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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

The Dead-Alive Mummy

By SEABURY QUINN

An amazing and startling story about an ancient Egyptian mummy and a beautiful American girl—a tale of Jules de Grandin

HE came walking slowly toward us past the rows of mummy-cases. Not tall, but very slim she was, sheathed in a low-cut evening gown of midnight velvet which set her creamy shoulders off in sharp relief. Her hair, blue-black and glossy, was stretched without a ripple to a knot behind her neck, and contrasted oddly with her eyes of peacock blue. There was contrast, too, between the small and slightly kestrel nose and the full and sensuous mouth which blossomed moist and brilliant-red against the unrouged pallor of her narrow face. One slender-fingered hand was toying with a rope of pearls, and as she stepped there was a glint of golden links beneath the gossamer silk encasing her left ankle. Clouded, but unconcealed, the jewel-red lacquer on her toenails shone through filmy stocking-tips exposed by toeless satin sandals.

"*Mon Dieu*, but she is vital as a flame!" de Grandin whispered. "Who is she, Friend Trowbridge?"

"Dolores Mendoza," I answered, "the sister of the man who gave this collection of Egyptiana to the Harkness Museum. Old Aaron Mendoza, her father, was fanatical about ancient Egypt, and was said to have the third finest collection in the world, ranking next after the British Museum and the *Musée des Antiques* at Cairo."

The little Frenchman nodded. "So we are here," he murmured.

We were, as he had said, there for that very reason.

Aaron Mendoza, son and grandson of our city's foremost merchants, had retired from commercial life at the relatively early age of sixty, turning active management of the Mendoza Department Store over to his son Carlos and devoting himself to Egyptology with an energy amounting to a passion. Honest in all his mercantile transactions with the rigid honesty of a Portuguese-Jewish family which traced its history unbroken past the days of the Crusades, he had not scrupled to resort to any practise which would further his ambition to acquire the finest private Egyptological collection in the world. Men noted for their learning, daring and "resourcefulness" had named what fees they wanted for their services to him, and one by one they brought to him the spoils of Egypt's sands and pyramids and hidden rock-tombs—bits of art-craft wrought in gold and silver, lapis-lazuli and celadon, things whose valuations sounded like the figures of a nation's load of debt, papyri setting forth in picture-writing secrets never dreamt by modern man, desiccated bodies of kings and priests and priestesses whose intrigues shaped the destiny of nations in the days when history was an infant in its swaddling bands.

One morning they found Aaron sitting on his bed, a vacuous grin disfiguring his handsome face, both feet thrust into one trouser-leg. He babbled like a baby when they spoke to him, and smiled at me with child-like glee when I tried to ask him how he felt. His strong, fine



"Catch her, my friend," he ordered. "She swoons!"

brain had softened to a mass of cheesy waste while he was sleeping, and within a week the helplessness of paresis had settled on him. In six months he was dead.

Scarcely had the period of formal mourning ended when Carlos Mendoza announced the gift of all his father's ancient treasures to the Harkness Museum. With antiques went a sum to build a wing for housing them and a fund for their maintenance. This evening

the new wing was opened with due ceremony, and the city's notables were gathered for the rites of dedication. Somehow—possibly because I had brought him and his sister into the world and steered them through the mumps and chickenpox and other childish ills—Carlos had included me and de Grandin in the list of guests invited, and we had traversed miles of marbled corridors, viewing the exhibits with that awe which modern man displays before the relics of

the older days. Tired of the flower-scent and chatter and repeated "ohs" and "ahs" of those assembled in the main hall, we had retired to the Gallery of Mummies for a moment's respite, and stood beside the bronze-barred window at its farther end as Dolores entered.

"Would you like to meet her?" I asked as the Frenchman's interested gaze stayed fixed upon the girl.

"*Corbleu*, does the heliotrope desire to face the sun?" he answered. "Yes, my friend, present me, if you will, and I shall call you blessed.

"*Enchanté, Mademoiselle*," he assured her as he raised her fingers to his lips. "You are like a breath of life among these relics of mortality; a star which is reflected in the black tides of the Styx."

The girl looked round her with a little shudder of repulsion.

"I hate these ancient things," she told us. "Carlos wasn't sure he wanted to part with them after Father spent so many years collecting them, but I urged him to present them to the museum. I hope I never have to look at them again. The jewels are ghastly—cold and dead as the people who once wore them, and the mummies——" She paused and looked distastefully at the upright mummy which faced us through the screen of dust-proof glass.

"*Mummy and Coffin of Sit-ankh-hku, Priestess of Isis, from Hierakonpolis. Period XIXth Dynasty (circa. 1,200 B. C.)*" she read aloud from the neatly lettered card. "Can you fancy living in the house with things like that? She might have been a girl about my age, judging by the portrait on the coffin top. Every time I looked at her it was as though I looked at my own body lying in that coffin."

The mummy and its case were usual types. In the open casket stood the mummy, barely five feet tall, swathed in

closely wrapped brown cerecloth, banded latitudinally and diagonally with retaining bandages, the head a mere conical hooded protuberance above the slanting shoulders, no trace of arms apparent, feet shown merely as a horizontal shelf beneath the upright body. On the lid, which stood beside the coffin proper, had been carved a face to represent the dead. The features were small, patrician, delicately hawk-nosed and full-lipped, with narrow brows of vivid black arched over eyes of peacock blue. The ancient artist had worked well. Here was no mere mortuary portrait, typical of race and era, but lacking personality. It was, I felt on looking at it, a faithful likeness of the girl who died three thousand years ago, personalized and individual.

DE GRANDIN studied it a moment, then: "One understands, *Mademoiselle*," he told her. "When one looks at that face it takes small imagination to conceive that it resembles you. She had rare beauty, that old one, just as you—*sapristi*, what is it, *Mademoiselle*?"

Dolores stood before the mummy-case, staring at the painted face with a set, unwinking gaze. Her countenance was mask-like, almost totally expressionless; yet something that was lurking terror lay within her eyes, rendering them glassy, shallow. It was as if a curtain had been drawn across them from within, hiding anything that might be seen by one who looked in them and leaving only a suggestion of sheer fright and horror printed on the retina.

"*Mademoiselle Dolores!*" he repeated sharply. "What is it?" Then, as she swayed unsteadily, "Catch her, my friend," he ordered. "She swoons!"

Even as he cried his warning the girl oscillated dizzily, with a sort of circular motion, as though her feet were fast-pivoted upon the floor, then pitched for-

ward toward the glass-framed mummy-case, and as she toppled forward her eyes were wide and staring, fixed in fascination on the painted face upon the coffin lid. My arm went round her as she swayed, and a gasp of wonder choked my words of sympathy unuttered. From sandal-sole to head she was rigid as a frozen thing; taut, hard, unyielding as a hypnotist's assistant in a trance.

The rigor that affected her was such that we carried her across the room as though she had lain on a litter.

"What in heaven's name is it?" I demanded as we laid her on a Theban couch of sycamore and ivory. We could not chafe her hands, for they were set so firmly that they might have been carved wood, and when I placed my hand upon her breast to feel her heart, the flesh beneath her velvet corsage met my touch unyieldingly. It might have been a lovely waxen tailor's dummy over which we leant rather than the vibrant girl to whom we talked a moment since.

"Perhaps I'd better get some water," I suggested, but de Grandin stayed me with a gesture.

"*Non*," he advised. "Stay here and watch with me, my friend. This is—*s's'sh*, she is recovering!"

The set and horrified expression in Dolores' eyes was giving way, and in its stead we saw what seemed to be a look of recognition, like that of one who comes upon an old and long-forgotten scene, and fails at first to place it in his memory. The rigid, hard lines faded from her cheeks and jaw, and her slender bosom fluttered with a gasp of inspiration as her lips fell open and a little sigh escaped them. The words she used I could not understand, for they were spoken in a mumbling undertone, strung together closely, like an invocation hurriedly pronounced, but it seemed to me they had a harsh and guttural sound, as

though containing many consonants, unlike any tongue with which I was familiar.

She sang softly, in an eery, rising cadence, with a sharply accented note at the end of every measure, over and over the same meaningless jargon, a weird, uncanny tune, vaguely like a Gregorian chant. One single sound I recognized—or thought I did—though whether it really were a word or whether my mind broke its syllables apart and fitted them to the sound of a more or less familiar name I could not tell; but it seemed to me that constantly recurring through the rapid flow of mumbled invocation was a sibilant disyllable, much like our letter *s* said twice in quick succession.

"What's she trying to say—'Isis'?" I asked, raising my eyes from her fluttering lips.

De Grandin was watching her intently, with that fixed, unwinking stare which I had seen him hold for minutes at a time when we were in the amphitheater of a hospital and a work of unique surgery was in progress. He waved an irritated hand at me, but neither spoke nor shifted the intentness of his gaze.

The flow of senseless words grew slower, thinner, as though the force of breath behind the red and twitching lips were lessening. "*Ab mon . . . sss-sss . . . se-rhus*—" came the softly whispered slurring syllables; then, as the faint voice ceased entirely, a gleam of consciousness came into Dolores' eyes, and she looked from Jules de Grandin to me with a puzzled frown. "Oh, did I faint?" she asked apologetically. "It was so terribly hot in there"—she gestured toward the crowded auditorium—"I thought it would be better here, but I suppose—" She raised her shoulders in the faint suggestion of a shrug, leaving her explanation uncompleted. Then, composedly,

she swung her feet to the floor and placed her hand upon my arm.

"Will you take me to the coat room and call my car, please, Doctor?" she requested. "I think I'm about done in. Better be getting home before I have another fainting-fit."

"THAT was one of the most remarkable exhibitions of autosuggestion I've ever seen," I declared as we drove home.

"U'm?" said Jules de Grandin.

"It was," I answered firmly. "I'll admit it was uncanny as the devil, but the explanation's logical enough. That poor child had developed such a detestation of those mummies that it amounted almost to an obsession. Tonight, while she was staring at the face upon that coffin top—you'll recall she said it looked like her?—she suddenly went rigid as a mummy herself. Hypnosis induced by a carefully self-built-up train of thought identifying herself with the mummy of that priestess, then the fatigue of the reception, finally the ideal combination of the polished glass case reflecting a bright light and the face upon the coffin lid to focus her gaze. And, did you notice, she even mumbled some sort of gibberish while she was unconscious? Absolute identification with the character of the priestess. I don't think Carlos got those mummies out of his house one day too soon for his sister's mental health."

"I agree," de Grandin answered heartily. "Perhaps he did not move as quickly as he should. Her case will bear our observation, I believe."

"Oh, then you don't agree with my theory of autosuggestion and self-hypnosis?"

"*Eh bien*, they are queer things, these minds of ours," he returned evasively. "Hypnotism, what is it? No one rightly

knows. Is it the 'animal magnetism' of Mesmer, or the substitution of the operator's mind for that of his subject, or, as some have hinted, the domination of one soul and spirit by another? Me, I do not know; neither do you. But he who plays with it toys with something perilously akin to magic—not always good magic, by the way, my friend."

He paused a moment, drumming on the silver knob of his ebony opera stick with restless fingers; then, abruptly: "Do me a favor, my friend," he begged. "Arrange that we may continue our acquaintance with Monsieur Mendoza and his so charming sister. I would observe her further, if such a thing is possible. I do not like the prospect of the future for that little lovely one."

MENDOZA'S dinner was perfection; oysters with champagne *brut*, dry sherry with the turtle soup, pheasant with ripe Conti, Madeira with dessert and '47 cognac with the coffee. De Grandin had been gay throughout the meal, brimming with high spirits, recounting anecdote on anecdote of humorous adventure in the tropics, in the war, of student days in Paris and Vienna. When books were mentioned he was equally at home in French and English literature, discussing Villon, Huysmans, Verlaine, Lamartine and Francis Thompson with impartial intimacy.

Another guest was with us, a Doktor-professor Grafensburg whose huge square head topped with close-cut, bristling hair, square spectacles and sweeping handlebar mustache, no less than his ponderous manner and poorly fitting dinner clothes, labeled him unmistakably a scientist of the Viennese school. He seemed quite lost among the small talk of the table, and occasionally when de Grandin let fly a particularly witty sally he would look up helplessly, as though

he sought to mark the flight of some swift-moving insect through the air. Now, cigar between the pudgy fingers of one hand, liqueur glass grasped firmly in the other, he sat foursquare before the fire of blazing apple logs and looked at Mendoza with something like pathetic appeal in his protuberant blue eyes.

"Doktor Grafensburg has consented to go over some of my—some of the mummies in the Harkness Museum," Carlos volunteered with a smile at the big Austrian. "Many of them have never been properly classified, and there's a mass of data to be translated and catalogued."

"*Ach*, yes," replied the savant, his infantile eyes beaming at this chance to take the center of the stage, "there are some most unusual things which your father's curators had completely overlooked, Herr Carlos. That little, small one, for example, the one they call the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku, she had never even been unwrapped, yet in her bandages I found a something truly startling."

"Ah?" breathed Jules de Grandin softly, as a momentary glitter shone in his small blue eyes. "What, by example, Herr Doktor?"

Grafensburg rose ponderously and stood before the Frenchman, legs apart, great head thrust forward between his bulging shoulders. "You are, perhaps, familiar with Egyptian beliefs?" he asked challengingly.

"I would not presume to discuss them with the Herr Doktor professor Grafensburg," replied the Frenchman diplomatically. "Would you not be kind enough to tell us——"

"*Ja wohl*," the Austrian broke in discourteously. "They had no idea of the things we know today, those ancient ones. They thought the arteries were full of air, the seat of the emotions was the

heart, that anger generated in the spleen, *nicht wahr?*"

"So we have been told," de Grandin nodded.

"I tell you the same, also," rumbled Grafensburg. "Also I tell you that they had partly grasped the truth when they said that reason resided in the brain. Now, in the wrappings of this Priestess Sit-ankh-hku I found the customary mortuary tablet, the golden plate on which her name and titles were engraved, with the usual pious invocation to the gods, and the pious hope of final resurrection in the flesh, only it was different. You know the reason for the mummification of Egyptian dead, yes? They believed that when three thousand years had passed the soul returned to claim its body, and without a habitation of the flesh would have nowhere to go. It would have to wander bodiless and nameless in Amenti, the realm of the damned. As the little lady lived about the time of the Oppression, she should now be ready for reanimation——"

"Perfectly, Herr Doktor," de Grandin nodded, "one understands, but——"

"*Ha*, little man, but you do not understand!" the Austrian thrust his cigar forward as though it had been a weapon. "Usually the tablets prayed the gods to guide the *ka*, or vital principle, back to the waiting body. This one does nothing of the kind. It asserts—asserts, if you please, asserts with positiveness—that Sit-ankh-hku will rise again with the help of one who lives, and by the power of the brain. That is most unusual; it is extraordinary. Never before in the annals of all Egyptology have we found an instance where the deceased will rise otherwise than by the help of the gods. This one will rise by the assistance of a man who lives, or perhaps of a woman, the text is not quite clear. But rise she

will, by human assistance and by strength of brain. *Donnerwetter*, it is droll, *nicht wahr?* She will reanimate herself by the power of her brain, and that brain was flung into the Nile three thousand years ago, together with her blood!" he finished with a rumbling laugh.

"I do not think that it is droll, *Herr Doktor*," de Grandin answered in a level voice. "I rather think that it is devilish. That statement which you read may go far to explain what—*grand Dieu*, look to Mademoiselle Dolores, Friend Trowbridge!"

At his shouted warning I wheeled round. Dolores stood beside the grand piano, a straight, slim silhouette in lettuce green, pearl-pale and rigid as an image. Even as I leaped to aid her the thought flashed through my mind that she was like a gallant little tree whose roots were severed by the woodsman's ax. She swayed uncertainly a moment, then leant from the perpendicular like a toppling tower. Had I not seized her in my arms she would have fallen flat upon her face, for every nerve and muscle of her slender body had been petrified in the same awful way as on that night at the museum, and as my hands closed round her I was shaken by a feeling of repulsion at the hardness of her flesh.

"Dolores dear, what is it?" Carlos cried as he placed his sister on a sofa.

"Is—is it epilepsy?" he asked fearfully, as he saw the girl's pale skin and set and staring eyes.

De Grandin's face was almost totally expressionless, but anger-lightning flashed in his small eyes as he responded tonelessly: "Monsieur Mendoza, one cannot be quite sure, but I think she is suffering from an attack of the *Herr Doktor's* cursed *drôlerie*."

Treatment was futile. All night Dolores lay as rigid as if petrified. As

though she had been dead, her temperature was exactly that of the surrounding atmosphere, the uncanny hardness of the flesh persisted, and she was unresponsive to all stimuli, save that the pupils of her set and staring eyes showed a slight contraction when we flashed a light in them. There was practically no pulse perceptible, and when we drove a hypodermic needle in her arm to administer a dose of strychnin there was no reflex flinching of the skin, and the impression we had was more like that of thrusting a pin through some tough ceraceous substance than through yielding flesh. As far as we could see, every vital function was suspended. Yet she was not dead. Of that much we were certain.

Toward morning the dreadful stiffness, so like rigor-mortis, passed, and as at the museum, she began to hum a chant, a weird and oddly accented tune composed of four soft minor notes. This time enunciation seemed more perfect, and we could recognize a phrase which constantly recurred throughout the chant like an imperative refrain repeated endlessly: "*O Sit-ankh-hku, nehes — O Sit-ankh-hku, nehes!*"

"*Morbleu!*" exclaimed de Grandin as a light of recognition flashed in his eyes. "*Par la barbe d'un bouc vert*, do you apprehend the burden of her song, Friend Trowbridge?"

"Of course not," I replied. "This gibberish hasn't any meaning, has it?"

"Has it not, *ha?*" he shot back. "Me, I shall say it has. It is the tongue of ancient Egypt that she chants, my friend, and that phrase she constantly repeats means: '*Awake, O Sit-ankh-hku; O Sit-ankh-hku, awake!*'"

"Good Lord, identification with that devilish mummy again!" I exclaimed. "Confound that Grafensburg and his childish talk about the thing, he——"

"He is a species of a camel," cut in Jules de Grandin. "May the fires of hell consume him living—he called me 'little man'!"

DESPITE our every effort, Dolores failed to show improvement. Cold compresses on the head, caustics on brow and neck, and repeated stimulants alike seemed powerless to rouse her from her lethargy. Occasionally the delirium in which she chanted thick-tongued invocations lightened the profound coma of absolute unconsciousness; but these spells came unbidden and unheralded, and we were powerless to lift her into consciousness or strike the slightest note of response from her, however much we tried.

"*Dieu de Dieu!*" de Grandin swore when three days of unavailing work had brought us close to nervous breakdown; "me, I am slowly going crazy. This *sacré* coma which has taken hold on her, I do not like it."

"D'ye think there's any chance of her recovering?" I asked, more for the sake of making conversation than from any hope of favorable response.

"*Tiens; le bon Dieu* and the devil know, not I," he answered somberly, his speculative gaze upon the patient. For a space of several minutes he continued his inspection, then plucked me by the sleeve. "Do you observe it, *mon ami?*" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Her face, her hands—the whole of her?"

"I don't think——" I began, but:

"Look at her carefully," he ordered. "We have forced the vital functions artificially. Elimination we have had, and nourishment by forcible feeding; moreover, she has lain this way for a scant three days, but observe her if you will. Is she not more than normally emaciated?"

He was right. While some loss of weight was normally to have been expected, emaciation had progressed far past the normal point. The subcutaneous tissue seemed to have dissolved, leaving little more than unfilled skin upon the staring bones. Paper-thin, her cheeks seemed plastered to the jaw-joints of her skull, lips thin as tight-stretched parchment showed the outlines of her teeth, and her very eyeballs seemed deflated, so that the eyes were merely empty pits in a cadaverous face. Wrist processes and radii showed almost as plainly through the drum-tight skin of forearms as though they had no covering at all.

"Good heavens, yes, you're right," I told de Grandin. "Why, she's desiccated as a mummy!"

"*Tu parles, mon vieux,*" he responded grimly. "Like a mummy—yes, by blue, you have put your finger on the word! Come."

"Come?" I echoed. "What d'ye mean, Surely, you'll not leave her——"

"But yes, of course," he interrupted. "The *garde-malade* can watch by her. She can at least report her death, which is all that we could do if we remained. Meanwhile, there is a chance . . . yes, my friend, I think there is a little. so small chance. . . ."

TO THE Harkness Museum," he ordered the taxi driver, "and hurry, if you please. There is five dollars extra for you if you get us there within ten minutes."

"I'm afraid Doctor Grafensburg can't see you now, sir," said the attendant when de Grandin panted his demand that we be taken to the Austrian at once. "He's very busy in his office, and left strict orders——"

"*Ab bab,*" the little Frenchman cut in. "You tell me *that* when we are come upon an errand that may mean the saving

of a life? Where is this pig-dog's utterly unmentionable office? Me, I will go to him without announcement. Only show us where he hibernates, my friend, and I shall take the full responsibility for disturbing him. Yes, certainly; of course."

"*Kreuzsakrament!* Did I not strict orders leave that I should not be bothered?" Doktor Grafensburg's big face turned toward us with a snarl of almost bestial fury as we wrenched aside his office door and hastened toward him. He was gowned in linen, as for an autopsy, and glared at us across a porcelain operating-table on which there lay a partly unbandaged mummy. A shiver of repulsion ran through me. With his great head hunched forward, mouth disfigured by the stream of curses which he hurled at us, he reminded me of some foul ghoul disturbed at its repast. The furious scowl lightened somewhat as he recognized us, but his effort at cordiality was plainly forced as he drew a sheet across the mummy on the table and came forward.

"So? Is it you, little man?" he asked with ponderous jocularity. "I had thought that you were busy taking temperatures and mixing pills."

"*Sale bête!*" de Grandin murmured underneath his breath; then, aloud:

"We have just come from Mademoiselle Mendoza's sickroom," he explained. "Something has happened which has made our presence here imperative. Is it the mummy of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku you are working on, *Herr Doktor?*"

Grafensburg glared at him suspiciously. "And if it is?" he countered.

"*Précisément*, if it is, we should greatly like to see what you have found, if anything. Her physical condition, the extent of preservation of her body, is of great importance to us. May we inspect it?"

"*Nein!*" the other spread his arms in

a protective gesture, as though de Grandin made a threat against the mummy on the table. "She is mine, and only I may look at her. When I have my investigation made and my notes arranged, you may read what I have found; meantime——"

There was the menace of cold hatred in de Grandin's voice as he cut in—"Meantime, *mon cher collègue*, you will kindly stand aside and let me look at that ten-thousand-times-accursed mummy, or I shall give myself the great felicity of sending your fat soul to hell." From his shoulder holster he snatched out a pistol and aimed it steadily at the Austrian's protruding paunch.

"*Allez—en avant!*" he ordered as the other stared at him with dilated eyes. "I do not feel inclined to argue with you, my pig-ugly one."

Muttering thick-throated curses, Grafensburg gave ground, and de Grandin reached his free hand toward the sheet, twitching it from the half-stripped mummy on the operating-table.

"*Ab?*" he breathed as the cotton covering came fluttering off. "*Ab-ha? Ab-ha-ha?*"

I stared in blank amazement.

The form upon the table was no mummy. Denuded of their centuries-old bandages, the head and shoulders were exposed, and from the face Herr Grafensburg had lifted the gold mummy-mask. A pale, exquisite countenance looked up at us, clear-cut as cameo. The brow was low and broad, framed in a mass of fine, dark hair bound round the temples with a diadem of woven silver set with lapis-lazuli. The nose was small and delicately aquiline, the mouth a trifle wide and rather thin-lipped, a wilful, proud and somewhat cruel mouth, I thought. Long, curling lashes rested on the youthful, rounded cheeks. Bare, creamy shoulders gleamed beneath the

little pointed chin, and from the torn and powdered wrappings, still crossed on the breast, a pair of slender, red-tipped hands peeped out like fragile lilies blooming in corruption. I gazed upon the lovely face in awed amazement, realizing that these silk-fringed eyes had looked upon the world three thousand years ago. How many men had lived and died since those pale lips had drawn the breath of life and those closed eyes had looked upon the sun-gilt, star-jeweled skies of ancient Egypt!

De Grandin drew his breath in with a sort of whistling gasp. "*Mon Dieu,*" he whispered softly, "cannot you see it, good Friend Trowbridge? Does not the likeness strike you?"

"Yes — *yes!*" I breathed. "You're right; she does resemble poor Dolores. One could swear that they are sisters, though they lived three thousand years apart."

"*Himmelkreuzsakrament!*" raged Doktor Grafensburg. "You come in here, you crazy, brainless *schmetterling*, and point pistols at me; you interrupt me at my work, you take from me my beautiful, incomparable one, and——"

"Calm yourself, *mon collègue,*" broke in Jules de Grandin with a smile. "We would not for the world disturb you at your work, but we desire certain information which only you can give. This is truly an amazing piece of body preservation. I have seen many mummies in my time, but never one like this. Tell me, if you will; have you some theory of the method they employed to keep her as we see her now?"

The Austrian's pale eyes blazed with enthusiasm.

"*Nein, nein,*" he answered huskily. "I was unwrapping her when you came in. I was about to make a set of careful measurements and note them down;

then I would make an autopsy to find how they performed the work to her preserve this way. By heaven, it is a marvel! It is something never seen before. *Herr Gott*, it is——"

"One agrees entirely," de Grandin nodded, "but——"

"*Nein, lieber Gott*—you do not understand!" the Austrian cut in. "You have seen mummies, *ja?* You know they are deprived of moisture-content, left with nothing but the husk of bone and tissue, *ja?* But—*Donnerwetter!*—did you ever see a mummy which could take up moisture from the air and resume the look of life it had before the old embalmers pickled it, *hein?*"

The little Frenchman's small blue eyes were dancing with excitement, his tightly waxed wheat-blond mustache seemed fairly quivering as he faced the fleshy Austrian. "*Herr Doktor,*" he asked half tremulously, "do you tell me that this mummy-thing has seemed revived——"

"*Sehr wohl,*" the Austrian broke in, "have I not told you so? When first I took that mummy from its case it was a mummy, nothing more. All moisture had been from it dried; it weighed not more than thirty pounds. I the outer layer of bindings stripped away, then stopped to read and translate the inscription on the pectoral tablet. Three days it lay here partially unwrapped. Today—*Herr Gott!*—I start to take the other bindings off, and what do I discover? Not the mummy I had left three days before, but the lovely, life-like body of a lovely woman! *Herr Gott*, she has begun to blossom like a flower in the moisture of the air! She enchants me; I love her as I never loved a woman in my life; I can scarcely wait to cut her open!"

De Grandin looked at Grafensburg a moment; then: "*Mein herr,*" he asked,

"does human life mean anything to you?"

The big man stared at him as though he had been something he had never seen before, then raised his shoulders in a ponderous shrug.

"If it does," resumed the Frenchman, "you have now the chance to aid us. This body, this lovely, evil thing must be destroyed, and quickly. Believe me, life depends on it."

"*Nein!*" cried the other in a voice gone thin with sudden panic. "I cannot have it so. Not for a hundred human lives shall you lay hands upon my *liebes liebschen* till I have the autopsy performed on her. Men have died and worms have eaten them ten thousand thousand times since the embalmers of old Egypt finished with their labors on this body. Men will die until the end of time, but here we have a miracle of science. What is one paltry life compared with the disclosures an autopsy on this body will give us? Bah, you little pill-peddler, you tinkerer of broken bones, you set your stupid trade above the cause of science? You would hold the clock-hands back that you might spare some little, worthless life a few years longer? By heaven! I say you shall not touch this body with your little finger! Out, out of my cabinet, out, before I throw you!" Pop-eyes blazing, heavy lips drawn backward in a snarl, he advanced on Jules de Grandin, heedless of the latter's pistol as though it had been but a pointed finger.

"*Halte la!*" de Grandin cried. "I will make the bargain with you. Bring this body which you so adore to Monsieur Mendoza's house this evening, and promise me you will perform your autopsy upon it before midnight, and I will consent. Refuse, and—it would be some loss to science if I had to shoot you dead,

Herr Doktor, but if I must I will. Make no mistake about it."

For a moment they glared in each other's eyes; then, with a shrug of resignation, the big Austrian turned back. Half the other's size, dandified, almost effeminate, de Grandin nevertheless bore the stamp of the born killer, and in the steady gaze of his little, round blue eyes the Austrian savant had seen the bare-boned face of death. For all his ponderous size and his bloodless, cold devotion to his science, Herr Doktor Grafensburg was something of a coward, and his blustering bravado melted like a snow-patch in the sun before the Frenchman's cold determination.

"*Ja wohl,*" he finally agreed. "Leave me to my work this afternoon. I will the body have at Herr Mendoza's house to-night at eight."

"**W**HAT the dickens does it mean?" I asked as we drove toward Mendoza's. "Have you found some explanation for this chapter of strange incidents——"

"*Non,*" he broke in, "I am at sea, my friend. I, the clever one, the shrewd, so wily fox, am faced with a blank wall. This business of the monkey passes my experiences. I am a poor and purblind stupid fool. Let me think!"

"But——"

"Precisely-exactly, 'but'," he agreed, nodding. "Consider, if you please: Mademoiselle Dolores has been ill three days. She is unconscious in a coma, and we cannot waken her. She loses weight so quickly that within the little space of seventy-two hours she has become to all appearances a cadaver—a mummy, by blue! Meantime, what happens at the museum? The swinish Grafensburg partially unwraps the mummy of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku, then stops to read her

pectoral tablet. Three days elapse, and in their course the mummy of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku puts on the semblance of a new-dead body. What is the next step in this dual transformation, *hein?*?"

"But there may be something in the theory Grafensburg advances," I argued. "We've seen dehydrated food—apples, for instance. Though shrunken to a husk, and bearing no more resemblance to their original state than a mummy resembles a fresh body, when they're put in water they fill out and almost simulate fresh fruit. Isn't it possible that the embalmers of old Egypt might have hit upon some process of dehydration whereby the body would take up moisture from the air when it had been unwrapped, and——"

"*Ab bah,*" he interrupted in disgust. "Grafensburg can read hieroglyphs, Grafensburg knows Egyptology, but also Grafensburg is a great fool!"

A CASE of leucocytopenia I had under observation at Mercy Hospital kept me later than I had expected, and preparations were complete when I reached Mendoza's house that night. Thin, frail, emaciated, looking more like a cadaver than a living person, Dolores lay swathed in blankets on a lounge. Beside her, close as though ready for a blood transfusion, lay the blanketed body of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku, and as I looked upon the two pale faces I was struck anew with the strange resemblance each bore to the other. The only light in the room was that given by a red-bowled vigil lamp which de Grandin placed about two feet from, and midway between, the two dark heads pillowed on their couches, and the flickering, fitful gleam of the little lamp's short wick cast a shifting mottle of shadows on the equally immobile faces of the living and the dead.

Silently de Grandin crossed the room, drew back the curtains at the window and looked up at the sky. "The moon is rising," he announced at length. "It will soon be time for our experiment."

For something like five minutes he stood at gaze; then, as a shaft of silver light stole through the window and across the floor, splashing a little pool of luminance upon the two still faces, he stepped quickly to the lamp, blew out its flame, and from beneath his jacket drew a roll of silken gossamer.

"*Lieber Gott!*" cried Grafensburg as de Grandin spread the silver tissue out, laying part of it across the dead girl's face, the other end across Dolores' white, still countenance. "Where—where did you get that? It is a portion of the——"

"Silence, *cochon,*" bade the little Frenchman sharply. "It is a fragment of the veil of Isis which hung before her altar-throne that the profane might not see her godhead. It will help us get in contact with the past—one hopes."

Now the moonlight shone full on the girls' veiled faces, touching them with argent gilding. De Grandin laid one hand upon Dolores' brow and touched the forehead of the long-dead priestess with the finger-tips of the other. There was something measured, monotonous as a chant, in his voice as he called out softly: "Mademoiselle Dolores, you can hear me when I speak?"

A moment's silence; then, so softly we could scarcely hear, soft as a breath of wind among the leafless branches of a tree, but still distinct enough to understand, there came the answer: "I can hear you."

"You can hear the chiming of the sistra; you can hear the chanting of the priests?"

"I can hear them!"

"Open the eyes of your memory; look

around you—tell us what it is you see. I order, I command it.”

As the answer came I started violently. Was it a vagary of overwrought nerves, or did my ears deceive me? I could not surely tell, but it seemed that by some odd trick of ventriloquism the reply came not only from Dolores, but from the dead girl at her side, as well. They seemed speaking in soft chorus!

“I am in a lofty temple,” came the faltering, halting answer. “Sistra ring and harps are playing, priestesses are chanting hymns. A man has come into the temple. He is young and very beautiful. He is robed in white. His head is shaven smooth. He has paused before the silver veil that hangs between the temple and the face of Isis. He has put aside the veil and gone through a low door. I can no longer see him.”

We could hear the soft rustle of the April wind in the budding trees outside; somewhere in the house a clock ticked steadily, and its ticking sounded like the blows of some great hammer on a giant anvil. The sharp staccato yelp of a taxi's horn out in the street was almost deafening in the silence of that darkened room. Then there came another sound. No, not quite a sound; rather, it was like that subjective sense of ringing in the inner ear we have after taking a heavy dose of quinine, more the *impression* of a sound than any actual vibration. Bell-like it was, almost unbearably shrill, unspeakably sweet; nearly toneless, yet utterly fascinating. I felt a sense of drowsiness come stealing over me, and with it the impression of another presence in the room was borne upon me. There was another — some one — some *thing* — among us, and I shivered as though a chill hand had suddenly been passed across my cheek.

“What is the ceremony you are wit-

nessing?” de Grandin asked, and his voice seemed faint and far away.

“A man is entering the priesthood. He is in the sanctuary of the goddess now. She will come to him and flood him with her spirit. He will be her own for time and for eternity. He will put away the love of woman and the hope of children from his heart, and devote himself for ever to the service of the great All-Mother.”

“Who is this man?”

“I do not know his name, but he was born à Hebrew. He has put aside his God to take the vows of Isis for love of a priestess of the goddess. She has put a spell on him; he is mad for love of her, but because she is forbid to marry by her vows he has abjured Jehovah and become a heathen priest that he may be near her in the temple and commune with her in common worship of the goddess.”

“What else do you see?”

“I see nothing. All is dark.”

WE WAITED a tense moment; then: “Is it over—have you finished?” I asked, edging toward the light-switch. Somehow, I felt, with the friendly glow of electricity upon us, that sense of being in the room with something alien would fade away.

The Frenchman hushed my question with an upraised hand. “Tell us what you witness now?” he ordered, leaning forward till his breathing stirred the silver veil which lay upon Dolores' face.

“It is daylight. The sun shines brightly on a temple's painted pylon. The sacred birds are feeding in the courtyard. I see a woman cross the forecourt. It is I. I am robed in a white robe which leaves my bosom and my ankles bare. Sandals of papyrus shoe my feet. Jewels are on my arms and a band of silver crowns my

hair. In one hand I bear a lotus bud, and a water-pot is in the other. I am going to the fountain. An old man accosts me. He is very feeble. His hair and beard are white as snow. He wears a blue robe and red turban. He is a Hebrew. He raises his hands and curses me. He tells me I have charmed his son away from God, and have made a heathen of him. He curses me in life and death. He calls the curse of Yahweh on me. I laugh at him and call him Jewish dog and slave. He curses me again and tells me I shall find no rest until atonement has been made. He swears that I must walk the earth again in penance and humility.

"Now I see the youth who took the vows of Isis. He is dead. A wound gapes like a flower in his throat. His Jewish brethren have set on him and killed him for apostasy. I bend over him and kiss him on the lips, and on the gaping, bloody wound. My tears fall on his face. I tear my hair and throw dust on my head. But he does not answer to my cries. I swear that I will join him.

"I seek out Ana the magician. He is old and wise and very wicked. I promise him what he will if he will make it so that I can join the man who forsook his race and God for me. He tells me I must be a Jewess, but I know this cannot be, for I am Egyptian. He says that when the time for my awakening comes and my *ka* comes back to seek its earthly tenement, he can make me rise a Jewess. I ask him what his fee will be, and he says it is I. So I yield myself to his embrace, and then, because I know the priests will stone me with stones until I die because I broke my vows of chastity, I throw myself into the Nile. Ana the magician takes my body and prepares it for the tomb."

Silence heavy as a cloud of darkness

settled on the room as the last faint, halting sentence ended. The shaft of moonlight had vanished from the window, and the still, couched forms were barely visible. There was a queer, sharp freshness to the air, as though it had been ozonated by a thunder-storm. Almost, it seemed to me, there was a quality of intoxication in the atmosphere, and mechanically I put my hand upon my wrist to test my pulsation. My heart was almost racing, and throughout my body there tingled a feeling of physical well-being like that one feels upon a mountain-top in summer.

"Lights!" came Jules de Grandin's hail. "*Grand Dieu*—Trowbridge, Grafensburg, make lights; it is incredible!"

I stumbled through the gloom, found the wall-switch and turned on the electricity. De Grandin stood between the silent bodies, a mute forefinger pointed at each.

"Look, observe; behold!" he ordered.

I blinked my eyes and shook my head. Surely this was some gamin trick of faulty senses. Dolores lay in quiet sleep, lips softly parted, limbs relaxed, a faint but unmistakable glow of health upon her cheeks. Beside her lay the body of the priestess, and already it seemed undergoing dissolution. The once firm cheeks were sunken in, the eye-holes so depressed they were no more than hollow pits; the lips were drawn back from the staring teeth, and on the skin there lay that hideous tint of leprous gray which is the harbinger of putrefaction.

"Quickly, Grafensburg," de Grandin bade, "if you would make your precious autopsy you had better be about it while there yet is time. Take her away. We follow you soon."

THE Herr Doktorprofessor Grafensburg stripped off his rubber gloves and looked from me to Jules de Grandin,

then back again in blank bewilderment. "By heaven!" he swore, "never have I a thing like this seen before. Never; never! She was a mummy first, *kollegen*, as perfect a specimen of embalming as ever I have seen, and thousands of them have I unwrapped. Then she was a woman, almost living, breathing. Next she becomes a *kadaver*, a long-dead corpse, already almost reeking. *Lieber Gott*, I cannot understand it!"

"Yet the autopsy——" de Grandin murmured, but:

"*Ach, ja,*" excitedly broke in the Austrian, "it showed hers was a body like the thousand others I have cut apart. *Donnerwetter*, I might have been in hospital dissecting the dead corpse of one who died in bed a little while before! Brain, heart and lungs, viscera—everything she had in life, were all in place. *Herr Gott*, she had not been embalmed at all according to Egyptian custom; only dried and bandaged! I am in the sea of doubt submerged. I cannot tell my right hand from my left; my experience is of no value here. Have you perhaps a theory?"

De Grandin shed his linen operating-gown and lit a cigarette. "I have an hypothesis," he answered slowly, "but I would not care to dignify it by the name of theory. The other night when Mademoiselle Dolores went insensible before that mummy in the museum, she was like one hypnotized. She made a quick recovery, so we thought, but only to be seized again when you told us of the strange inscription you had found upon the pectoral tablet of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku. Why was this? one wonders.

"Me, I think I have the answer. Thoughts are things, immortal things. Thought emanations, especially those produced by violent emotions, have a way of permeating physical objects and remaining in them as the odor of the flow-

ers lingers in the vase, or the sweet perfume of sandalwood remains for all to smell long after life departs from out the tree. Very well, consider: Too-late-awakened love, perhaps, shook this ancient priestess' being to its very core; she would make atonement for the sin she had committed against the Jewish youth who loved her more than he adored his God. That was the thought which moved her when she struck her so abominable bargain with the wizard Ana; the thought persisted when she cast herself into the Nile. *And though her body died, the thought lived on.*

"When Ana the magician made her body ready for the tomb he mummified it by some secret process of his own, not by the technique of the *paraschites*. And, further to concentrate the thought which dominated her, he carved upon her pectoral mortuary tablet the prediction that she would arise through the agency of her brain—her thought, if you prefer—rather than by intervention of the gods.

"Mademoiselle Dolores is a psychic. As she paused before the mummy of this so unfortunate young girl the tragic history of her life and pitiable death was borne to her as the scent of mummy spices which have been borne to one less susceptible to psychical suggestion. Unwittingly Friend Trowbridge sensed the truth when he said that she 'identified herself with the mummy'.

"My friends, she was infected with the thought-force emanating from that long-dead mummy, even as she might have taken germ-contagion from it. Sit-ankh-hku would expiate her sin of long ago by resurrection as a Jewess. Mademoiselle Dolores is a Jewess. Strangely, by coincidence, perhaps, the two resembled each other. *Voilà*, the thought-cycle was completed. Dolores Mendoza would become Sit-ankh-hku; Sit-ankh-hku would com-

pletely dominate—displace—the personality of Dolores Mendoza. Yes, undoubtedly it was so.

“These things I surmised without knowing them. It was a process of instinct rather than of reason. *Alors*, I blended the modern with the ancient. There is much to say in favor of the Freudian psychology, even though it has been made the happy hunting-ground of pornography by some who practise it. Mademoiselle Dolores suffered from a ‘complex’, a series of emotionally accentuated ideas in a repressed state. A thought-thorn was imbedded in her personality. While it remained there it would fester. Accordingly, we must take it out, as we would take out a physical thorn from her physical body if she were not to suffer an infection.

“I had you bring the body of the olden one and lay it close beside her that she might be *en rapport* with things which happened in the long ago. For the same reason I secured the veil of Isis and laid it on her face. It, too, was pregnant with the thought-forms of an ancient day. Finally, I waited for the moon to shine upon her, for the moon was sacred to the Goddess Isis, and each little thing which brought her nearer to the past brought the past nearer us. I sent her questing spirit backward to the days of old. I bade her tell us what she saw and heard, and through her living lips dead Sit-ankh-hku disclosed the tragedy which came to her three thousand years ago.

“*Enfin*, we took the stopper from the jar of scent, and the perfume, liberated in the air, disseminated. Those old tragic thoughts, so long locked tightly in Sit-ankh-hku’s little body, were set at liberty; they thinned and drifted off like vapor in a breeze—*pouf!* they were gone for ever. No longer will they ride Made-

moiselle Dolores like an incubus. She is for ever freed from them. It is doubtful if she will retain the slightest memory of the sufferings she underwent while they possessed her.”

“But how do you account for Dolores almost changing to a mummy, while the mummy almost came to life?” I asked.

“In Mademoiselle Dolores’ case it was, as you have aptly phrased it, a case of ‘identifying herself with the mummy’. Under self-hypnosis, originally induced by the thought-force she had absorbed as she stood before the mummy of the Priestess Sit-ankh-hku, she forced herself to simulate the mummy’s stark rigidity, the very physical appearance of a desiccated lich. In the mummy’s case—who knows? Perhaps it was as Doktor Grafensburg suggests, that the body was so treated by the wizard Ana’s art that it took up moisture from the air, became rehydrated and put on its original appearance. Me, I think it was a transfer of psychoplasm from Dolores to the mummy which drained the living girl of all life-force and gave her the appearance of a mummy, while the dead form put upon it the appearance of returning life. One cannot surely say, these are but guesses, but my opinion is strengthened by the fact that when Dolores had recounted the tragedy of Sit-ankh-hku she all at once regained her normal look, while dissolution seemed to fall upon the dead girl with the suddenness of striking fate. It was as if a tide of life flowed and ebbed from one to the other. You see? It is most simple.”

An expression of bewilderment, mingled with horrified incredulity, spread over Grafensburg’s broad face as de Grandin finished speaking. I could scarce refrain from laughing, he looked for all the world like William Jennings Bryan reading Darwin, or a leader of the W. C.

T. U. perusing a de luxe edition of the Bartenders' Guide.

"*Lieber Himmel!*" he exclaimed. "You—you tell us this? With seriousness you say it? Yes? *Mein Gott, du bist verrückt!* Stay, stay, little man, and rave your crazy ravings. I am going to get drunk!"

A smile of almost heavenly delight lit up de Grandin's face. "*Mon cher ami, mon brave collègue,*" he exclaimed, "for a week I've known you, yet never till this instant have I heard you speak one word of sense!"

"Wait till I find my seven-times-ac-cursed hat, and I will go with you!"
