

have heard that her mother was Asma, my wife. Even so I have told you. Asma was brought to bed with child, but Izrail called it away even as it drew its first breath. In its stead I took the child Uyuni. I said she is born a Nasrani but she will be trained in the True Faith. I have taught her diligently, and not to a single one have I told the truth till now. But you have stoned her,—may jackals gnaw your bones—and the truth must now be told."

"Do you hear, Uyuni?" Galt asked, but the girl looked at him dumb, with wide eyes.

"What mad tale is this, begotten in the fogs of thy feeble mind?" cried the sheikh. "If the girl is not thine, then who gave her birth?"

"Dost thou forget, O Scorpion," and the crowd listened expectantly, "the one who came years ago from distant lands, to delve in the ruins of this old city, an unhallowed task which brought him ill luck, even as thou must remember, O sheikh? Dost thou forget that he was slain in the night at the great desert tomb? Nay, I think that thou hast not forgotten, nor hast thou forgotten the woman, his wife, with hair as golden as the millet sheaves, who embraced the river bed rather than be thine. Like calls to like. The dove mates with the dove, not the rook. Even as it was with the mother, so it is now with the daughter. Allah, Allah," cried the old man, putting his hands on his breast, as if begging forgiveness for allowing Uyuni to stray from the fold of the True Faith, "they stoned her, they stoned her."

"Is this true, effendi?" breathed the girl.

"Yes, child, it is true," said the hakim.