The Corrupter

Said Jibrin*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1947 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
The Corrupter

Said Jibrin

Abstract

HELLO, Blue Eyes.” “Hello. Do you know me?” ”A man knows his property. You are mine.” ”Yours!!?” ”Yes, mine . . At least, you will be.” ”But I do not know you. I never saw you before.”...
The Corrupter

Said Jibrin

HELLO, Blue Eyes."
"Hello. Do you know me?"
"A man knows his property. You are mine."
"Yours!!?"
"Yes, mine . . At least, you will be."
"But I do not know you. I never saw you before."
"The beautiful flower cannot know all the bees of the field."
"Nor the greedy bee know all the flowers of Spring. Say . .

how do you know me?"
"I have always known you. Your beauty has always lighted
my road."
"Without my feeling your presence?"
"Yes. Your eyes smiled tenderly at me in the face of the first
woman I loved—my mother. They peeped from the violets of
May shining with dew and light; they winked at me from the
rainbow following the spring showers. I saw your face in the
paintings of the masters and heard you whisper to me in the
music I love."
"It seems so strange to me. But who are you?"
"I am an artist. A preserver of beauty. I polish the lamp
and light it to shine and never lose its glamour again. I will
preserve your beauty from decay and let it remain fresh and
desired, forever like a magic lantern."
"Where are you from? Your face and your words are strange."
"I come from the East, where life is a calm perfumed lake,
and dreams come and go, leaving the water undisturbed. I come
from everywhere and nowhere. I am a globe-trotter."
"But what is your native land? Surely you have one."
"I have seen the land of my dreams in a woman's black eyes
. . eyes that shone like a lake among the mountains in the moon-
light on a late clear night of August."
"Have you any hope of seeing it any more? You should be
homesick."
"Yes, that is why I have been travelling all this time. Actually,
I see it now. My God! What a garden in your eyes! Blue eyes,
childish and jolly and innocent. If one is not captured by their
"Tell me more about yourself."

"Should I repeat what I said before? I have mastered the art of globe-trotters. I earn my living as I wander. I am filled with a fever that pushes me to leave. So I carry my bag and stick and wander. I run after the good and the beautiful. When I find it, or a shadow of it, I live in love and fear, as I am now."

"Are you? I am glad . . no, actually, I am sorry for you."

"I love you. But your blue eyes will not shine forever and I should continue my search and wandering for my native land sooner or later. It throws me into surprise and fear."

"But you are a preserver of beauty. Can't you do anything about that?"

"Yes . . I think I can. I shall draw a picture of you in the most perfect and desirable way you look. When I finish the picture, I will have my native land with me forever. Fear will leave me and only happiness remain. Then you will not run away from me. You will be mine."

"Tell me more about yourself. Are you good? Are you bad?"

"I am neither good nor bad. Neither moral nor immoral."

"You mean, like animals?"

"No, like gods. I make my own laws and apply them in my own world."

"What do you mean?"

"Well . . when I am not painting, I am busy corrupting people."

"Are you a corrupter?"

"And a perfect one, indeed! I see undecided people. So I make them decide one way or the other and give meaning to their lives."

"Then you are a bad man."

"But sometimes I reform. If a man's good traits are dominant I help him to be good."

"Why don't you limit yourself to that?"

"Because I am no preacher. I only want to save my world from chaos and imperfection."

"Have you tried to give meaning yourself to life—either good or bad?"

"I tried. Both ways. I was like a man in a cold room with a short blanket. He pulls it to his feet and his head freezes. He
pulls it to his head and his feet freeze. So I decided to change both the room and the blanket, and here I am.”

“Which are there more of—those you corrupt or those you reform?”

“Evil is dominant. It is like the black color.”

“You are a bad man . . . a dangerous man. You should be locked up. You should be . . .”

“Don’t be excited, Blue Eyes. They are not citizens of your country. In fact, they are not from any country.”

“Where are they from?”

“They are from my own world. The world I create for myself. They move in the poems I compose, and they look at you from the pictures I draw. You hear them talk in the music I play on my Bohemian flute. It is my world of Art, where there is no moral or immoral. It is playing with sand on the coast at the ocean . . .”

“An attractive magician, I see. What would you make out of my imperfection and indecision?”

“A bouquet of violets, Blue Eyes.”

Vacuum
Richard Caplan

The morning sunlight filtered through the dirt-streaked window of Harry Ellis’ bedroom to the few items of furniture which held most of Harry’s belongings. In the bed Harry stretched and yawned, opening his eyes to the light. Slowly he crawled out of bed, struggled into his soiled blue coveralls and went down the stairs to breakfast.

“Harold, what time did you get in last night?”

“Well, it was a little late, Dad.”

“What time?”

“Well, maybe about 1:30.”