

### 310 THE SHADOW OF THE MOSQUE

Scorpion. "Allah, give thee peace, thou doddering one."

"She is not my daughter, O Scorpion."

The people who had listened in silence began to murmur. The ancient Koran teacher had gone mad. Was he not speaking of the girl who daily for many years had led his blind footsteps to the mosque? Truly he had lived too long, for while his body still lived, his mind had decayed.

"Alas," whispered Uyuni brokenly to Galt, "the saiyid, my father, is truly mad," but Galt, with his arm still about her, answered, "Listen, Uyuni," and wondering what it all meant she listened.

"Out of the way, thou old imbecile," said the sheikh, but the saiyid, groping with his blind hands, laid hold of the Scorpion's horse's bridle, and raising one hand stilled the growing tumult.

"Hear, men of El Ragi. Allah, I have kept the secret well. Not one among you knows, not even thou, O Scorpion, though day by day she walked among you and her hair is golden like millet sheaves. I have kept it well locked here, and here it would have rested until this old body rotted in the grave, but to-night you stoned her." His voice was hoarse with denunciation, and the people drew back, leaving a wider circle with the Scorpion alone beside her. "The fires of Iblis consume you, you vermin who are not fit to bathe her feet. Daily she has led me to the mosque; she has cooked my rice; she has been My Eyes, My Eyes. Even so I have called her; yet her name I know not. Do you think this parchment hide could breed the milk skin of her cheek? You