

The Dragoman

Sěra stared a moment and dropped her cigarette. Then she uttered a shrill wail and threw her skirt over her head, swaying back and forth.

"Shut up!" cried the dragoman, jerking away the cloth. "It is time enough to wail when the mourners assemble."

Sěra picked up her cigarette.

"When did Hatatcha go to Anubis?" she asked her daughter.

"Kāra did not say," returned the girl. "I was with her at the last sunset, and she was dying then."

"It matters nothing," said the dragoman, carelessly. "Hatatcha is better off in the nether world, and her rascally grandson must now go to work or starve his royal stomach."

"Who knows?" whispered Sěra, with an accent of awe. "They have never worked. Perhaps the gods supply their needs."

"Or they have robbed a tomb," returned Tadros. "It is much more likely; but if that is so I would like to find the place. There is money in a discovery of that sort. It means scarabs, and funeral idols, and amulets, and vases and utensils of olden days, all of which can be sold in Cairo for a good price. Sometimes it means jewels and gold ornaments as well; but that is only in the tombs of kings. Go to Hatatcha, my Sěra, and keep your eyes open. Henf! what says the proverb? 'The outrunner of good fortune is thoughtfulness.'"