

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAGIC IMAGE

That night Pharaoh and Tua rested in privacy with those members of the Court whom they had brought with them, but on the morrow began a round of festivals such as history scarcely told of in Egypt. Indeed, the feast with which it opened was more splendid than any Tua had seen at Thebes even at the time of her crowning, or on that day of blood and happiness when Amathel and his Nubian guards were slain and she and Rames declared their love. At this feast Pharaoh and the young Queen sat in chairs of gold, while the Prince Abi was placed on her right hand, and not on that of Pharaoh as he should have been as host and subject.

"I am too much honoured," said Tua, looking at him sideways. "Why do you not sit by Pharaoh, my uncle?"

"Who am I that I should take the seat of honour when my sovereigns come to visit me?" answered Abi, bowing his great head. "Let it be reserved for the high-priest of Osiris, that Holy One whom, after Ptah, we worship here above all other deities, for he is clothed with the majesty of the god of death."

"Of death," said Tua. "Is that why you put him by my father?"

"Indeed not," replied Abi, spreading out his hands, "though if a choice

must be made, I would rather that he sat near one who is old and must soon be called the 'ever-living,' than at the side of the loveliest queen that Egypt has ever seen, to whom it is said that Amen himself has sworn a long life," and again he bowed.

"You mean that you think Pharaoh will soon die. Nay, deny it not, Prince Abi, I can read your thoughts, and they are ill-omened," said Tua sharply and, turning her head away, began to watch those about her.

Soon she noticed that behind Abi amongst his other officers stood a tall, grizzled man clad in the robes and cap of an astrologer, who appeared to be studying everything, and especially Pharaoh and herself, for whenever she looked round it was to find his quick, black eyes fixed upon her.

"Who is that man?" she whispered presently to Asti, who waited on her.

"The famous astrologer, Kaku, Queen. I have seen him before when he visited Thebes with the Prince before your birth. I will tell you of him afterwards. Watch him well."

So Tua watched and discovered several things, among them that Kaku observed everything that she and Pharaoh did, what they ate, to whom they spoke, and any words which fell from their lips, such as those that she had uttered about the god Osiris. All of these he noted down from time to time on his waxen tablets, doubtless that he might make use of

them afterwards in his interpretation of the omens of the future.

Now, among the ladies of the Court who fanned Pharaoh and waited on him was that dancing girl of Abi's who many years before had betrayed him at Thebes, Merytra, Lady of the Footstool, now a woman of middle age, but still beautiful, of whom, although Tua disliked her, Pharaoh was fond because she was clever and witty of speech and amused him. For this reason, in spite of her history, he had advanced her to wealth and honour, and kept her about his person as a companion of his lighter hours. Something in this woman's manner attracted Tua's attention, for continually she looked at the astrologer, Kaku, who suddenly awoke to her presence and smiled as though he recognised an old friend. Then, when it was the turn of another to take her place behind Pharaoh, Merytra drew alongside of Kaku, and under shelter of her broad fan, spoke to him quickly, as though she were making some arrangement with him, and he nodded in assent, after which they separated again.

The feast wore on its weary course till, at length, the doors opened and slaves appeared bearing the mummy of a dead man, which they set upon its feet in the centre of the hall, whereon a toast-master cried:

"Drink and be merry, all ye great ones of the earth, who know not how soon ye shall come to this last lowly state."

Now this bringing in of the mummy was a very ancient rite, but one that had fallen into general disuse, so that as it chanced Tua, who had never

seen it practised before, looked on it with curiosity not unmingled with disgust.

"Why is a dead king dragged from his sepulchre back into the world of life, my Uncle?" she asked, pointing to the royal emblems with which the corpse was clothed.

"It is no king, your Majesty," answered Abi, "but only the bones of some humble person, or perhaps a block of wood that wears the uræus and carries the sceptre in honour of Pharaoh, our chief guest."

Now Tua frowned, and Pharaoh, who had overheard the talk, said, smiling sadly:

"A somewhat poor compliment, my brother, to one who, like myself, is old and sickly and not far from his eternal habitation. Yet why should I grumble at it who need no such reminder of that which awaits me and all of us?" and he leaned back in his chair and sighed, while Tua looked at him anxiously.

Then Abi ordered the mummy to be removed, declaring, with many apologies, that it had been brought there only because such was the ancient custom of Memphis, which, unlike Thebes, did not change its fashions. He added that this same body or figure, for he knew not which it was, having never troubled to inquire, had been looked upon by at least thirty Pharaohs, all as dead as it to-day, since it was the

same that was used at the royal feasts before, long ago, the seat of government was moved to Thebes.

"If so," broke in Tua, who was angry, "it is time that it should be buried, if flesh and bone, or burned if wood. But Pharaoh is wearied. Have we your leave to depart, my Uncle?"

Without answering, Abi rose, as she thought to dismiss the company. But it was not so, for he raised a great, golden cup of wine and said:

"Before we part, my guests, let Memphis drink a welcome to the mighty Lord of the Two Lands who, for the first time in his long and glorious reign, honours it with his presence here to-day. As he said to me but now, my royal brother is weak and aged with sickness, nor can we hope that once his visit is ended, he will return again to the White-walled City. But as it chances the gods have given him a boon which they denied for long, the lovely daughter who shares his throne, and who, as we believe and pray, will reign after him when it pleases him to ascend into the kingdom of Osiris. Yet, my friends, it is evil that the safe and lawful government of Egypt should hang on one frail life. Therefore this is the toast to which I drink--that the Queen Neter-Tua, Morning Star of Amen, Hathor Strong in Beauty, who has rejected so many suitors, may before she departs from among us, find one to her liking, some husband of royal blood, skilled in the art of rule, whose strength and knowledge may serve to support her woman's weakness and inexperience in that sad hour when she finds herself alone."

Now the audience, who well understood the inner meaning and objects of this speech, rose and cheered furiously, as they had been schooled to do, emptying their cups to Pharaoh and to Tua and shouting:

"We know the man. Take him, glorious Queen, take him, Daughter of Amen, and reign for ever."

"What do they mean?" muttered Pharaoh, "I do not understand. Thank them, my daughter, my voice is weak, and let us begone."

So Tua rose when at length there was silence and, looking round her with flashing eyes, said in her clear voice that reached the furthest recesses of the hall:

"The Pharaoh, my father, and I, the Queen of the Upper and the Lower Lands, return thanks to you, our people of this city, for your loyal greetings. But as for the words that the Prince Abi has spoken, we understand them not. My prayer is that the Pharaoh may still reign in glory for many years, but if he departs and I remain, learn, O people, that you have naught to fear from the weakness and inexperience of your Queen. Learn also that she seeks no husband, nor when she seeks will she ever find one within the walls of Memphis. Rest you well, O people and you, my Uncle Abi, as now with your good leave we will do also."

Then, turning, she took her father by the hand and went without more words, leaving Abi staring at his guests while his guests stared back at him.

When Tua had reached the pylon tower, where she lodged, and her ladies had unrobed her and gone, she called Asti to her from the adjoining chamber and said:

"You are wise, my nurse, tell me, what did Abi mean?"

"If your Majesty cannot guess, then you are duller than I thought," answered Asti in her quick, dry fashion, adding; "however, I will try to translate. The Prince Abi, your noble uncle, means that he has trapped you here, and that you shall not leave these walls save as his wife."

Now fury took hold of Tua.

"How dare he speak such words?" she gasped, springing to her feet. "I, the wife of that old river-hog, my father's brother who might be my grandfather, that hideous, ancient lump of wickedness who boasts that he has a hundred sons and daughters; I, the Queen of Egypt, whose birth was decreed by Amen, I--how dare you?" and she ceased, choking in her wrath.

"The question is--how he dares, Queen. Still, that is his plot which he will carry through if he is able. I suspected it from the first, and that is why I always opposed this visit to Memphis, but you will

remember that you bade me be silent, saying that you had determined to see the most ancient city in Egypt."

"You should not have been silent. You should have said what was in your mind, even if I ordered you from my presence. Neither Abi nor any of his sons proposed for my hand when the others did, therefore I suspected nothing----"

"After the fashion of women who have already given their hearts, Queen, and forget that they have other things to give--a kingdom, for instance. The snake does not roar like the lion, yet it is more to be feared."

"Once I am out of this place it is the snake that shall have cause to fear, Asti, for I will break its back and throw it writhing to the kites. Nurse, we must leave Memphis."

"That is not easy, Queen, since some ceremony is planned for each of the next eight days. If Pharaoh were to go away without attending them, he would anger all the people of the North which he has not visited since he was crowned."

"Then let them be angered; Pharaoh can do as he wills."

"Yes, Queen, at least, that is the saying. But do you think that Pharaoh wishes to bring about a civil war and risk his crown and yours? Listen: Abi is very strong, and under his command he has a greater army than

Pharaoh can muster in these times of peace, for in addition to his trained troops, all the thousands of the Bedouin tribes of the desert look on him as lord, and at his word will fall on the wealth of Egypt like famished vultures on a fatted ox. Moreover, here you have but a guard of five hundred men, whereas Abi's regiments, summoned to do you honour, and his ships of war block the river and the southern road. How then will you leave Memphis without his good leave; how will you even send messengers to summon aid which could not reach you under fifty days?"

Now when she saw the greatness of the danger, Tua grew quite calm and answered:

"You have done wrong, Asti; if you foresaw all these things of which I never thought, you should have warned Pharaoh and his Council."

"Queen, I did warn them, and Mermes warned them also, but they would not listen, saying that they were but the idle dreams of one who strives to peep into the future and sees false pictures there. More, Pharaoh sent for me himself, and whilst thanking me and Mermes my husband, told me that he had inquired into the matter and found no cause to distrust Abi or those under his command. Moreover, he forbade me to speak to your Majesty about it, lest, being but young and a woman, you might be frightened and your pleasure spoiled."

"Who was his counsellor?" asked Tua.

"A strange one, I think, Queen. You know his waiting-woman, Merytra, she of whom he is so fond, and who stood behind him with a fan this night."

"Aye, I know her," replied Tua, with emphasis. "She was ever whispering with that tall astrologer at the feast. But does Pharaoh take counsel with waiting-ladies of his private household?"

"With this waiting-lady, it seems, Queen. Perhaps you have not heard all her story, in the year before your birth Merytra came up the Nile with Abi. She was then quite young and very pretty; one of Abi's women. It seems that the Prince struck her for some fault, and being clever she determined to be revenged upon him. Soon she got her chance, for she heard Abi disclose to the astrologer Kaku, that same man whom you saw to-night talking with her, a plan that he had made to murder Pharaoh and declare himself king, from which Kaku dissuaded him. Having this secret and being bold, she fled at once from the ship of Abi, and that night told Pharaoh everything. But he forgave Abi, and sent him home again with honour who should have slain him for his treason. Only Merytra remained in the Court, and from that time forward Pharaoh, who trusted her and was caught by her wit and beauty, made it a habit to send for her when he wished to have news of Memphis where she was born, because she seemed always to know even the most secret things that were passing in that city. Moreover, often her information proved true."

"That is not to be wondered at, Nurse, seeing that doubtless it came

from this Kaku, Abi's astrologer and magician."

"No, Queen, it is not to be wondered at, especially as she paid back secret for secret. Well, I believe that after I had warned Pharaoh of what I knew, never mind how, he sent for Merytra, who laughed the tale to scorn, and told him that Abi his brother had long ago abandoned all ambitions, being well content with his great place and power which one of his sons would inherit after him. She told him also that the troops were but assembled to do the greater honour to your Majesties who had no more loyal or loving subject than the Prince Abi, whom for her part she hated with good cause, as she loved Pharaoh and his House--with good cause. If there were any danger, she asked would she dare to put herself within the reach of Abi, the man that she had once betrayed because her heart was pure and true, and she was faithful to her king. So Pharaoh believed her, and I obeyed the orders of Pharaoh, knowing that if I did not do so he would grow angry and perhaps separate me from you, my beloved Queen and fosterling, which, now that Rames has gone, would, I think, have meant my death. Yet I fear that I have erred."

"Yes, I fear also that you have erred, Asti, but everything is forgiven to those who err through love," answered Tua kindly and kissing her. "Oh, my father, Pharaoh! What god fashioned you so weak that an evil spirit in a woman's shape can play the rudder to your policy! Leave me now, Asti, for I must sleep and call on Amen to aid his daughter. The snare is strong and cunning, but, perchance, in my dreams he will show me how it may be broke."

That night when the feast was ended Merytra, Pharaoh's favoured waiting-maid, did not return with the rest of the royal retinue to the temple where he lodged. As they went from the hall in state she whispered a few words into the ear of the chief Butler of the Household who, knowing that she had the royal pass to come in and out as she would, answered that the gate should be opened to her, and let her go.

So covering her head with a dark cloak Merytra slipped behind a certain statue in the ante-hall and waited till presently a tall figure, also wrapped in a dark cloak, appeared and beckoned to her. She followed it down sundry passages and up a narrow stair that seemed almost endless, until, at length, the figure unlocked a massive door, and when they had passed it, locked it again behind them.

Now Merytra found herself in a very richly furnished room lit by hanging-lamps, that evidently was the abode of one who watched the stars and practised magic, for all about were strange-looking brazen instruments and rolls of papyrus covered with mysterious signs, and suspended above the table a splendid divining ball of crystal. Merytra sank into a chair, throwing off her dark cloak.

"Of a truth, friend Kaku," she said, so soon as she had got her breath, "you dwell very near the gods."

"Yes, dear Merytra," he answered with a dry chuckle, "I keep a kind of half-way house to heaven. Perched here in my solitude I see and make note of what goes on above," and he pointed to the skies, "and retail the information, or as much of it as I think fit, to the groundlings below."

"At a price, I suppose, Kaku."

"Most certainly at a price, and I may add, a good price. No one thinks much of the physician who charges low fees. Well, you have managed to get here, and after all these years I am glad to see you again, looking almost as young and pretty as ever. Tell me your secret of eternal youth, dear Merytra."

Merytra, who was vain, smiled at this artful flattery, although, in truth, it was well deserved, for at an age when many Egyptians are old, she remained fresh and fair.

"An excellent conscience," she answered, "a good appetite and the virtuous, quiet life, which is the lot of the ladies of Pharaoh's Court--there you have the secret, Kaku. I fear that you keep too late hours, and that is why you grow white and withered like a mummy--not but that you look handsome enough in those long robes of yours," she added to gild the pill.

"It is my labours," he replied, making a wry face, for he too was vain. "My labours for the good of others, also indigestion and the draughts in this accursed tower where I sit staring at the stars, which give me rheumatism. I have got both of them now, and must take some medicine," and filling two goblets from a flask, he handed her one of them, saying, "drink it, you don't get wine like that in Thebes."

"It is very good," said Merytra when she had drunk, "but heavy. If I took much of that I think I should have 'rheumatism,' too. Now tell me, old friend, am I safe, in this place? No, not from Pharaoh, he trusts me and lets me go where I will upon his business--but from his royal brother. He used to have a long memory, and from the look of him I do not think that his temper has improved. You may remember a certain slap in the face and how I paid him back for it."

"He never knew it was you, Merytra. Being a mass of self-conceit, he thought that you ran away because he had banished you from his royal presence and presented you--to me."

"Oh, he thought that, did he! What a vain fool!"

"It was a very dirty trick you played me, Merytra," went on Kaku with indignation, for the rich wine coursing through his blood revived the sting of his loss. "You know how fond I always was of you, and indeed am still," he added, gazing at her admiringly.

"I felt that I was not worthy of so learned and distinguished a man," she replied, looking at him with her dark eyes. "I should only have hampered your life, dear Kaku, so I went into the household of that poor creature, Pharaoh, instead--Pharaoh's Nunnery we call it. But you will not explain the facts to Abi, will you?"

"No, I think not, Merytra, if we continue to get on as well as we do at present. But now you are rested, so let us come to business, for otherwise you will have to stop here all night and Pharaoh would be angry."

"Oh, to Set with Pharaoh! Though it is true that he is a good paymaster, and knows the value of a clever woman. Now, what is this business?"

The old astrologer's face grew hard and cunning. Going to the door he made sure that it was locked and drew a curtain over it. Then he took a stool and sat himself down in front of Merytra, in such a position that the light fell on her face while his own remained in shadow.

"A big business, Merytra, and by the gods I do not know that I should trust you with it. You tricked me once, you have tricked Pharaoh for years; how do I know that you will not play the same game once more and earn me an order to cut my own throat, and so lose life and soul together?"

"If you think that, Kaku, perhaps you will unlock the door and give me

an escort home, for we are only wasting time."

"I don't know what to think, for you are as cunning as you are beautiful. Listen, woman," he continued in a savage whisper, and clasping her by the wrist. "If you are false, I tell you that you shall die horribly, for if the knife and poison fail, I am no charlatan, I have arts. I can make you turn loathsome to the sight and waste away, I can haunt you at nights so that you may never sleep a wink, save in full sunshine, and I will do it all and more. If I die, Merytra, we go together. Now will you swear to be true, will you swear it by the oath of oaths?"

The spy looked about her. She knew Kaku's power which was famous throughout Egypt, and that it was said to be of the most evil sort, and she feared him.

"It seems that this is a dangerous affair," she replied uneasily, "and I think that I can guess your aim. Now if I help you, Kaku, what am I to get?"

"Me," he answered.

"I am flattered, but what else?"

"After Pharaoh the greatest place and the most power in Egypt, as the wife of Pharaoh's Vizier."

"The wife? Doubtless from what I have heard of you, Kaku, there would be other wives to share these honours."

"No other wife--upon the oath, none, Merytra."

She thought a moment, looking at the wizened but powerful-faced old magician, then answered:

"I will take the oath and keep my share of it. See that you keep yours, Kaku, or it will be the worse for you, for women have their own evil power."

"I know it, Merytra, and from the beginning the wise have held that the spirit dwells, not in the heart or brain or liver, but in the female tongue. Now stand up."

She obeyed, and from some hidden place in the wall Kaku produced a book, or rather a roll of magical writings, that was encased in iron, the metal of the evil god, Typhon.

"There is no other such book as this," he said, "for it was written by the greatest of wizards who lived before Mena, when the god-kings ruled in Egypt, and I, myself, took it from among his bones, a terrible task for his Ka rose up in the grave and threatened me. He who can read in that book, as I can, has much strength, and let him beware who breaks an

oath taken on that book. Now press it to your heart, Merytra, and swear after me."

Then he repeated a very terrible oath, for should it be violated it consigned the swearer to shame, sickness and misfortune in this world, and to everlasting torments in the next at the claws and fangs of beast-headed demons who dwell in the darkness beyond the sun, appointing, by name, those beings who should work the torments, and summoning them as witnesses to the bond.

Merytra listened, then said,

"You have left out your part of the oath, Friend, namely, that you promise that I shall be the only wife of Pharaoh's Vizier and hold equal power with him."

"I forgot," said Kaku, and added the words.

Then they both swore, touching their brows with the book, and as she looked up again, Merytra saw a strange, flame-like light pulse in the crystal globe that hung above her head, which became presently infiltrated with crimson flowing through it as blood might flow from a wound, till it glowed dull red, out of which redness a great eye watched her. Then the eye vanished and the blood vanished, and in place of them Queen Neter-Tua sat in glory on her throne, while the nations worshipped her, and by her side sat a man in royal robes whose face was hidden in a

cloud.

"What do you see?" asked Kaku, following her gaze to the crystal.

She told him, and he pondered a while, then answered doubtfully:

"I think it is a good omen; the royal consort sits beside her. Only why was his face hidden?"

"I am sure I do not know," answered Merytra. "I think that strong, red wine of yours was doctored and has got into my head. But, come, we have sworn this oath, which I dare say will work in more ways than we guess, for such accursed swords have two edges to them. Now out with the plot, and throw a cloth over that crystal for I want to see no more pictures."

"It seems a pity since you have such a gift of vision," replied Kaku in the same dubious voice. Yet he obeyed, tying up the shining ball in a piece of mummy wrapping which he used in his spells.

"Now," he said, "I will be brief. My fat master, Abi, means to be Pharaoh of Egypt, and it seems that the best way to do so is by climbing into his niece's throne, where most men would like to sit."

"You mean by marrying her, Kaku."

"Of course. What else? He who marries the Queen, rules in right of the

Queen."

"Indeed. Do you know anything of Neter-Tua?"

"As much as any other man knows; but what do you mean?"

"I mean that I shall be sorry for the husband who marries her against her will, however beautiful and high-placed she may be. I tell you that woman is a flame. She has more strength in her than all the magicians in Egypt, yourself among them. They say she is a daughter of Amen, and I believe it. I believe that the god dwells in her, and woe be to him whom she may chance to hate, if he comes to her as a husband."

"That is Abi's business, is it not? Our business, Merytra, is to get him there. Now we may take it this will not be with her consent."

"Certainly not, Kaku," she answered. "The gossip goes that she is in love with young Count Rames, who fought and killed the Prince of Kesh before her eyes, and now has gone to make amends to the king his father at the head of an army."

"That may be true, Merytra. Why not? He is her foster-brother and of royal blood, bold, too, and handsome, they say. Well, queens have no business to be in love. That is the privilege of humbler folk like you and me, Merytra. Say, is she suspicious--about Prince Abi, I mean?"

"I do not know, but Asti, her nurse and favourite lady, the wife of Mermes and mother of Rames, is suspicious enough. She is a greater magician than you are, Kaku, and if she could have had her way Pharaoh would never have set foot in Memphis. But I got your letter and over-persuaded him, the poor fool. You see he thinks me faithful to his House, and that is why I am allowed to be here to-night, to collect information."

"Ah! Well, what Asti knows the Queen will know, and she is stronger than Pharaoh, and notwithstanding all Abi's ships and soldiers, may break away from Memphis and make war upon him. So it comes to this--Pharaoh must stay here, for his daughter will not desert him."

"How will you make him stay here, Kaku? Not by----" and she glanced towards the shrouded crystal.

"Nay, no blood if it can be helped. He must not even seem to be a prisoner, it is too dangerous. But there are other ways."

"What ways? Poison?"

"Too dangerous again. Now, if he fell sick, and he has been sick before, and could not stir, it would give us time to bring about the marriage, would it not? Oh! I know that he is well at present--for him, but look here, Merytra, I have something to show you."

Then going to a chest Kaku took from it a plain box of cedar wood which was shaped like a mummy case, and, lifting off its lid, revealed within it a waxen figure of the length of a hand. This figure was beautifully fashioned to the living likeness of Pharaoh, and crowned with the double crown of Egypt.

"What is it?" asked Merytra, shrinking back. "An ushapti to be placed in his tomb?"

"No, woman, a magic Ka fashioned with many a spell out of yonder ancient roll, that can bring him to the tomb if it be rightly used, as you shall use it."

"I!" she exclaimed, starting. "How?"

"Thus: You, as one of Pharaoh's favourite ladies, have charge of the chamber where he sleeps. Now you must make shift to enter there alone and lay this figure in his bed, that the breath of Pharaoh may enter into it. Then take it from the bed and say these words, 'Figure, figure, I command thee by the power within thee and in the name of the Lord if Ill, that as thy limbs waste, so shall the limbs of him in whose likeness thou art fashioned waste also.' Having spoken thus, hold the legs of the image over the flame of a lamp until it be half melted, and convey the rest of it away to your own sleeping-place and hide it there. So it shall come about that during that night the nerves and muscles

in the legs of Pharaoh will wither and grow useless to him, and he be paralysed and unable to stir. Afterwards, if it be needful, I will tell you more."

Now, bold though she was, Merytra grew afraid.

"I cannot do it," she said, "it is black sorcery against one who is a god, and will bring my soul to hell. Find some other instrument, or place the waxen imp in the bed of Pharaoh yourself, Kaku."

The face of the magician grew fierce and cruel.

"Come with me, Merytra," he said, and taking her by the wrist he led her to the open window-place whence he observed the stars.

So giddy was the height at the top of this lofty tower that the houses beneath looked small and far away, and the sky quite near.

"Behold Memphis and the Nile, and the wide lands of Egypt gleaming in the moonlight, and the Pyramids of the ancient kings. You wish to rule over all these, like myself--do you not, Merytra?--and if you obey me you shall do so."

"And if I do not obey?"

"Then I will throw my spell upon you, and your senses shall leave you

and you shall fall headlong to that white line, which is a street, and before to-morrow morning the dogs will have picked your broken bones, so that none can know you, for you have heard too much to go hence alive unless it be to do my bidding. Oh, no! Think not to say 'I will' and afterwards deceive me, for that image which you take with you is my servant, and will keep watch on you and make report to me and to the god, its master. Now choose."

"I will obey," said Merytra faintly, and as she spoke she thought that she heard a laugh in the air outside the window.

"Good. Now hide the box beneath your cloak and drop it not, for if so that which is within will call aloud after you, and they will kill you for a sorceress. Unless my word come to you, lay the figure in Pharaoh's bed to-morrow evening, and at the hour of moonrise hold its limbs in the flame in your own chamber, and hide it away, and afterwards bring it back to me that I may enchant it afresh, if there be any need. Now come, and I will guard you to the gates of the old temple of Sekhet, where Pharaoh dwells."