

Welcome to the Court of the Great Sultan

The palace is an imposing compound of buildings that glow golden in the late afternoon light, thick walls of smooth marble, and dark shadows in the recesses of the towers.

The palace is full of many beautiful rooms, with inner walls of pierced stone, silk curtains that stir in the slightest breezes, deep pools and shady gardens.

The palace is home to a great number of people, visitors and slaves, scholars and servants, lovers and priests. Some of them are detailed here.

There has been a little disturbance of late. A primary trade route to the south has become plagued with trouble of one kind and another. Hasan ibn Daud, a favorite tutor to the children of the haram, has been taken gravely ill, perhaps due to an over-indulgence of some kind, but worth watching for something more. And the latest caravan from the west has just sent word that they are delayed. Again.

There is plenty in the great storerooms of the palace, no need for urgent concern, but all these things are weighing on the Sultan's mind, and thus on the people of his court. Recently, there has been a little whisper, the barest breath of sound, that something more serious is at the root of all these little irritations. Some of the Courtiers listed below may have heard that rumor, or even started that rumor, or are most keenly interested in squashing that rumor. The Sultan is healthy and wise, a tactically skilled man and a generally shrewd judge of character. The Sultana is beautiful and clever, a consummate diplomat and a capable director of all palace business. They will be glad of any opportunity to get this current spate of ill fortune behind them.

Use the above as the seed for the Sultan's temperment and the mood at Court. If you prefer to invent your own wholecloth, please do. The Courtiers below are partially pregenerated characters for use in short 2-3 hour games or as starts for live-action versions of the game.

Either the Sultan or the Sultana is necessary for the larp - be sure that person has read the game and the larp directions. There is a blank sheet for the Sultan or Sultana to fill out as part of their preparation. If both the Sultan and the Sultana are in play, the final decisions always rest with the Sultan. As with any other member of his Court, the Sultan decides which group the Sultana joins for the different stories and he may make her a Visir.

It may be that not all Courtiers will be played in each game - in this case, some adjustments to the envies might be needed. Have the players write what envies they see as most interesting or logical down on their Courtier sheet as part of their preparation along with determining their Ambition.

Connections in Court are exactly that, no more no less. They are notes to the players on the web of relationships in play. The Sultan and Sultana are free to write their own as they see fit, and any Courtier can make additional notes on their connections.

The Courtiers detailed in full are most decidedly not the full compliment of the Palace. Refer to the section on Courtiers in Common and make use of these other members of the Palace household:

Hasan ibn Daud, the tutor to the royal children, now ill

Fadii and Abu Fadii, guards stationed in the delayed caravan

Amira and Yasmina, young daughters of Umm Fadii

Hayat the gardener, wife of Bilal the Hawkmaster

Shams al Fayyad, a smith, the brother of Abu Samir the Chef

Arif, a 10 year old son of the haram, favorite of Umm Fadii

Jelal, a prince of the haram

Sura the tailor

Habibi the sweet-maker

Subanna the perfumer

Cassim the night watchman

Hannifa, a lady-in-waiting

Rahim, a scribe

Yasir, a guard

Shams, a camel-boy

Arpad, a cook's-boy

Malik, a messenger boy

Shafiya, a washerwoman

Aziza, a maid

Add at your whim maids and guards and servants and Courtiers of all types.

The Great Sultan

the most merciful and wise

Hearing -

Sight -

Smell -

Taste -

Touch -

I wear

Connections

I envy

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



There is an attempt on my life.

I am wounded in an attempt on my life.

The assassin is successful.

Freedom



I win my freedom to travel unknown.

The Glorious Sultana *the most generous and kind*

Hearing -

Sight -

Smell -

Taste -

Touch -

I wear

Connections

I Envy

Ambition




I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety

 The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

 The Sultan Rebukes me publically.

 I am beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.

Noorinissa

Handmaid to the Sultana

Hearing - The Sultana confides in me.

Sight - My hair is my vanity.

Smell - I do not like strong scents, but I do not dodge uncomfortable tasks.

Taste - Order and good manners are important to me.

Touch - I know the quality of a thing by the way it feels.

I wear a sheer long sleeved tuinc under a heavily embroidered long vest, and rich dark skirts.

Connections

I see Nadim, Hamida and Abu Samir the Cook as beneath me - mere kitchen staff.

Rayya the Jeweler, Ibn Kabir the Astrologer and Umm Fadii the Midwife are my peers.

I will turn to the guard Rafiq in a crisis - he is discrete.

Jalila the Scholar I am curious about - she is an independant woman!

I Envy

Rayya the Jeweler her artistry.

Rafiq the Guard his great strength.

Umm Fadii the Midwife her secrets.

Nadim the Waterboy his simple freedom from all care.

Hamida the Assistant Cook her utter disregard for fashion
- she is not in the Sultana's sight as I am.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publically.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Bafiq al Jurashi

the Palace Guard

Hearing - I love music, and can play a little.

Sight - Though large, I can be so still that other people forget I am not a statue.

Smell - When someone is nervous or afraid, their scent gives them away to me.

Taste - I am highly cautious, and only eat what I have seen others eat before me.

Touch - I have felt the sting of the lash.

I wear a wide fabric belt with a large dagger, and a short-sleeved v-neck top over loose pants. My face is round, and I am not a small man.

Connections

I admire Kadija the Storyteller and like to hear her stories.

I see Hamida the Assistant Cook as a brash little sister.

I almost trust Abu Samir the Cook, but I still am watchful - who knows what made Hasan fall ill?

I Envy

The Astrologer Ibn Kabir's learning - I can read, but not as he can.

The Mathematician Maboud's fine looks and his ability to disregard vigilance.

The Storyteller Kadija's family, as I have none.

The Scholar Jalila's travels in the wider world.

The Hawkmaster Bilal's authoritative manner - he strides around as if he runs the place.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



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باري

Umm Fadii Tasneem al Babat the Physician Midwife

Hearing - I am up before the first bird sings in the dawn.

Sight - I know which royal children in the haram are truly the Sultan's, and which are not.

Smell - Very little discomforts me.

Taste - I enjoy the occasional medicinal glass of wine.

Touch - I have held both birth and death in my hands.

I wear a dark, loose, column-like dress, with embroidery of flowers - the matching veil covers my head almost completely and drapes gracefully over my torso. I have a heart-shaped face.

Connections

Kadija the Storyteller is my peer, and Abu Samir the Cook is my friend.

I do not trust Rayya the Jeweler, as she looks too hungrily at the Sultan's children.

My son Fadii is a guard in the Sultan's delayed caravan, along with my husband Abu Fadii.

I have four other children, two who still live; Amira and Yasmina are young.

I Envy

Hamida the Assisant Cook her endless energy and work ethic.

Ibn Kabir the Astrologer his many friends and his knowledge of the future, though I think he uses it occasionally for his own gain.

Jalila the Scholar her novelty - the court loves whoever is most new, babe or grown.

Bilal the Hawkmaster the sky he has through his hawks.

The Storyteller Kadija's long memory - she knows things no others do.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Abu Samir al Fayyad the Sultans Own Chef

Hear - I whistle when I am pleased.

See - I can tell what people hunger for.

Smell - I have a distinguished face, with a nose broken long ago during my years as a soldier.

Taste - I enjoy my food and it shows a bit in my belt.

Touch - Despite my weight, I am light on my feet with a great efficiency in my movements.

Wear - I wear a dark-colored salwar kameez with a embroidered long vest. I have a small mustache and a square jaw.

Connections

My niece Hamida shows promise in the kitchen but I do not let her know that I see it - she would grow over-confident.

I notice that Maboud the Mathematician does not eat much - he's too picky and I find it rude.

Rayya the Jeweler and I have worked together to make amazments for the Sultan's pleasure.

I Envy

Nadim the Waterboy for being beneath the Sultan's gaze - he's insignificant and no one wonders if he is going to serve poison to the Sultan, because I put the water in the pitcher for him!

Umm Fadii the Midwife holds the power indeed. Every time there is a birth in the haram, she calls the orders and all must obey.

Rafiq the Guard is in fine fighting form - ah for my lost youth! I could tell you stories...

Jalila the Scholar has eaten foods I have not.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Jalila bint Latif al Suli

the Visiting Scholar

Hearing – I enjoy the debate of sharp minds, but have little patience for sharp tongues.

Sight – I long to see my father's face again.

Smell – The smell of incense relaxes me.

Taste – I find the fashions of Court odd and amusing.

Touch - I don't like to be touched.

My clothes are not from this region - I wear a close-fitting jacket with long sleeves and a very full skirt over pantaloons. I wear my hair in many braids, with a wrapped head-band. I have a round face.

Connections

Bilal the Hawkmaster and I are both foreigners to this court - I would like his freindship.

Kadija the Storyteller and Ibn Kabir the Astrologer are my peers, and Maboud the Mathemeatician is my rival here.

Nadim the Waterboy is sweet-faced indeed, but probably not a good idea just yet - I am new here and don't want to tread on any toes.

I Envy

Bilal the Hawkmaster his years of experience in this court.

Maboud the Mathematician his secure place - he seems the Sultan's favorite.

Rafiq the Guard his invisibility - I wonder what he has seen and heard?

Kadija the Storyteller her wit! That woman is clever!

Noorinissa the Sultana's Handmaid seems to know everything that's happening in court, and she is always perfectly willing to make that clear.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Maboud Abd al Bahman the Mathematician

Hearing - I consider my words carefully before speaking.

Sight - Everywhere I look I see the sacred geometry that shapes the world.

Smell - If I do not understand a thing, I will work at it until I do.

Taste - I sometimes forget to eat.

Touch - My fingers move constantly over a set of prayer beads.

I wear a long white robe with embroidered trim, a long patterned vest, and a snug -fitting cap. I have a trim beard and a finely sculpted face.

Connections

I have known the jeweler Rayya for years and see her as a friend.

Ibn Kabir the Astrologer and Jalila the Scholar are my peers.

I find Kadija's stories not as charming as the rest of the court, but I respect her wisdom.

I Envy

Ibn Kabir has such an easy way with people, something that I lack.

Rayya the Jeweler has great skill in her hands.

Hamida the Assitant Cook is so uninhibited!

Rafiq the Guard has only to flex a muscle to impress everyone. He never has to tax his mind on the problems of the Sultan until all hours.

Umm Fadii the Midwife is a woman of deep faith and she has been blessed with many blessings - I am ashamed of my envy of her.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

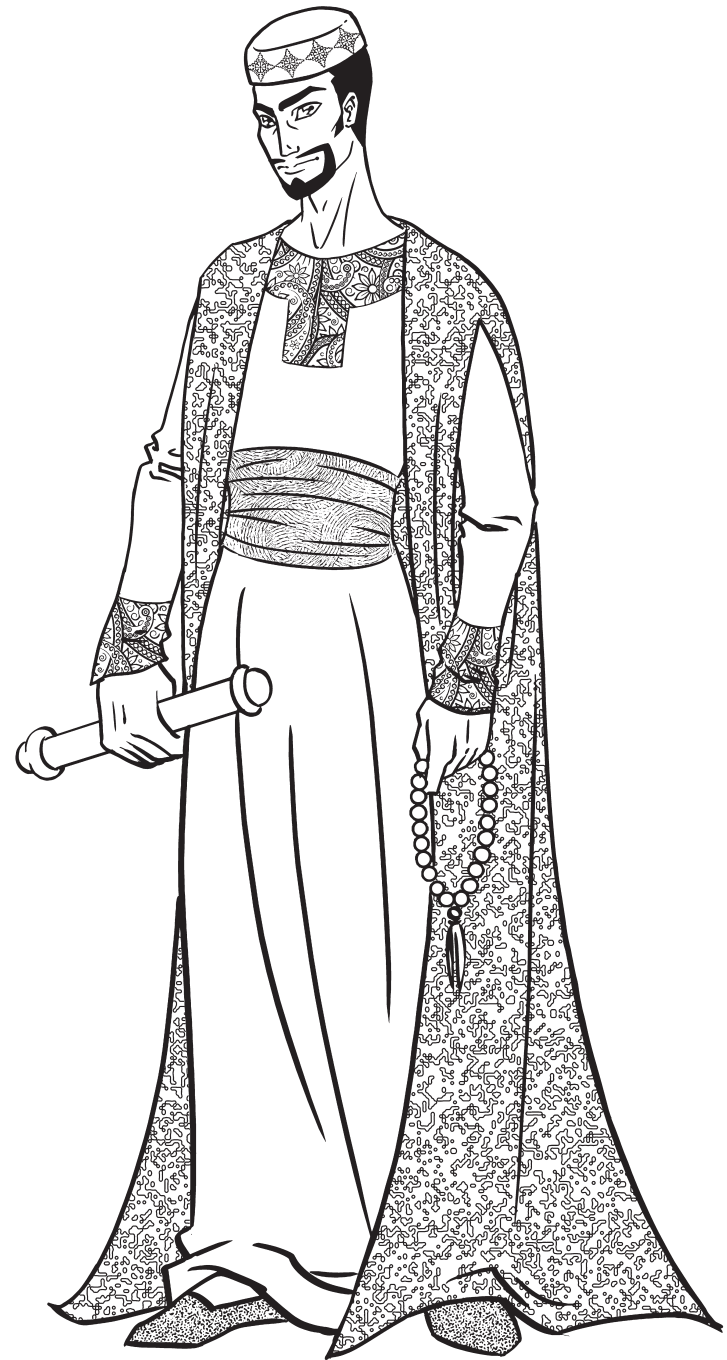
The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Ibn Babir the Astrologer

Hearing - People seek out my advice, and I am a little in love with the sound of my voice.

Sight - The interactions of the stars are sometimes more clear to me than my own heart.

Smell - I smell of night blooming jasmine and the open air.

Taste - I have an open ready smile for anyone, regardless of station or destiny.

Touch - My height makes me self-conscious and slightly stoop-shouldered.

I am tall, and wear a long and simple kaftan. I often clasp my hands before my waist, one hand wrapped around one fist, thinking. I might carry a small telescope in a leather case with a shoulder strap. My face is long and thin.

Connections

Maboud the Mathematician and Kadija the Storyteller are my friends; Abu Samir the Cook, Bilal the Hawkmaster, and Hasan the tutor are my peers.

I am friendly to Nadim the Waterboy, the Assistant Cook Hamida and Rafiq the Guard because all destiny is interconnected. I know not what I have done to upset the handmaiden Noorinissa, so I try to be calm in her presence.

I read the stars when the Midwife Umm Fadî's sons were born, and knew which ones would die.

I Envy

Hawkmaster Bilal his charming wife Hayat. Any man would be glad of such a helpmeet.

The Midwife Umm Fadî has even more of the Sultan's trust than I. I can see the royal children's stars, and plot the best time for conception, but she can bring them safely into this world.

Jalila the Scholar has such wide experience! I wish I had seen the lands she has seen.

The Guard Rafiq has such an easy job and he is so good natured about it.

Rayya the Jeweler can create the beauty that I can only observe.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Badija bint Ibrahim al Bumi

the Storyteller

Hearing - My voice is rich and pleasing to the ear

Sight - I can tell by your face what story you need, and the one you are not telling

Smell - I love the scent of roses and like to have them near me, including a bracelet with roses carved and jeweled.

Taste - I have simple taste in clothing, but enjoy new and unusual flavors and experiences

Touch - It has been years since I last had a lover.

I wear a simple gown, with slightly flared sleeves and an embroidered square yoke. My face is oval-shaped, and there is grey in my wavy hair. A lifetime of dramatic storytelling has left smile lines and a few small wrinkles on my face. I smile easily.

Connections

Bilal the Hawkmaster and his wife Hayat have been friends for years, even before my husband's death.

Umm Fadii the Midwife is worth knowing but we are not close.

My sons are grown and stationed far away in the Sultan's outposts.

Hasan the tutor is a dear friend, and I fear for him.

I Envy

Umm Fadii still has her husband, and there may be others as well.

Abu Samir the Cook has a whole staff beneath him to help him with his work.

The guard Rafiq his great discipline.

Noorinissa the Sultana's Handmaiden is such a sweet and innocent child - she has not felt loss as I have.

Jalila the Scholar has stories I do not know, and she has the ear of half the court because of it.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



Hamida bint Shams al Fayyad

Apprentice Cook

Hearing - I ignore the taunts of those who think I don't belong here.

Sight - You don't have to show me how to do a thing twice.

Smell - I can tell the recipe by the smell of the dish.

Taste - I am loyal to those who earn my trust.

Touch - I bite my fingernails when I am nervous or thinking hard about something.

I wear a necklace with a disc-shaped pendant from my mother's people, and sometimes I tuck my skirts up into a belt. My face is slender with an angular jaw, and I have curly hair. I'm wiry and strong, but short.

Connections

Noorinissa the Handmaid is haughty and thinks she's above me, but really I don't pay any attention to her.

Rafiq the Guard is hilariously funny when he's off duty, plus I've heard him play.

My uncle Abu Samir the Cook is a good teacher, but not fast enough! I want more!

I Envy

Storyteller Kadija's beautiful voice. It's like listening to a rainstorm or a little stream.

I do envy my uncle's undisputed place as the Sultan's chef.

Jalila the Scholar has beautiful hair and she sees straight to the heart of a problem - both things I would like.

Maboud the Mathematician has such fine clothes! He never has the slightest spot of grease or dirt.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



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Bilal ibn Bahul al Sagher

the Master of Hawks

Hearing - My bootheals on the palace floor ring out my approach.

Sight - If you catch my interest, I don't miss a thing. If you don't catch my interest, I don't notice you at all.

Smell - I habitually take a certain stimulant that has a distinctive spicy scent.

Taste - My wife's lips are the sweetest thing in all the world.

Touch - My hands and arms are scarred from the talons of my birds.

I wear boots and long leather gloves. My face is squarish, and I have heavy brows and deep-set eyes. My hair is often disheveled from the wind or the birds.

Connections

Ibn Kabir the Astrologer and Maboud the Mathematician are colleagues,

Kadija the Storyteller and Umm Fadai the Midwife are friends.

The Guard Rafiq shows promise and I like to encourage him.

My wife Hayat is a gardener, and is friends with the Sultan's page.

I have three children and two grandchildren in the Sultan's service.

I Envy

Noorinissa her perfectly smooth Handmaiden's hands.

Maboud the Mathematician his tenacity.

The Waterboy Nadim has not worked a day in his life, yet he has the eyes of half the women at court.

Abu Samir the Cook was a true leader, and still has an easy way with others.

Umm Fadai the Midwife has a strength I will never have, and the courage to use it.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

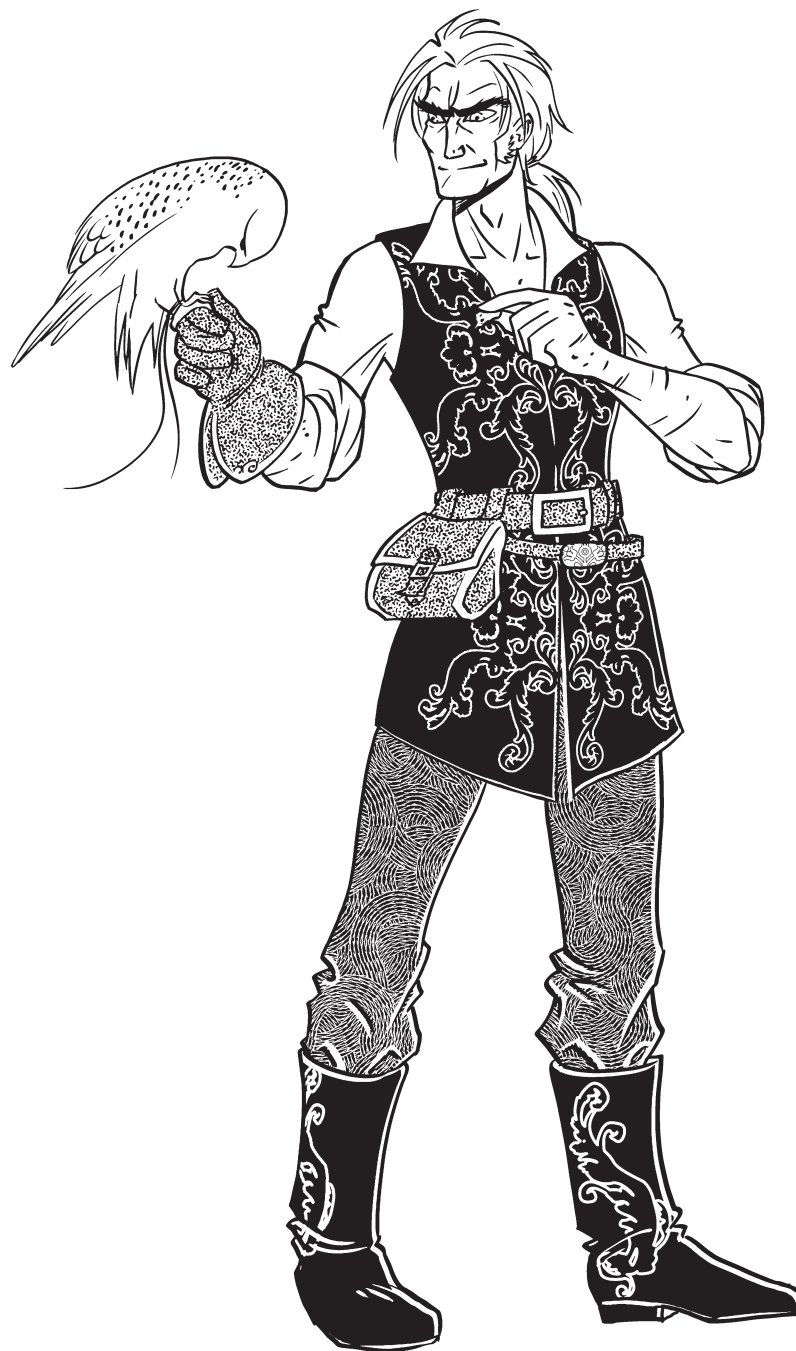
The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Nadim al Damiri

the Water Boy

Hearing - I know when to keep my mouth shut and when to let something slip.

Sight - I love the sight of my bed at the end of a long evening.

Smell - My skin shines with perfumed oils.

Taste - I have an adventurous appetite.

Touch - I'm naturally diplomatic.

I wear full silk pants, a slim-fitting shirt open at the throat, a striped vest and jeweled slippers. My face is heart-shaped and I have pale eyes.

Connections

The Handmaid Noorinissa has known me since I was a boy, and still treats me like one.

Rafiq the Guard, Abu Samir the Cook and his assistant Hamida are my friends.

Hasan the tutor taught me to read when I was a child, along with the Midwife Umm Fadii's son. I think I know what ails him, but right or wrong, it's dangerous for me to say. Best not to point fingers at people more powerful than I, especially while there is any doubt.

Jalila the Scholar and Ibn Kabir the Astrologer put up with my questions about their work.

I don't think Hawkmaster Bilal likes me so I try to avoid him.

I Envy

Abu Samir the Cook can eat all he wants whenever he wants.

Maboud the Mathematician is seen as very learned, very faithful, very wise.

Noorinissa is Handmaid to the Sultana!

Hawkmaster Bilal is loud and takes up space in ways I dare not,

The Midwife Umm Fadii is respected by everyone, for good reason.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



par

bar

Bayza bint Malik al Hadad

Jeweler to the Court

Hearing - The sound of children's laughter is more lovely to me than any gem.

Sight - I see the potential for beauty everywhere.

Smell - I know the scent of death.

Taste - I have no patience for wastefulness.

Touch - My hands are nimble, though calloused with the work of practicing my craft.

My eyes hold a sadness, even though my earrings add sparkle to my face.

I wear a beautifully embroidered long vest over a narrow long sleeved shirt and very full skirts. I wear a number of examples of my craft.

Connections

The Storyteller Kadija and Abu Samir the Cook I trust. I like working with them both.

I would turn to the Mathematician Maboud for guidance in times of trouble.

Hamida the Assitant Cook is my current inspiration - all fire and quick movement.

I have listened to the Guard Rafiq play when he did not know I was there.

I Envy

Maboud the Mathematician his faith.

Kadija the Storyteller her sons.

The Astrloger Ibn Kabir's knowledge of the heavens and the future.

Hawkmaster Bilal's family.

The Scholar Jalila her connection to the wider world.

Ambition



I achieve my Ambition, which is

Safety



The Sultan Rebukes me in private.

The Sultan Rebukes me publicly.

The Sultan has me beheaded.

Freedom



I win my freedom from Court.



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