

# Weird Tales



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# THE CALIFORNIAN.

*A WESTERN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.*

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## The Dramatic In My Destiny

By EMMA FRANCES DAWSON

### PROLOGUE

"ALCOHOL IS for the brutish body, opium for the divine spirit," said Tong-ko-lin-sing, as he lighted the lamp. "The bliss from wine grows and wanes as the body has its time of growth and loss, but that from opium stays at one height, as the soul knows no youth nor age." He handed me the pipe—flute-like, fit instrument for the divine music of dreamland, though clumsy bamboo—the earthen bowl with the rich coloring of much smoking, like a Chinaman himself. "Dead faces look on us, and dead voices call, for the soul then gains its full stature, can mix with the immortals, and does; when alone and in silence, it can know that Time and Space have no bounds." He took a wire, which he dipped in the jar and held in the flame. The few drops of the paste clinging to the wire bubbled and burned. He smeared it on the rim of the pipe-bowl. "Opium has the power of a god; it can efface or renew the Past, and ignore or foretell the Future."

I drew three or four whiffs of whitish smoke; the bowl was empty. Again he went through the long course of filling. "Though it bring dream within dream, like our Chinese puzzles—mark their meaning, for our Chinese saying is, 'The world's nonsense is the sense of God!'"

I heard. I knew him for my queer

teacher of Chinese, who knew French, English, and Sanscrit as well, whom I was wont to muse over here in Chinatown, as over a relic, until oppressed with thought of the age of his country, until San Francisco seemed a town built of a child's toy-houses, and ours but a gad-fly race.

I knew the Chinese lily, standing in the pebbles at the bottom of a bowl of clear water on the window-sill, by a globe of gold-fish; and, beyond, the Oriental street (for it was in the region bounded by Kearny, Stockton, Sacramento, and Pacific streets, where fifty thousand aliens make an alien city, a city as Chinese as Peking, except for buildings and landscape, and not unlike the narrow, dirty, thronged streets, with dingy brick piles, of Shanghai); an endless line of dark, mysterious forms with muffling blouse and flaunting queue, the rank, poisonous undergrowth in our forest of men. I was idly aware of all this. I knew that I, Yorke Rhys, quite care-free and happy, had nothing to dread. I calmly dropped down the tide of sleep—but what was this vivid and awful dream?—all in brighter hues and deeper shadows, and more sharply real than dream-land seems, without the magic touches of opium? As if looking in a mirror, like the Lady of Shalott, I saw all past scenes at once as a great whole. Against the mystic gloom of opium everything stood out as the

## ABOUT: EMMA FRANCES DAWSON

Ambrose Bierce, as vitriolic a literary critic as ever wrote and rapped in the history of San Francisco's vividly technicolored early journalistic history, once stated in print of the author of this story as follows:

"It is not my custom to set 'the cover of praise' upon every head that is presented, but of Miss Dawson I should like to be understood as affirming with whatever of strength resides in forthright sincerity that in all the essential attributes of literary competence she is head and shoulders above any writer on this coast with whose work I have acquaintance. And on this judgement I gladly hazard my small possession and large hope of reputation for literary sagacity." And, of her fantasies, "Those readers who did not remember them must have minds that are steel to impress and tallow to retain."

Unfortunately, since literary reputations in those long-ago years, with such few exceptions as Mark Twain, Brett Harte and Bierce himself, traveled almost exclusively from East to West, the well accoladed Miss Dawson remained and remains virtually unknown.

Yet she was a woman of wide cultural accomplishments as well as of great graphic talent. Although much of her adult life was burdened with care for a hopelessly invalid mother, Emma Frances Dawson was a gifted and successful concert musician before embracing literature. Her considerable linguistic talents and training enabled her to publish translations of stories, articles and poetry from the French, German, Spanish, Italian and Persian regularly in West Coast periodicals of the era.

*The Dramatic in My Destiny* appeared originally in *THE CALIFORNIAN, A Western Monthly Magazine*, for January, 1880 and was included in a collection of her works, *An Itinerant House, and Other Stories*, published in 1896.

If that seems long ago, worry not in mournful or any other numbers. Miss Dawson's description of a trip, via an opium pipe, with which her story opens, will ring gongs and bring reminiscent shudders to the most modern addict of synthetic mind-blowing hallucinogens. Nor need one be an addict of anything stronger than tincture of benzoine to receive the full impact.

Emma Frances Dawson belonged with the great turn-of-the century figures like Ambrose Bierce, Robert W. Chambers, F. Marion Crawford, Ralph Adams Cram, W. C. Morrow, Gertrude Atherton, Edith Wharton, Mary Wilkins Freeman to name but a few—who created great tales of the strange, the unknown and the horrible.

Now, enjoy this haunting yarn by an undeservedly forgotten master of the ghost story.

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night shows the stars: the soul had a mood that could focus All since the making of the world, and only then knew how far off, fading, stretch the bounds of Time, the untold reach of the Universe, which we wrongly think we daily see and know. I saw into it all as a leader reads an opera-score.

In the vast poppy-fields of Bengal, likened to green lakes where lilies bloom, near the holy city of Benares, which dates itself back to creation, I idly plucked a white blossom on a lonely stalk, and flung it down, when it at once changed to a shapeless form, which chased me. Then it seemed it had been my curse through far-off

ages, the frost that chilled me when I was a flower, the white cat that killed me when I was a bird, the white shark that caught me when I was a fish—in all places a white cloud between me and my sunshine. My horse, in gold armor, thickly gemmed, bore me from the field where a silk tent held my love, with others of King Arthur's court, to a gloomy-raftered cob-webbed hall, where shield and battle-axe were given me, and soon I wept over the shattered helm of one whom I had loved—yet killed.

Now, at a masked ball in some old palace, where I was dogged by a white domino with whom I must fight a

duel; then, in the red glare of the southern moon in the Arizona desert, through stillness overwhelming as noise, I fled from a figure in a Moqui blanket. By huge fires, I too, waited the coming of Montezuma. I was Montezuma, held down by weight of the mountain which bears his profile at Maricopa Wells. My great white shadow flitted after me across the red and yellow of Colorado scenery. In the awful depths of Gypsum Canon, I gazed in despair up at the round, well-like heights for chance to flee from it. At the Royal Gorge, peering from the cliff straight down for over two thousand feet, I gladly saw it at the base. Eased, I stood on a mountain-top, where, as I turned, I saw the four seasons—most wonderful view that could be brought by a wizard of old to a king's windows; but here I suddenly found a white mist that turned as I did, and strove to shape itself to my form. Crossing the plains of Nevada, it was the white dust which choked and blinded me from sight of the purple mist-veiled peaks.

Lost in the jungle of a Chinese forest, I suddenly came to a clearing where beetle and glow-worm were staking out a grave for some one near and dear to me, whose death I could not hinder. I watched until they began to mark a second grave—oh, for whom? But I was torn from this sight, and thrust in the heart of a Chinese city. I wound through its crooked streets to a dark flight of steps, which came to an end; no rail, no step, darkness before I could get quite down; and I was again creeping from the top of a like staircase. Over and over I tried to go down these vanishing stairs. At last, I was faced suddenly, as if he sprang through a trapdoor, by a huge white form that tried to tell me something, some strange fact linked with my fate, which would explain a secret that had long chafed me. But what? I shook with fear—Tong-ko-lin-sing spoke to me. I woke.

## I

“WAS IT not Fate, whose name is also Sorrow?” said Elinor.

We were looking at Randolph

Rogers' "Lost Pleiad," in the inner room of Morris & Schwab's picture-store.

"No," said I, kindling at a glance from her fine eyes; "Fate is well named when in one's favor, but can not be truly against one. I could master it; so could others. Man rules his own life—it need not depend on others—he gains what he strives for, and need never yield to evil forces."

"Then you have no pity for the man who killed another here yesterday?"

"None. That is the worst of crimes. I respect the Brahmins, who hold life sacred even in an insect. No. Heaven may keep me from other sin—I will hold myself from murder."

"Your friend, Noel Brande, does not think as you do."

"No; but he gains his wishes because he is brave enough to fight what he calls doom."

"That is not the only point on which you differ."

"No; but we are too fond of each other to quarrel."

"Even Fate could not break your friendship?"

"Never. I defy it."

"It is as good as a fortune to be sure of one's self," she said, looking at me for an instant.

Her shy, brief glances stirred my brain like wine. As we went up our boarding-house steps, I felt that the world was made for me. As she passed through the storm-door before me, I stayed for mere lightness of heart to drop a gold piece in the apron of Nora, the neat Irish nurse-girl, sitting outside with Elinor's little cousins. Elinor had glided so far alone that Si-ki, coming toward her with a card that had been left for her, did not see me. I watched him, thinking of what Nora had told of his skill in making melon-seed fowls, and carving flowers from vegetables, and of her dislike for his hue—"like an old green copper coin," she said.

He did have an odd sort of tea-color to his skin, not unlike that of morphine-lovers, but I thought he looked no worse than Nora with her face like a globe fish. Elinor, with hand on the newel, paused to look at the card. Amazed and angry, I saw Si-ki dare to lay his hand on hers.



to myself as I went up-stairs to my room, with a passing glimpse of Elinor, disturbed and blushing, in the doorway of her aunt's room.

She did not come to dinner. I was filled with shame to have spent so much force and feeling on such a wretch, and to have distressed Elinor by setting all these tongues in motion about her. But, as I told Brande that night in my room, I had a strange dislike for Si-ki.

"He is too cat-like," I said.

"Yes," said Brande; "our rough classes are like the larger kind of beast. But that Chinese teacher of yours is worse, dark as if the gloom of ages had taken man's shape. It is like dealing with a ghost or sphinx."

"He shows the effect of inherited civilization," said I; "dignified, priestly, close-mouthed as if his millions of ancestors in him frowned at me as one of a short-lived race, a sort of Mormon-fly with its life one night."

"He and the Chinese grammar both would be too much for me to meet," said Brande.

"But they have each their charm," I said.

"That early hieroglyphic you told me about," said he, "of folding-doors and an ear, which meant 'to listen,' shows the same law of thought that our landlady has. What hidden force let her have only raw coolies for months after she sent off a trained servant for his thefts? We hear of their 'high-binders' and other secret societies. You have not known the last of that cur you whipped."

"Pshaw! I soon start for China anyway," said I, "glad of the pay promised me there for three years, and tired of roughing it in Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona; but I wish—I wish I could have had a chance with your friends on California Street."

"I wish you had," Brande said; "but never mind. You will have gained the Chinese language, and, judging by your feat of to-day, the Chinamen had better not cross your path."

"For this," I answered, glumly. "Why did we move?" For we were scarcely settled. I came to be near Elinor, and Brande because he wished to be with me.

"There is the cause," he said, nodding toward the window as a gust

The sight filled me with such rage, that, just as I would have brushed a gnat out of the world, I sprang on Si-ki and began beating him. I was in such fury that I scarcely knew when Elinor and Nora fled, or that the French lady hung over the railing up-stairs, in her white frilled wrapper, with but one of her diamond sparks in her ears, and her hair half dressed, crying to heaven; that the Spanish lady stood in the parlor-door, clapping her hands; that the German professor opening his door, the Italian merchant running down-stairs, the English banker, the American broker, and my friend Brande, coming in from the street, all tried to stop me.

"Keep back! It is a matter between us two!" I answered them all. "Between us two!" timing my blows to my words. I thrashed him till my cane snapped in two. "Between us two!" I turned him out. "Between us two!" I cried, and flung him down the steps. "Between us two!" I muttered

of wind swept by. "People wonder at the roving impulse of the San Franciscans. It is the wind which urges and compels them to arise and go; it has even driven me to try and mock the monotone of its chant."

He took from his pocket and read to me these lines:

*Refrain, refrain, O Wind! from such complaining,  
Or deign at least to make thy murmurs sane.*

*Explain, explain thy pathos ever paining—  
Thy vain desire torments and tires my brain.*

*Refrain! Refrain!*

*At last reveal how vanished ages freighted  
Thy voices with their tadded woe and pain;*

*Forbear to mutter—I feel execrated.  
Urge not, for naught impatience can attain.*

*Refrain! Refrain!*

*At last, at last, cease all thy raging clamor,  
Nor beat and pant against my window-pane.*

*I listen Now; at last thine eerie hammer  
Mine ear hath welded for thy mystic strain— Nay, crouch not nigh with clank of heavy chain  
Refrain! Refrain!*

As he ceased, the wind, which had thrust in an undertone of sympathy, rose so strongly that the house trembled like a boat, and in the close, sweeping fog we might have been far out at sea not any sign to be seen of the city below us. We sat in silence, broken suddenly by a quick, intent knocking. Brande opened the door. Elinor's aunt stood there, looking wild. Without heeding him, she called to me:

"How could you do it? Why did you do it?"

"Because he insulted her," I stammered.

"He has done worse now!" she said.

"What do you mean?" asked Brande, while I stood in speechless wonder, amazed at her strange words.

"I mean," said she, still looking at me, "that Nora brought some Chinese sweetmeats that she said you had sent Elinor, but it seems they were given her by Si-ki."

"Well?" I gasped.

"Elinor, poor girl, at once tasted them—"

"And—"

"—and now lies senseless!"

"Poisoned!" I moaned.

## II

CHASED by Brande as by a shadow, I in turn tracked two policemen, through a network of horror like a nightmare—through the foreign city in the heart of San Francisco like a clingstone in its peach. In single file, dropping story below story under the side-walks, we slipped and stumbled in mildew, damp, and dirt, where the coolies flitted round like gnomes, where no window let in light, no drain bore off bad air.

We searched narrow galleries running everywhere, often bridging each other like those of an ant-hill, and dark ways where but one could pass. We bent at door-ways that barred our path at sudden turns, peered into vile dens that lined the way, and, choking and strangling, climbed above ground, where we scanned the thousands of workmen in the many boot and shoe factories and cigar-works; hunted through the numberless gambling-hells, but could not pass the old watchman, with wrinkled face like a baked apple, sitting on a stool in front of a red curtain (the color for luck), before he jerked the cord dangling near him, when bells warned, doors were barred, bolts shot like lightning, door upon door suddenly thrust itself across our path, or a screen slyly slid before us, turning us unaware into another passage.

Worn-out, Brande and I started for home, but on the way stopped to see Tong-ko-lin-sing. He had been playing chess with his friend Si Hung Chang, who left as we went in, and he packed the chess-men in their box while he heard our tale, but said nothing. His face was a clear blank when Brande asked about secret societies. I tried all forms of begging and urging I could

think of. He would not know what we meant. He offered us cigars, and took his pipe as if he wished us to go—his own pipe, with a small tube on one side in which to burn an opium-pill.

I opened the door, and signed to Brande to follow me. He did so, swearing at the Chinese as sly fools. We were half way down-stairs, when Tong-ko-lin-sing shuffled out on the landing and called after us, the English words having a queer effect of centred force when intoned like Chinese:

“Red-haired devils! barbarians! all of you! Like bears beating their stupid heads against the Great Wall. Are the black-haired people not your betters? Great in mind as in numbers, did we not make paper and ink, and print, a thousand years before your time?—and travel by a compass more than twenty-five hundred years before your Christ?” He shuffled back, but swung out again to add, “Do we not excel in dyes, in sugar, in porcelain, gun-powder, and fire-works?”

“Who could have foreseen such a lecture from a jumping-jack in brocade drawers, tight to the ankle, and a loose blouse?” said Brande, as we hurried home. “He has the wholly irresponsible air of a clothier’s sign-suit swinging in the wind, but he knows the points of the compass!”

We found Elinor seemed to have changed for the worse and still senseless. After Brande left me I sat in my window, too sad and too tired to go to rest. I only thought of her.

“Oh!” I groaned, “if I could have had some proof that she loved me!” As I sat, I saw in a long mirror the door behind me open, and—Elinor come! In misty white trailing robe, she looked unreal. Could it be, I thought, that they had left her alone to leave her room in a trance? A thrill of joy shot through me that she should even unconsciously come straight to me. I sprang to my feet and turned toward her—to find I was alone! I sank again in my chair. Was I losing my wits? No—she was there, there in the mirror, looking at me with the deepest woe in her face!

“Did I stay with Tong-ko-lin-sing, and take opium again?” I murmured. She made a gesture of farewell and half turned to go.

“Elinor! Elinor!” I cried.

A spasm of grief crossed her face. Filled with wonder, sorrow, and surprise, I rose again, but she made a motion of despair and left the room before I could turn. Did she go? Was she there, or was my brain wild? My own shadow, crossing the ceiling toward the door as I moved, startled me. The dim hall was still and vacant. I went to Elinor’s door. Her aunt said for the last half hour they had not felt sure she was not dead, but there had just come back signs of life; they could see that she breathed again. The doctor had slight hope. She gave me a slip of paper covered with Elinor’s dainty penciling.

“I found that in Elinor’s pocket,” she said, “in the dress she wore when out with you yesterday. I thought you would like to read it.”

I wrung her hand, and rushed to my room to read:

#### THE LOST PLEIAD.

*Spell-bound, by planet that I fain  
would spurn,  
To circle like the forms in poet’s  
soul,  
Like them for starry heights to madly  
yearn,  
Yet feel the tension of the Earth’s  
control,*

*And ever drifting seem  
Like blossom floating down restrain-  
ing stream.*

*Through vast cloud-spaces up and  
down I wheel,  
While years like vagrant winds shift  
far below;  
The stillness of the upper air I feel  
Is like the rest the immortals ever  
know.*

*Here I forget how man  
Through haste and strife his life can  
merely plan.*

*His life, like that reflected in a glass,  
Knows not the sweep of that  
among the gods—  
Has its set limits that he may not pass  
Except he vow himself to Art’s  
long odds,*

*And Sorrow’s eyes of woe  
Must some time fix on each with  
baleful glow.*

*More wise than man the acts of*

*Nature are—  
The little dew-drop pearly twilight leaf  
Will take unto its inmost heart a star.  
Which mortals give but careless glance and brief,  
Nor heed when slants the sun  
What mystic signs gleam red, gold clouds upon.*

*Forlorn, I fall for ever Pleiad height—  
Float downward just above the phantom realm  
Where Fame and Beauty, Love and Power, take flight,  
Fate ever whirling after to o'erwhelm.  
See rise the Day's bold crown,  
Or muffled Night with stolen stars slink down!*

*With slow pulse poise while moonless midnights pass,  
And vivid on the velvet dark is lain,  
By memory painted, that sweet time—alas!—  
When yet I knew, as nymph in Dian's train,  
The gods, the stars, the tides,  
The sylvan fauns and satyrs—naught besides.*

*Not for the goddess, stag, and hunt, I sigh,  
Nor for my sister Pleiades above,  
As for the blissful moments long gone by  
In rapture and despair of mortal love.*

*This is the potent spell  
Which sends me drifting down the cloud-sea's swell!*

"It can not be!" I cried, with bursting heart. "Our drama is not ended."

### III

THE NEXT DAY found no change in Elinor, and found us again with the policemen, hunting Chinatown. One Chinaman we saw everywhere; on a corner across the way; at the head of steps as we were coming up; at the foot of the stairs when we were on a roof; bowing at a shrine with gold and saffron legends and scarlet streamers round the door, and through the dim inner light and scent of burning

sandalwood, the gleam of tinsel and flare of lamp, before an ugly image; even in the theatre, watching the ground and lofty tumbling, until the crowd and noise and bad air forced us to leave, when as I came out last of our party I nearly fell over him.

"Tong-ko-lin-sing!"

"Why all this trouble for a woman?" he asked, gravely. "Women are plenty, for to become one is a future punishment of ours for sin when men. I have seen her with you; she wore the tiger's-claw jewelry you got through me."

"Where is Si-ki?" I cried, making a vain clutch at Tong-ko-lin-sing's sleeve. But the others had turned back for me, and my Chinese teacher's jacket and cap of black astrakhan fur soon melted into the darkness of some too near alley. Disheartened, we went home. Elinor had not changed. We could not try to sleep, but sat in my room.

"I wish," said Brande, "you looked as full of life and joy as you did the last time I saw you come home with Miss Elinor."

"O Noel!" I cried, "if I could but live over that last happy day!"

"Like Socrates under the plane-tree," he mused, "'borne away by a divine impression coming from this lovely place.'"

"Spirits in prison," said I; "where do you think they go when first set free?—to another world, or to the dearest friend in this?"

"That would depend," he answered, "upon the kind of spirit that goes. One like Miss Elinor now—"

"Do not speak of her death," I cried, "though I have thought before that you did not like her."

"No," said he, "I do not, but with no reason."

I started. Elinor had come in at the door behind him, and stood looking at me, making a sign of caution as if she did not wish Brande to know of her presence.

"What is it?" he asked. "You look as if you saw a ghost."

"Nothing," I faltered. While I wondered what was best to do, she looked anxiously at me, and made motions toward Brande as if I meant to do him mortal harm, as if warning me back from a crime.



"What do you see?" Brande cried, and to my horror added, "there is nothing here!"

"Don't you see her?" I gasped, hardly able to get on my feet, for a sinking at my heart seemed to root me to my chair.

"Poor fellow!" he said to himself in pity. "He has lost his wits! See, my boy," he said to me, rising and walking toward her. "Empty space, all empty space."

"Elinor! What is it? Speak!" I cried.

But Brande caught me in his arms, and by main force bore me to a chair in spite of my struggles and prayers.

"Let me go!" I panted.

"I can not let you dash your brains out against the wall," he said.

I made one more vain effort to leave my seat. He held me in a grasp of iron.

"What shall I do?" he groaned to himself, and turned white about the lips, for unseen I had made out to draw my pistol from my pocket, and now suddenly held it toward him.

"Yorke Rhys!" he shouted, but did not let go his hold.

How can I tell it? The room turned black to me. Then I found Elinor had fled, and my friend lay at my feet with a bullet through his heart!

I have a confused remembrance of the boarders rushing in. They thought Brande had shot himself, for I sat there vaguely asking over and over:

"Why did he do it?"

There was a murmur of "Don't tell him." The crowd gave way for Elinor's aunt, who came and laid my head against her breast in motherly fashion.

"What does Elinor want?" I asked. "She has just been here."

She only said, "Poor boy!" and smoothed my hair.

"Elinor died just now!"

#### IV

I LAY ON MY BED, dimly aware of a long, slow lapse of time. Was it of weeks, months or years? I could not tell. One day Nora brought me a folded page of note-paper, which, she said, fell from my clothes when I was undressed the night I fainted, and she had kept it for me, "because it had

Miss Elinor's writing on it." It was "The Lost Pleiad." All my weight of woe dropped on me anew. I knew what star had fallen from my sky.

"You kept it for me all this time?" I said, as I gave her some money. "I suppose I was sick some weeks."

"Months," she answered.

I sighed. How much in debt such long idleness and illness must have brought me! And I must have lost my chance for work in China. Letters must be written. I opened my desk. It had not been locked, and a pile of receipted board and doctor's bills I had never seen lay in it, with a letter dated the very day that Elinor—that Noel—that I fell ill, from Brande's friends on California Street. It told me that through his strong efforts I was given a place with them, which made sure the income I had longed for to let me marry and stay in my own country. They had kept the place waiting for me, and meanwhile paid my bills. Through Brande's influence! And I had killed my best friend! I could trace my troubles all back to that infernal Si-ki. Hastily making ready, I stole out unseen, and rushed to Tong-ko-lin-sing. He was struck with the change in me, and wished to talk of it.

"I must find Si-ki," I said.

"In a field of melons do not pull up your shoes," said he; "under a plum-tree do not adjust your cap. If I go with you, it will look as if I knew where to find him. I do not."

"You can find him. You must hunt for him," I persisted.

"The lady—?"

"Is dead," I told him. I piled a small heap of gold and silver on the table.

We searched parts of Chinatown which would have been barred to me without a Chinese comrade; underground depths like the abysses after death, upper stories and roofs of buildings that towered in air as if striving for space to breathe, narrow, crooked alleys where loungers talked across from windows about the American straying there, and seemed to think I was led by Tong-ko-lin-sing because in some way his prisoner.

At last, the cobbler who always sits on the south side of Clay Street, just below Dupont, told him something which I did not catch, but he heard

with a start. He wavered and urged me to give up the search. I would not. He set off a new way, and soon darted into an alley full of the grimy, blackened buildings which can never be used after the Chinese have lived in them, whose dark horrors recalled some scene elsewhere known—in what past age? I saw round me only the signs of a civilization older than the Pharaohs.

As Tong-ko-lin-sing started down some break-neck steps, I stopped a moment for breath, and looked around me. I felt the crook of this under-world soon shut all out like a coffin-lid. My love was dead. My friend was murdered. I cursed aloud. I followed Tong-ko-lin-sing only by the strained tension of my nerves.

He went in at a door, through a long passage that had a strange smell that made me feel faint, a smell of

death—till, after a moment's pause as if to make sure he was right, and giving me a warning touch he opened a door into a dimly lighted den, where the sickening scent grew worse.

"Si-ki!" he called.

What was this ghostly form, white as a skeleton, which slowly glimmered through the gloom before my amazed eyes? Dizzy from the fetid scent, yet held by my horror as by transfixed spear, with failing heart and quaking limbs I saw the ghastly figure cross the rotten, slimy floor toward us.

"My dream! My dream!" I murmured as I clung to Tong-ko-lin-sing for support.

An awful voice, discordant as a Chinese gong, the hollow voice of a leper, a voice unearthly as if we had been shades met in another world cried,

"Between us two! *Between us.*"