

# *How Raja Rasâlu Went Out Into the World*

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Indian

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*Advanced  
5 min read*

Young Rasâlu lived on, far from the light of day, for eleven long years, growing tall and strong, yet contented to remain playing with his colt and talking to his parrot; but when the twelfth year began, the lad's heart leapt up with desire for change, and he loved to listen to the sounds of life which came to him in his palace-prison from the outside world.

'I must go and see where the voices come from!' he said; and when his nurses told him he must not go for one year more, he only laughed aloud, saying, 'Nay! I stay no longer here for any man!'

Then he saddled his horse Bhaunr Irâqi, put on his shining armour, and rode forth into the world; but—mindful of what his nurses had often told him—when he came to the river, he dismounted, and going into the water, washed himself and his clothes.

Then, clean of raiment, fair of face, and brave of heart, he rode on his way until he reached his father's city. There he sat down to rest a while by a well, where the women were drawing water in earthen pitchers. Now, as they passed him, their full pitchers poised upon their heads, the gay young Prince flung stones at the earthen vessels, and broke them all. Then the women, drenched with water, went weeping and wailing to the palace, complaining to the King that a mighty young Prince in shining armour, with a parrot on his wrist and a gallant

steed beside him, sat by the well, and broke their pitchers.

Now, as soon as Raja Sâlbâhan heard this, he guessed at once that it was Prince Rasâlu come forth before the time, and, mindful of the Jôgis' words that he would die if he looked on his son's face before twelve years were past, he did not dare to send his guards to seize the offender and bring him to be judged. So he bade the women be comforted, and for the future take pitchers of iron and brass, and gave new ones from his treasury to those who did not possess any of their own.

But when Prince Rasâlu saw the women returning to the well with pitchers of iron and brass, he laughed to himself, and drew his mighty bow till the sharp-pointed arrows pierced the metal vessels as though they had been clay.

Yet still the King did not send for him, and so he mounted his steed and set off in the pride of his youth and strength to the palace. He strode into the audience hall, where his father sat trembling, and saluted him with all reverence; but Raja Sâlbâhan, in fear of his life, turned his back hastily and said never a word in reply.

Then Prince Rasâlu called scornfully to him across the hall—

'I came to greet thee, King, and not to harm thee!  
What have I done that thou shouldst turn away?  
Sceptre and empire have no power to charm me—  
I go to seek a worthier prize than they!'

Then he strode out of the hall, full of bitterness and anger; but, as he passed under the palace windows, he heard his mother weeping, and the sound softened his heart, so that his wrath died down, and a great loneliness fell upon him, because he was spurned by both father and mother. So he cried sorrowfully—

'O heart crown'd with grief, hast thou naught  
But tears for thy son?  
Art mother of mine? Give one thought  
To my life just begun!'

And Queen Lonâ answered through her tears—

'Yea! mother am I, though I weep,

So hold this word sure,—  
Go, reign king of all men, but keep  
Thy heart good and pure!

So Raja Rasâlu was comforted, and began to make ready for fortune. He took with him his horse Bhaunr Irâqi, and his parrot, both of whom had lived with him since he was born; and besides these tried and trusted friends he had two others—a carpenter lad, and a goldsmith lad, who were determined to follow the Prince till death.

So they made a goodly company, and Queen Lona, when she saw them going, watched them from her window till she saw nothing but a cloud of dust on the horizon; then she bowed her head on her hands and wept, saying—

‘O son who ne’er gladdened mine eyes,  
Let the cloud of thy going arise,  
Dim the sunlight and darken the day;  
For the mother whose son is away  
Is as dust!’

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