

Glancing across the court, he thought that he saw a man standing below, peering upward. With his hands resting upon the window-ledge, Cairn looked long and steadily.

There certainly was someone standing in the shadow of the tall plane-tree, but whether man or woman he could not determine.

The unknown remaining in the same position, apparently watching, Cairn ran downstairs, and, passing out into the court, walked rapidly across to the tree. There he paused in some surprise; there was no one visible by the tree, and the whole court was quite deserted.

"Must have slipped off through the archway," he concluded; and, walking back, he remounted the stairs and entered his chambers again.

Feeling a renewed curiosity regarding the silken rope which had so strangely come into his possession, he sat down at the table, and, mastering his distaste for the thing, took it in his hands and examined it closely by the light of the lamp.

He was seated with his back to the windows, facing the door so that no one could possibly have entered the room unseen by him. It was as he bent down to scrutinize the curious plaiting that he felt a sensation stealing over him, as though someone were standing very close to his chair.

Grimly determined to resist any hypnotic tricks that might be practised against him, and well assured that there could be no person actually present, in the chambers, he sat back, resting his revolver on his knee. Prompted by he knew not what, he slipped the silk cord into the table drawer and turned the key upon it.

As he did so a hand crept over his shoulder—followed by a bare arm of the hue of old ivory—a woman's arm!

Transfixed, his eyes fastened upon the ring of dull metal, bearing a green stone inscribed with a complex figure vaguely resembling a spider which adorned the index finger.

A faint perfume stole to his nos-

trils—that of the secret incense; and the ring was the ring of the Witch-Queen!

In this incredible moment he relaxed that iron control of his mind which, alone, had saved him before. Even as he realized it, and strove to recover himself, he knew that it was too late; he knew that he was lost!

Gloom—blackness, unrelieved by any speck of light, murmuring, subdued, all around—the murmuring of a concourse of people. The darkness was odorous with a heavy perfume.

A voice came—followed by complete silence.

Again the voice sounded, chanting sweetly.

A response followed in deep male voices.

The response was taken up all around—what time a tiny speck grew, in the gloom—and grew, until it took form; and out of the darkness the shape of a white-robed woman appeared—high up—far away.

Wherever the ray that illumined her figure emanated from, it did not perceptibly dispel the stygian gloom all about her. She was bathed in dazzling light, but framed in impenetrable darkness.

Her dull gold hair was encircled by a band of white metal—like silver, bearing in front a round, burnished disk, that shone like a minor sun. Above the disk projected an ornament having the shape of a spider.

The intense light picked out every detail vividly. Neck and shoulders were bare, and the gleaming ivory arms were uplifted, the long slender fingers held aloft a golden casket covered with dim figures, almost undiscernible at that distance.

A glittering zone of the same white metal confined the snowy draperies. Her bare feet peeped out from beneath the flowing robe.

Above, below, and around her was—Memphian darkness!

The whole invisible concourse took up the chant, and the light faded, un-