

Vadganomiar the Master Thiever himself.

I had heard the name of Vadganomiar spoken from one end of the Twelve Deserts to the next, for his reputation as one of the greatest thieves who ever lived had spread throughout the lands of Yanlomite, Dreyvish, and Jezrian alike, and now he stood before me. His handsome face was free of scar and blemish, his skin bronze like a coin, his laughing eyes a sparkling viridian, his hair bound into one slender braid. Tall he was, lean and sinewy like a desert panther, quick and light as the owl. How well I remember, for I believed that I had never seen a finer example of vigorous manhood. And many, too, were the women of various lands, both peasant and queen, who had succumbed to his virile charms. He appeared almost more a merchant than a thief, for he wore about him such a variety of bracelets, bangles, rings, armlets and medallions that he seemed veritably clad in silver and gold.

*... a figure of daring and resolve ...*

Vadganomiar, who had stolen away with the crimson cone of the changa tree from the lair of the Gatterux, having picked it even while the beast slept at his feet around the trunk of the ancient tree.

Vadganomiar, whom Empress Jelga Nah of Othorniz had commanded to seize for her the Heart of Rainbows, and who commandeered the barge of the iron magi in order to reach the ethereal isle whereon that mystic gem lay.

Vadganomiar, who entered the palace of the Shinkor Khan in the guise of a beggar, and snatched his fabled dagger from off the Khan's belt even whilst it hung still about the Khan's waist; the Master Thiever escaped in the Khan's own palanquin, dressed in his highness's silken robes and carried by the royal slaves who believed they bore their master upon their shoulders.

*He learned the tragedy of a prisoner from a clouded past ...*

It was as I told him the tragedy of the queen's daughter, the Princess Felahlis, that Vadganomiar was seized with interest. For, ten