



"Then she drew me to the bed and held the light so that the sleeper's face was clearly revealed."

A King in Babylon

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The Big Scene of The Picture is Filmed,
The Burying Alive of The Princess

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"I FEEL that I shall never be afraid again," Jimmy added, after a moment. "Never again—whatever happens!"

So that was the change we had sensed in him—he had shaken off fear.

"You mean that you have been afraid?" I asked. "Oh, desperately. It wasn't the heat, Billy, that sent me off like that. It was fear—fear and bewilderment—a sort of feeling that Fate had brought me here after the lapse of centuries for some awful purpose of its own. I seemed to recognize this oasis; the first time I looked down into that excavation, it somehow looked familiar; when we dug out that ghastly mummy, I knew that I had seen it before . . ."

"Of course you had seen it before!" I broke in. "No, I hadn't. I'd never laid eyes on it till Creel and I dragged it out of that hole."

"It was manufactured in our work rooms about a month ago," I pointed out, "so if you mean you had seen it out here, or in some former existence, or anything of that sort—why, it's ridiculous!"

"I know it," Jimmy agreed. "Perhaps it was one like it—I suppose they all look alike. But the biggest shock was when we laid it on the sand, and I stared down at it, and saw it change . . ."

He passed his hand before his eyes, and let the sentence trail away into nothingness.

"The trouble with you is," I said brusquely, "that this infernal picture has got on your brain. You've muddled over it so much that you are beginning to think it's true, and to imagine you really see what you are only supposed to see! It makes your acting better than I ever knew it—I'll say that—but it must be blamed hard on your nerves!"

"You may be right," Jimmy agreed. "As a matter of fact, I suppose you are right. But all that was nothing to the sensation I had when I crawled through that hole this afternoon—and it had nothing to do with the picture, either!"

"I could see that you were scared," I said.

was waiting for me inside." I felt the desert chill strike into me, and I snuggled back deeper into the sand.

"Well, was there?" I asked, in a voice I tried vainly to make unconcerned.

"Yes," answered Jimmy, in a low tone, "there was."

"What was it?" I asked, and all pretense had fallen away—I had slipped back shamefully into unreasoning fear!—and my voice was only a hoarse whisper.

"I don't know what it was," answered Jimmy, quietly; "but I know that it took me by the hand, as if in welcome, and raised me from the place where I had fallen, and led me through that narrow door, and along that corridor, to the spot where I lay buried; and it said to me, 'Kneel here!' . . ."

He broke off suddenly, and rubbed his head bewilderedly.

"There's a crook somewhere," he said; "I can't think straight—I can't disentangle reality from unreality—it's all mixed up. Do you suppose I'm going mad, Billy?"

"Mad?" I echoed. "Nonsense, man!"

But there was a chill in my blood; perhaps that was it!

"My mind seems extraordinarily lucid," he added, "and all my senses seem somehow more acute. That's one reason I wanted to go over there to-night—I could see things and hear things and smell things . . ."

"Nonsense!" I said again, and rose abruptly—he'd be asking me to accompany him, next! "You're going to bed—that's where you're going. We've all of us got a hard day ahead to-morrow, and we'll need all the rest we can get. Come along!"

He rose with an obedience that surprised me.

"Whether I'm mad or not," he said, as we started back, "there's one thing I'll promise you—I'll never be afraid again!"

"Scared! Scared isn't the name for it. I was in a blue funk. It was all I could do to claw my way through that hole, because I knew, clear to the bottom of my soul, that it was my own tomb I was entering, and that something

CHAPTER XXI.

HE was as good as his word. Whatever he was after that—malign, demoniac, possessed—I am sure that not for one instant was he afraid. Right up to the end of the chapter, he carried a brave front—even a reckless one. Perhaps, in the final hour, when he found himself alone . . .

Next morning, while Davis and two or three of the natives were chipping away at the cemented lid of the sarcophagus of Sekenyen-Re, we made a re-take of the discovery of the mummy, and Jimmy went through the whole gruesome programme without a shiver. The mummy was lifted through the hole, and then Jimmy entered, while Creel, again in khaki in the character of first assistant explorer, posed the natives, with the invaluable assistance of Mustafa. The scene, of course, was to follow immediately the one we had taken the day before, when Jimmy entered the tomb, and the audiences that viewed the picture would never suspect the exciting events which had occurred between!

Creel got everything ready, at last, and gave me the signal, and I started cranking, and then he went forward and peered through the hole; and then he backed away, and Jimmy appeared in the opening with the mummy in his arms. He held it closely, even lovingly, and as he passed it out to Creel and Mustafa, he cast a glance which I can only describe as exultant at Mlle. Roland, who was waiting, attired in her harem costume, to do the vision. Her attitude was one of calm detachment, as though the proceedings rather bored her; but Jimmy's eyes were shining as though he had somehow won a great victory.

Then the mummy was laid on the ground, and he went through the business of staring down at it, and tumbling in a faint; but he didn't do it half so convincingly as he had the day before! I don't mean to say he didn't do it well—Jimmy was too good an actor to do anything badly—but his performance lacked the gripping, hair-raising reality which it had possessed before. Then it had given me the shivers—now I watched it quite unconcerned.

It wasn't till Mlle. Roland came forward to do the double-exposure that I saw how pale she was. Creel noticed it too.

"Aren't you well?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, thank you, I am quite well," she answered, and took her place on the sand.

"For heaven's sake, don't you get to falling over!"

"Do not fear; I am not of that sort," and she smiled up at him much as she was supposed to smile up at Jimmy.

Creel stood looking down at her for a moment with a puzzled face—perhaps it was the gibe at

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