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In the Holy Land

The Encounter front of him and the center of the square building. That room was open to the others

By Duanne L. Herrmann with a large archway which opened the center half of the wall.

The man entered the room from This center room was separated from

outside. He was surprised to see how the rooms surrounding it by a light,

simply it was decorated, almost barren, filigree lace, transparent curtain and its

really, but not quite. The floor was richly raised floor. The most noticeable differ-

carpeted with ornate designs: flowers, ence from it and the outer rooms were the

leaves and tendrils. He could see through contents. Whereas the outer, surrounding

the interior doors to the other rooms that rooms were empty, the center room was

were similarly carpeted. filled with lights. It was light upon light:

The walls were unadorned light, pale multiple candelabras, chandeliers and yellow, almost white. Exterior doors and candles. No one walked in that room.

windows were covered with obviously And, many of the lights had cut glass to

thick, dark curtains with elegant edging reflect the light: light upon light. This was

that did not distract. He was sure they an obvious effort to bestow in death light

would muffle any outside sounds, as would upon One who was denied even a single

the two-foot-thick stone walls. The original candle in His prison cell on dark, freezing

structure was somewhat fortress-like, but winter nights.
with too many doors and windows for that. The man stood, just to the
side of
The most interior wall, the one he the door, and watched others come in,
was facing as he entered, was adorned singly, after him, slowly,
reverently. Nearly
with three items. Centered on each side all would pause midway into the
room,
were large, framed texts. He could not as if to catch their breath and
possibly to
read them from his distance, but he could say a brief, silent prayer. Then
they would
recognize that one was in a script he could approach the center room but
with a
not read. In the center of the wall, just slower, even more reverent,
pace.
below the ceiling, was another framed Upon reaching the
threshold to the
inscription in the same script which he central room they would,
invariably, kneel
could not read. on the soft carpet, then bow
their heads to
In each of the two corners he was the threshold in respect and tribute
to the
facing were plant stands with lamps with One buried there. Some would
touch the
large globes which were lit from within threshold, some would not.
so they cast a soft, warm light. Their light The threshold, in front of
the filigree
was inconsequential compared to the curtain, was marked off with a
thin cloth
chandelier hanging in the center of the of dark green, the green in
respect for the
room. None of these lights compared with descendancy of the One buried
within
the lights in the center room directly in from the Prophet Muhammad. Down
the
center of this cloth were carefully scattered
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rose petals and on each side stood a vase surprised him, love that was
deep and
of fresh roses. The man now identified the intense, love that he had never
before
scent of roses which greeted him upon experienced in his life. No one
had ever
entering the room. It was powerful, but loved him like this. No one. The
power of

not unpleasant. this love could not even be
 compared to
 The people who knelt would gener- the love he had received from his
 ally not remain there for long. They would grandparents, wife or children.
 He could
 get up reverently, back themselves away, not think, He could not reason
 – he felt
 then side over often to an empty space suspended in space and time.
 Then he
 along a side wall of the room or in the sobbed. His body shook and tears
 flowed.
 back, though some would find a spot in He could not stop, he could only
 cry.
 the larger space of the room, and sit on the Gradually the sensation
 ceased, as did
 carpet in whatever manner felt comfort- his sobbing. He pulled himself
 up, looked
 able to them. Some would close their eyes furtively around to see the
 reactions of
 in prayer, others would read silently from the others in the room. This was
 not his
 a prayer book. There were several avail- typical response to anything!
 There was no
 able from a small chest upon entering the indication from any of the
 others in the
 portico surrounding the building. Upon room that anything unusual had
 occurred.
 entering that surrounding space everyone He backed away, as he had seen
 the others
 took off their shoes in respect. do, and found a spot where he
 could lean
 The man decided to go forward to the against a side wall. He was drained
 of
 threshold also. It seemed the most reason- emotion and astonished that such
 an expe- rience could actually happen,
 able thing to do, and kneeling also.
 and happen
 At first he placed his forehead on to him!!
 the cloth on the threshold as he had seen What had just happened?
 others do, but this did not feel “right.” He He did not know.
 then lowered his head to the side of the
 threshold. This felt much more appro-
 priate, though he did not understand why.
 Before he could begin to wonder about
 this, he began to feel as if he was a small
 child pushing his head against the knees of

a person sitting before him. He wanted to join with that person and become part of the One greater than himself. He pushed his head more firmly against the knees. He inexplicably wanted to be as close to this person as possible.

Suddenly, in the midst of this powerful desire, he “felt” arms reach out above him to extend over his head, but not touching him. Before he could more than begin to wonder about this, he felt loved.

He felt love of such power that

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