Some ladies of Egypt, who were well known for telling tales, heard of all that had been going on, and had a great deal of fun about Zuleikha’s situation; each of them had her own little something to say.

‘Have you heard? Zuleikha went and fell for her slave. And the slave actually ignored and rejected her! And then our lord Kytfir found out. He saw her literally running after a slave!’

Oh, those women went on and on about the first lady. And each had her own preferred version. ‘The wife of our lord did this and that and the other’, they went on: ‘She is shamed in the sight of the people!’

And of this pack of women that slighted Zuleikha some had no idea what they were saying, and others had undergone similar attractions, and were already disgraced in their families’ eyes.

Anyway, Zuleikha got to hear about all this gossiping, so she ordered a feast and asked them all.
Four hundred ladies she invited to banquet with her and each took their place as an honoured guest.

Zuleikha asked Joseph for assistance on this occasion:

‘Just this once, please, take note of what I say.
When I summon you, then come and join the gathering, and let these gentle ladies observe your beauty.’

She herself dressed up Joseph in highly embroidered robes and combed his hair with her own hands. Finest red gold was the chalice that she gave him to carry, and Joseph brought it with him to this gathering.

At that point those gentle ladies were all lolling in their seats – knife in one hand, and an orange in the other. They had just been told they could start to cut up their fruit, when Joseph came striding into the hall.

Every single one of them turned and looked at Joseph. They found his beauty beyond belief and each of those gentle ladies stared at him so much, they cut their fingers instead of the orange.

They went on staring at him for such a long time, their fingers were nicked in numerous places, but not a single one of those women felt the slightest pain, and they were stunned beyond words.

At last they said: ‘Dear me, this is no human! How could a mere slave be like this? How could anyone see him, and stay straight in their heads? Beyond any doubt this is a delightful angel.’

Zuleikha remarked: ‘Having seen what now you have seen, perhaps you understand why my face waned away?
You have seen him only once, and you have ended up cutting your hands.
Have you not all gone a little mad?

As for me, I have been looking at him for seven years now and my love has grown more with every day. I lost my ability to act, there was no escape; but my patience will outlast yours!’