Once Mahiya reaches Ustad Khurari's house, she presents her with the fruit she has brought and cajoles her into treating her alleged depression. That night she urges Zambur to sneak out to try to discover Khwaramah's whereabouts. He does, but runs into a patrol headed by a guard named Gharrad. The guards seize Zambur and interrogate him. He persuades them that he is a simple stranger headed home, but they are so drunk that they bolsterously string him up by his feet. They leave him hanging in this position while they succumb to sleep.

"As for Mahiya, she saw that it was late and she was waiting for Zambur to return. When a long time had passed she got upset. She put on her veil and boots and went outside the house, looking all through the marketplace until she came to that place. There she saw that someone was suspended upside down and a group of men had been drinking wine. The utensils of the party were scattered, and all the participants were lying all over the place. She went forward and, recognizing Zambur, she set him free. Then she drew a knife from her belt and cut off the heads of all Gharrad's companions. She hung Gharrad up in Zambur's place and went back home with Zambur."

Jagana organizes this gruesome scene in a predictable but effective manner. Placing Mahiya, the heroine of the story, at the very center of the composition, he shows her actively swinging the throat of a guard. All but one of the sprawling figures have met the same fate at her hand. That figure, who must be Gharrad, has been spared because Mahiya has something special in mind for him. Hanging upside down in a blackened doorway directly above Mahiya and further aligned with the central gateway below is Zambur. Mahiya will soon avenge his humiliation by forcing his tormentor, Gharrad, to take his place.

While much of the preceding illustration (cat 60) suffers from a debilitating fussiness, this scene is invigorated by the sense of largeness that pervades virtually every element. The massacred guards, for example, are big, flat shapes placed strategically around the courtyard, their solidly colored forms breaking up the expanse of patterned tilework behind them. Similarly, the hexagonal kiosk to the left expands powerfully into the courtyard, an effect enhanced by the huge starburst pattern of its tiled roof. Even the blue panels flanking Zambur have outsized half-medallions and flowers. All these features connect the painting with Jagana's earlier paintings in the volume (cat. 35 and 50). Many of the tile patterns actually repeat those found in the former painting.

The obvious exceptions to this bright and basic style are the two crucial figures, Mahiya and Zambur. Mahiya's face, like that of her immediate victim, has been repainted. Nonetheless, the voluminous rendering of red sleeves and orange lower garment and even the fringe on her green turban point to the hand of Kesava Dasa. This is corroborated by the hanging figure of Zambur, whose skillfully drawn face and feet and highly developed modeling strongly recall Kesava's figures in other paintings in this section of the manuscript (cat. 35 and 36).
In the midst of all this conniving comes a very brief martial interlude. Male Na‘im’s vizier, Muhandis, proposes to wreak havoc among Ibrahim’s forces by releasing a fearsome Zangi from prison, where he is sent periodically for eating people. Na‘im agrees, and sends out As the Zangi to carry the fight to the God-worshippers. The Zangi begins to decimate Ibrahim’s men, but he soon runs into the formidable Ibrahim himself, who quickly tears him to pieces. With this daunting figure dispatched posthaste, the story returns to affairs of the heart, this time describing how Na‘im’s son Ghazanfar pines away for the captive Khwaramah.

The text provides no clue as to how Ibrahim kills As the Zangi. Left to his own devices, the painter Mukhils simply invents a scene of grotesque carnage, with Ibrahim literally ripping the Zangi’s arm completely away from his body. In this, he repeats a form he employed in an earlier scene (cat. 45). He also constructs the composition in a similar manner, isolating Ibrahim and As the Zangi centrally and framing them with a congruent screen of rocks. In this case, however, he packs both sides of the composition with clusters of soldiers, who probably represent opposing armies, but are equally astonished at the slender Ibrahim’s display of brute strength. Mukhils shows some interest in varying his views of figures, as, for example, the drummer seen directly from the back, or the frontal figure slightly below him with a broad, squared nose. Most of all, Mukhils revels in pattern, typically making it so strong, so colorful, so relentless that it drowns out subtler volumetric and tactile effects.

Recognizing that Mukhils was merely competent in faces, the supervisor assigned the faces and hands of the two key figures—Ibrahim and As the Zangi—to a figure specialist, Madhava Khurd. To discern Madhava’s style is to admire it. The round-eyed Ibrahim, for example, bites his lip, as he wrenches the Zangi’s arm from his body. Likewise, Madhava captures with inimitable nuance the Zangi’s nappy hair, glazed eyes, and crooked teeth. Both hands are muscular and three-dimensional, qualities appreciated most fully when one compares the blockish hands or strandlike fingers of the soldiers to the right.

Mukhils also supplies the architectural backdrop to the scene. His whimsical forms are familiar by now, but here they are more minuscule than ever, and collectively pitch precariously to the left. The artist resorts to somewhat forced transitional devices to integrate the two parts of the composition. On the left, for example, the ramparts end where the camel begins; but Mukhils makes no effort to adjust the radically different scales he is using for forms set at approximately the same distance. In the center of the composition, Mukhils obscures the entrance to the fort with a painterly ridge, one that billows so high, in fact, that it extends over much of one of his already completed soldiers.
ALLIED SPIES SEEK OUT AND FREE PRINCE SA’ID FARRUKH–NIZHAD
cat 63–65

A mere glimpse of the dashing Sa’id Farrukh–Nizhad causes Malak Mah, the daughter of King Nazm and Sare Baru, to surrender her heart to him. She dons a warrior’s armor and engages him for a time in battle, but he desists when he discovers that his opponent is a beautiful woman. The two retire from the field together, after a prolonged absence, Farrukh–Nizhad finally returns to his camp.

The enemy spy Mahlaw abducts Farrukh–Nizhad, who is eventually transported to Aq’iqlagar where Malik Taysun has him imprisoned. Malak Mah sets out to rescue her beloved and encounters Hamza’s spies Songhur Balkhi and Lulu, who are on the same mission. This rescue party is joined by two more of Hamza’s spies – Saldak and the woman Khosh–Khiram. In Aq’iqlagar Malak Mah, lagging behind the others, is snatched from the street by an old hag—later revealed to have been a sorceress—and disappears before her companions have time to turn around.

During their explorations in the town, Songhur Balkhi and Lulu meet two merchants, actually followers of a famous local spy, Baba Balbsha World-Traveller. He supports their cause and gives them information, but that night neither team of spies is able to break into the prison where Farrukh–Nizhad is being held. Finally, with the tacit approval of Shuharban, a sympathetic wine-seller, they pour a knock-out drug into the drink served to the prison guards. Soon after, the two spies go to the prison, where the guards are thoroughly incapacitated. Then, as the text tersely recounts, the spies cut off their heads, free Sa’id Farrukh–Nizhad, and smuggle him into Baba Balbsha’s establishment.