

This story is an adventure story in which the unnamed narrator describes how he decides to travel again, but then finds himself abandoned on an island. After searching the island for a means of escape, he comes across a strange and impressive bird called a roc.

1 I had resolved, as you know, on my return from my first sea voyage, to spend the rest of my days quietly
2 in Bagdad, but very soon I grew tired of such an idle life and longed once more to find myself upon the
3 enigmatic water discovering the world's mysteries and hidden treasures.

4 I packed, therefore, such goods as were suitable for the places I intended to visit, and embarked for the
5 second time in a good ship with other merchants whom I knew to be honourable men. We went from island
6 to island, often making excellent bargains, until one day we landed at a spot which, though covered with fruit
7 trees and rich in springs of excellent water, appeared to possess neither houses nor people. While my
8 companions wandered here and there like ants exploring the land, I sat down in a shady place: having heartily
9 enjoyed the provisions and the wine I had brought with me, like a slumbering king, I fell asleep, lulled by the
10 murmur of a clear river which flowed close by.

11 How long I slept I know not, but when I opened my eyes and realised that I was alone and that the ship
12 was gone. I watched with a numbed horror as the ship disappeared in the horizon; sweat drenched my skin
13 and a sickness engulfed me like never before.

14 Alone on this strange and remote island, I wished bitterly enough that I had been content to stay at home
15 in safety, but since wishes could do me no good, I presently took courage and looked about me for a means of
16 escape. With a resolute determination, I climbed a tall tree and directed my glances towards the sea; but,
17 finding nothing hopeful there, I turned landward, and my curiosity was excited by a huge dazzling white
18 object, so far off that I could not make out what it might be.

19 Descending from the tree I hastily collected what remained of my provisions and set off as fast as I could
20 go towards it. As I drew near it seemed to me to be a white ball of immense size and height, and when I could
21 touch it, I found it marvellously smooth and soft. As it was impossible to climb it--for it presented no foot-
22 hold--I walked round about it seeking some opening, but there was none. I counted, however, that it was at
23 least fifty paces round. By this time the sun was near setting, but quite suddenly it fell dark, something like a
24 huge black cloud came swiftly over me, and I saw with amazement that it was a bird of extraordinary size
25 which was soaring near. Then I remembered that I had often heard the sailors speak of a wonderful bird called
26 a roc, and it occurred to me that the white object which had so puzzled me must be its egg.

27 Sure enough the bird settled slowly down upon it, covering it with its wings to keep it warm, and I
28 cowered close beside the egg in such a position that one of the bird's feet, which was as large as the trunk of
29 a tree, was just in front of me. Taking off my turban I bound myself securely to it with the linen in the hope
30 that the roc, when it took flight next morning, would bear me away with it from the island. And this was
31 precisely what did happen. As soon as the dawn appeared the bird rose into the air carrying me up and up till
32 I could no longer see the earth, and then suddenly it swooped so swiftly that I almost lost consciousness.

33 When I became aware that the roc had settled and that I was once again upon solid ground, I hastily
34 unbound my turban from its foot and freed myself, and that not a moment too soon; for the bird, pouncing
35 upon a huge snake, killed it with a few blows from its powerful beak, and seizing it up rose into the air once
36 more and soon disappeared from my view. When I had looked about me I began to doubt if I had gained
37 anything by quitting the desolate island.

38 The valley in which I found myself was deep and narrow, and surrounded by mountains which towered
39 into the clouds, and were so steep and rocky that there was no way of climbing up their sides. As I wandered
40 about, seeking anxiously for some means of escaping from this trap, I observed that the ground was strewn
41 with glistening and sparkling diamonds. This sight gave me great pleasure, but my delight was speedily
42 subdued when I saw also numbers of horrible snakes so long and so large that the smallest of them could have
43 swallowed an elephant with ease. Fortunately for me they seemed to hide in caverns of the rocks by day, and
44 only came out by night, probably because of their enemy the roc.

45 All day long I wandered up and down the valley, and when it grew dusk I crept into a little cave, and
46 having blocked up the entrance to it with a stone, I ate part of my little store of food and lay down to sleep,
47 but all through the night the serpents slithered to and fro, hissing horribly, so that I could scarcely close my
48 eyes for terror. I was thankful when the morning light appeared, and when I judged by the silence that the
49 venomous serpents had retreated to their dens I came tremblingly out of my cave and wandered up and down
50 the valley once more, kicking the diamonds scornfully out of my path, for I felt that they were indeed vain
51 things to a man in my situation. At last, overcome with weariness, I sat down upon a rock, but I had hardly
52 closed my eyes when I was startled by something which fell to the ground with a thud close beside me.