

Hatatcha

forth to keep the flies from settling upon Hatatcha's face. She was, perhaps, fifteen years of age, but as fully matured in form as an English girl of twenty-five. Her face was remarkably handsome from the standpoint of regularity of contour, but its absolute lack of expression would render it uninviting to a connoisseur of beauty. Her dark eyes were magnificent, and seemed to have depths which were disappointing when you probed them. She wore the conventional black gown, or tunic, but because of the heat had allowed it to slip down to her waist, leaving her shoulders and breasts bare.

After a long and thoughtful look at his grandmother, Kāra sat down beside the girl and put his arm around her, drawing her close to his body. She neither resented the caress nor responded to it, but yielded herself inertly to the embrace while she continued to sway the palm branch with her free right arm.

"Ah, my Nephthy," said the man, lightly, in the Coptic tongue, "is our Hatatcha in the grip of the devils again?"

The girl made no reply, but at the sound of Kāra's voice the old woman opened her great eyes and gazed for an instant steadfastly upon her grandson. Her hands, which had been nervously clutching her robe, were raised in supplication, and she said in English, in a weak, hoarse voice:

"The draught, Kāra! Be quick!"

The man hesitated, but released the girl and stood up.