

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS ASSASSINS \neq MARCO POLO

FB as they wish at their pleasure and that they will find there *beautiful gardens & full of*
 Z *rivers which run separately in fullness of wine and of milk and of honey and of water,*
 FB *in the same way as that of the Old Man;* and therefore had he made them make that
 garden like the Paradise of which Mahomet had spoken to the Saracens. And
 FB *therefore the Saracens of that country believe truly that that [18c] garden is Paradise,*
 LT R *because of its beauty & delectable pleasure. He wished to give them to understand that he was*
 V *a prophet and companion of Mahomet, and that he could make whoever he wished go into the*
 Z R Z *of evil life whom he wished to make satellites and assassins. Because he had indeed a*
 R Z VB *castle at the entry of that garden at the mouth of the valley so very strong and impregnable*
 R *that he was not afraid of a man in the world; and it could be entered by a secret way;*
 P V *and it was very carefully guarded, and in other parts it was not possible to enter into*
 V *this garden but only there. And the Old Man kept with him at his court all the*
 R *young men of the inhabitants of those mountains of the country from twelve years to*
 FA R *twenty; they were those who seemed to wish to be men of arms¹ and brave and*
 P *valiant, who knew well by hearsay, according as Mahomet their most unhappy*
 FA *prophet had told them, that their Paradise was made in such manner as I have told*
 FB R *you, and so they believed in truth as Saracens believe it. And every day he preached to*
 V VB *them of this garden of Mahomet, and how he was able to make them go therein. And what*
 V VB *shall I tell you about it? Sometimes the Old Man, when he wished to kill any lord*
 FB R FB *who made war or was his enemy, made them put some of these youths into that*
 TA *Paradise by fours and sixes and by tens or twelves and by twenties together just as he*
 R FB TA *wished, in this way. For he had opium to drink given them by which they fell asleep*
 LT V *and as if half dead immediately as soon as they had drunk it, and they slept quite three*
 FB R FB FB *days and three nights. Then he had them taken in this sleep and put into that garden*
 FB R FB FB *of his, into different rooms of the said palaces, and there made them wake, and they found*
 themselves there.

FB **H**OW THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN MAKES HIS ASSASSINS PERFECT AND
 OBEDIENT. And when the youths were waked up and they find themselves
 VA R *in there and see themselves in so fine a place and they see all these things*
 VA R *which I have told you, made just as the law of Mahomet says, and the damsels were round*
 VA R *each one always, and all the day were singing and playing and making all the caresses and*
 R *dalliance which they could imagine, giving them food and most delicate wines, so that intoxicated*
 R *with so many pleasures and with the little streams of milk and wine which they saw, they*
 R *believe that they are most truly in Paradise. And the ladies and the damsels stayed*

¹ FA: *qui auoient volente destre hommes darmes et leur disoit*