



# The waking hours before dawn

Steven Tabor  
2020 (c)



# The Waking Hours Before Dawn

So Scheherezade said,

*"shall I tell you a story to while away the waking hours before dawn "*

The 1001 Nights fantasized Arab life. Originally told by storytellers in Iran, Saudi Arabia and India starting around 600 AD., the first English Language edition of Arabian Nights was published in 1706. These were a treasure trove of stories about sexual desire, power, race and social relations.

In the stories of the Arabian Nights, black people are, almost without exception, portrayed using negative stereotypes. An exception to this is *The Man of al-Yaman and His Six Slave-girls*, in which slave-girls of different complexions unabashedly praise themselves:

“ Were I to set forth all the praise of blackness, I should be tedious; but little and enough is better than great plenty and too much. As for thee, O blonde, thy color is that of leprosy and thine embrace is suffocation; and it is of report that frost and intense cold are in Hell for the torment of the wicked. Again, of black things is ink, wherewith is written the word of God; and were it not for black ambergris and black musk, there would be no perfumes to carry to kings. How many glories are there not in blackness and how well saith the poet:

"Dost thou not see that musk, indeed, is worth its weight in gold, Whilst for a dirhem and no more  
a load of lime is sold?"

This series combines landscapes of the deserts of the Emirates with bodyscapes of an African model. It is an ode to a world of dreams, fantasy, exoticism and the coming together of neighboring continents and cultures.













































































































































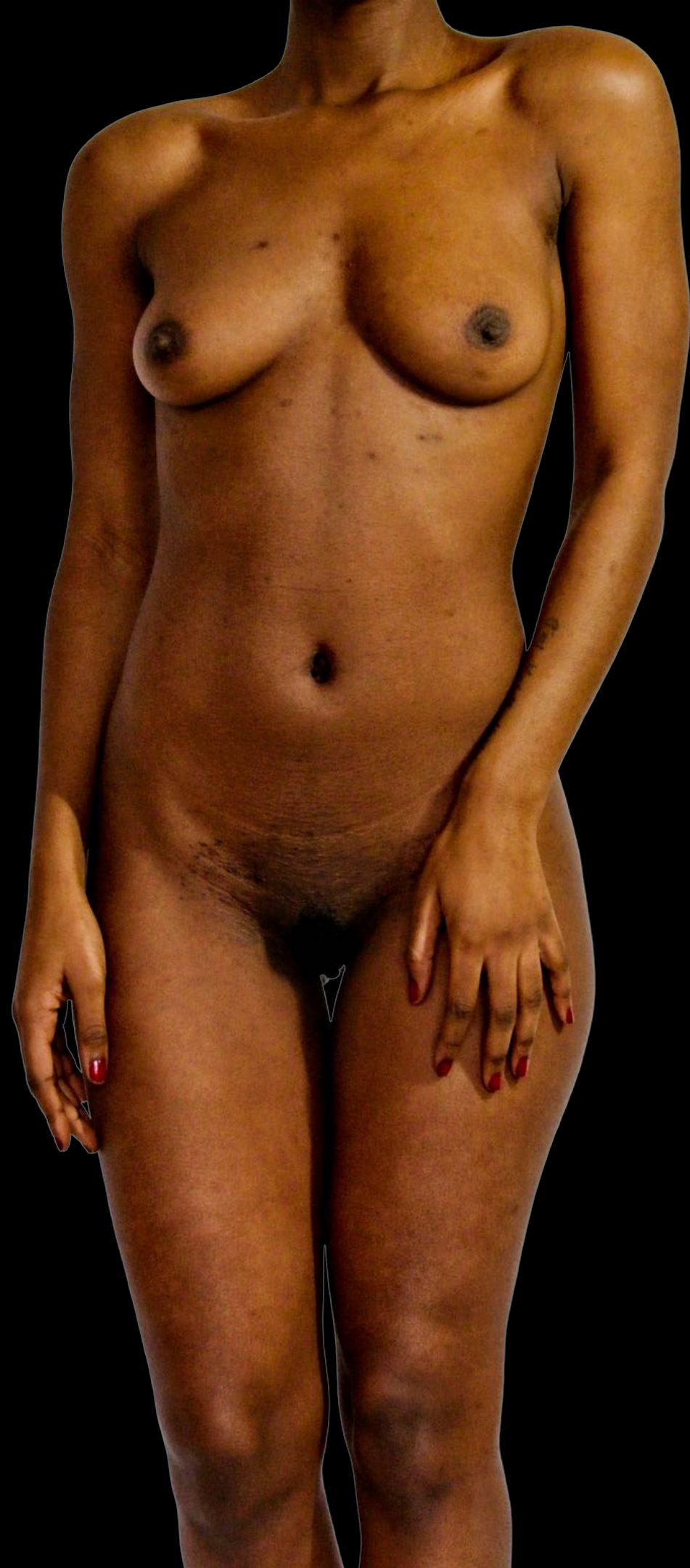
























































































































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