLS,
YOUR EXCELLENCY?



THESE WALLS ARE NEITHER BLIND NOR DEAF, LORD NELSON. THEY HEAR ALL THE RUMBLINGS FROM EUROPE... AND CERTAIN THINGS ARE HEARD LOUDER THAN OTHERS.



BUT THERE ARE MANY DISCORDANT SOUNDS. ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER.

THINK OF AN ORCHESTRA IN WHICH EACH INSTRUMENT ASSAULTS YOUR EARS.



THE NOISE BECOMES UNBEARABLE.

THINK OF A BATTLEFIELD ON WHICH EACH CANNON ASSAULTS THE ADVERSARY.



THE DESSERT IS ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS.

WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA FOR THIS RECIPE?

IT WAS AN OFFERING TO MY MASTER.



A PASTRY OF ENHANCED FLAVOR OF WHICH THE PROPERTIES ARE NOT INSIGNIFICANT.

THE PROPERTIES?



YES. THE APHRODISIAC PROPERTIES. THEY OPEN A DOOR TO ALL YOUR DESIRES. MY MASTER DREAMS AND DESIRES MANY THINGS AT NIGHT.



AND YOU, LADY NELSON, DO YOU SOMETIMES ENJOY YOUR DREAMS?

OH! WELL... I'VE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT...



EX... EXCUSE ME... I DON'T FEEL WELL.

I SUDDENLY HAVE A TINGLING SENSATION... A SUDDEN FLUSH...