

Chapter XI. Resurrection

We reached the sepulchre without stopping to look at the parked machines or even the marvelous statue that stood above it, for what did we care about machines or statues now? As we approached we were astonished to hear low and cavernous growlings.

"There is some wild beast in there," said Bickley, halting. "No, by George! it's Tommy. What can the dog be after?"

We peeped in, and there sure enough was Tommy lying on the top of the Glittering Lady's coffin and growling his very best with the hair standing up upon his back. When he saw who it was, however, he jumped off and frisked round, licking my hand.

"That's very strange," I exclaimed.

"Not stranger than everything else," said Bickley.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Open these coffins," he answered, "beginning with that of the old god, since I would rather experiment on him. I expect he will crumble into dust. But if by chance he doesn't I'll jam a little strychnine, mixed with some other drugs, of which you don't know the names, into one of

his veins and see if anything happens. If it doesn't, it won't hurt him, and if it does--well, who knows? Now give me a hand."

We went to the left-hand coffin and by inserting the hook on the back of my knife, of which the real use is to pick stones out of horses' hoofs, into one of the little air-holes I have described, managed to raise the heavy crystal lid sufficiently to enable us to force a piece of wood between it and the top. The rest was easy, for the hinges being of crystal had not corroded. In two minutes it was open.

From the chest came an overpowering spicy odour, and with it a veritable breath of warm air before which we recoiled a little. Bickley took a pocket thermometer which he had at hand and glanced at it. It marked a temperature of 82 degrees in the sepulchre. Having noted this, he thrust it into the coffin between the crystal wall and its occupant. Then we went out and waited a little while to give the odours time to dissipate, for they made the head reel.

After five minutes or so we returned and examined the thermometer. It had risen to 98 degrees, the natural temperature of the human body.

"What do you make of that if the man is dead?" he whispered.

I shook my head, and as we had agreed, set to helping him to lift the body from the coffin. It was a good weight, quite eleven stone I should say; moreover, it was not stiff, for the hip joints bent. We got it out

and laid it on a blanket we had spread on the floor of the sepulchre. Whilst I was thus engaged I saw something that nearly caused me to lose my hold from astonishment. Beneath the head, the centre of the back and the feet were crystal boxes about eight inches square, or rather crystal blocks, for in them I could see no opening, and these boxes emitted a faint phosphorescent light. I touched one of them and found that it was quite warm.

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed, "here's magic."

"There's no such thing," answered Bickley in his usual formula. Then an explanation seemed to strike him and he added, "Not magic but radium or something of the sort. That's how the temperature was kept up. In sufficient quantity it is practically indestructible, you see. My word! this old gentleman knew a thing or two."

Again we waited a little while to see if the body began to crumble on exposure to the air, I taking the opportunity to make a rough sketch of it in my pocket-book in anticipation of that event. But it did not; it remained quite sound.

"Here goes," said Bickley. "If he should be alive, he will catch cold in his lungs after lying for ages in that baby incubator, as I suppose he has done. So it is now or never."

Then bidding me hold the man's right arm, he took the sterilized syringe

which he had prepared, and thrusting the needle into a vein he selected just above the wrist, injected the contents.

"It would have been better over the heart," he whispered, "but I thought I would try the arm first. I don't like risking chills by uncovering him."

I made no answer and again we waited and watched.

"Great heavens, he's stirring!" I gasped presently.

Stirring he was, for his fingers began to move.

Bickley bent down and placed his ear to the heart--I forgot to say that he had tested this before with a stethoscope, but had been unable to detect any movement.

"I believe it is beginning to beat," he said in an awed voice.

Then he applied the stethoscope, and added, "It is, it is!"

Next he took a filament of cotton wool and laid it on the man's lips.

Presently it moved; he was breathing, though very faintly. Bickley took more cotton wool and having poured something from his medicine-chest on to it, placed it over the mouth beneath the man's nostrils--I believe it was sal volatile.

Nothing further happened for a little while, and to relieve the strain on my mind I stared absently into the empty coffin. Here I saw what had escaped our notice, two small plates of white metal and cut upon them what I took to be star maps. Beyond these and the glowing boxes which I have mentioned, there was nothing else in the coffin. I had no time to examine them, for at that moment the old man opened his mouth and began to breathe, evidently with some discomfort and effort, as his empty lungs filled themselves with air. Then his eyelids lifted, revealing a wonderful pair of dark glowing eyes beneath. Next he tried to sit up but would have fallen, had not Bickley supported him with his arm.

I do not think he saw Bickley, indeed he shut his eyes again as though the light hurt them, and went into a kind of faint. Then it was that Tommy, who all this while had been watching the proceedings with grave interest, came forward, wagging his tail, and licked the man's face. At the touch of the dog's red tongue, he opened his eyes for the second time. Now he saw--not us but Tommy, for after contemplating him for a few seconds, something like a smile appeared upon his fierce but noble face. More, he lifted his hand and laid it on the dog's head, as though to pat it kindly. Half a minute or so later his awakening senses appreciated our presence. The incipient smile vanished and was replaced by a somewhat terrible frown.

Meanwhile Bickley had poured out some of the hot coffee laced with brandy into the cup that was screwed on the top of the thermos flask.

Advancing to the man whom I supported, he put it to his lips. He tasted and made a wry face, but presently he began to sip, and ultimately swallowed it all. The effect of the stimulant was wonderful, for in a few minutes he came to life completely and was even able to sit up without support.

For quite a long while he gazed at us gravely, talking us in and everything connected with us. For instance, Bickley's medicine-case which lay open showing the little vulcanite tubes, a few instruments and other outfit, engaged his particular attention, and I saw at once that he understood what it was. Thus his arm still smarted where the needle had been driven in and on the blanket lay the syringe. He looked at his arm, then looked at the syringe, and nodded. The paraffin hurricane lamps also seemed to interest and win his approval. We two men, as I thought, attracted him least of all; he just summed us up and our garments, more especially the garments, with a few shrewd glances, and then seemed to turn his thoughts to Tommy, who had seated himself quite contentedly at his side, evidently accepting him as a new addition to our party.

I confess that this behaviour on Tommy's part reassured me not a little. I am a great believer in the instincts of animals, especially of dogs, and I felt certain that if this man had not been in all essentials human like ourselves, Tommy would not have tolerated him. In the same way the sleeper's clear liking for Tommy, at whom he looked much oftener and with greater kindness than he did at us, suggested that there was

goodness in him somewhere, since although a dog in its wonderful tolerance may love a bad person in whom it smells out hidden virtue, no really bad person ever loved a dog, or, I may add, a child or a flower.

As a matter of fact, the "old god," as we had christened him while he was in his coffin, during all our association with him, cared infinitely more for Tommy than he did for any of us, a circumstance that ultimately was not without its influence upon our fortunes. But for this there was a reason as we learned afterwards, also he was not really so amiable as I hoped.

When we had looked at each other for a long while the sleeper began to arrange his beard, of which the length seemed to surprise him, especially as Tommy was seated on one end of it. Finding this out and apparently not wishing to disturb Tommy, he gave up the occupation, and after one or two attempts, for his tongue and lips still seemed to be stiff, addressed us in some sonorous and musical language, unlike any that we had ever heard. We shook our heads. Then by an afterthought I said "Good day" to him in the language of the Orofenans. He puzzled over the word as though it were more or less familiar to him, and when I repeated it, gave it back to me with a difference indeed, but in a way which convinced us that he quite understood what I meant. The conversation went no further at the moment because just then some memory seemed to strike him.

He was sitting with his back against the coffin of the Glittering Lady, whom therefore he had not seen. Now he began to turn round, and being too weak to do so, motioned me to help him. I obeyed, while Bickley, guessing his purpose, held up one of the hurricane lamps that he might see better. With a kind of fierce eagerness he surveyed her who lay within the coffin, and after he had done so, uttered a sigh as of intense relief.

Next he pointed to the metal cup out of which he had drunk. Bickley filled it again from the thermos flask, which I observed excited his keen interest, for, having touched the flask with his hand and found that it was cool, he appeared to marvel that the fluid coming from it should be hot and steaming. Presently he smiled as though he had got the clue to the mystery, and swallowed his second drink of coffee and spirit. This done, he motioned to us to lift the lid of the lady's coffin, pointing out a certain catch in the bolts which at first we could not master, for it will be remembered that on this coffin these were shot.

In the end, by pursuing the same methods that we had used in the instance of his own, we raised the coffin lid and once more were driven to retreat from the sepulchre for a while by the overpowering odour like to that of a whole greenhouse full of tuberose, that flowed out of it, inducing a kind of stupefaction from which even Tommy fled.

When we returned it was to find the man kneeling by the side of the

coffin, for as yet he could not stand, with his glowing eyes fixed upon the face of her who slept therein and waving his long arms above her.

"Hypnotic business! Wonder if it will work," whispered Bickley. Then he lifted the syringe and looked inquiringly at the man, who shook his head, and went on with his mesmeric passes.

I crept round him and took my stand by the sleeper's head, that I might watch her face, which was well worth watching, while Bickley, with his medicine at hand, remained near her feet, I think engaged in disinfecting the syringe in some spirit or acid. I believe he was about to make an attempt to use it when suddenly, as though beneath the influence of the hypnotic passes, a change appeared on the Glittering Lady's face. Hitherto, beautiful as it was, it had been a dead face though one of a person who had suddenly been cut off while in full health and vigour a few hours, or at the most a day or so before. Now it began to live again; it was as though the spirit were returning from afar, and not without toil and tribulation.

Expression after expression flitted across the features; indeed these seemed to change so much from moment to moment that they might have belonged to several different individuals, though each was beautiful. The fact of these remarkable changes with the suggestion of multiform personalities which they conveyed impressed both Bickley and myself very much indeed. Then the breast heaved tumultuously; it even appeared to struggle. Next the eyes opened. They were full of wonder, even of fear,

but oh! what marvelous eyes. I do not know how to describe them, I cannot even state their exact colour, except that it was dark, something like the blue of sapphires of the deepest tint, and yet not black; large, too, and soft as a deer's. They shut again as though the light hurt them, then once more opened and wandered about, apparently without seeing.

At length they found my face, for I was still bending over her, and, resting there, appeared to take it in by degrees. More, it seemed to touch and stir some human spring in the still-sleeping heart. At least the fear passed from her features and was replaced by a faint smile, such as a patient sometimes gives to one known and well loved, as the effects of chloroform pass away. For a while she looked at me with an earnest, searching gaze, then suddenly, for the first time moving her arms, lifted them and threw them round my neck.

The old man stared, bending his imperial brows into a little frown, but did nothing. Bickley stared also through his glasses and sniffed as though in disapproval, while I remained quite still, fighting with a wild impulse to kiss her on the lips as one would an awakening and beloved child. I doubt if I could have done so, however, for really I was immovable; my heart seemed to stop and all my muscles to be paralysed.

I do not know for how long this endured, but I do know how it ended. Presently in the intense silence I heard Bastin's heavy voice and

looking round, saw his big head projecting into the sepulchre.

"Well, I never!" he said, "you seem to have woke them up with a vengeance. If you begin like that with the lady, there will be complications before you have done, Arbuthnot."

Talk of being brought back to earth with a rush! I could have killed Bastin, and Bickley, turning on him like a tiger, told him to be off, find wood and light a large fire in front of the statue. I think he was about to argue when the Ancient gave him a glance of his fierce eyes, which alarmed him, and he departed, bewildered, to return presently with the wood.

But the sound of his voice had broken the spell. The Lady let her arms fall with a start, and shut her eyes again, seeming to faint. Bickley sprang forward with his sal volatile and applied it to her nostrils, the Ancient not interfering, for he seemed to recognise that he had to deal with a man of skill and one who meant well by them.

In the end we brought her round again and, to omit details, Bickley gave her, not coffee and brandy, but a mixture he compounded of hot water, preserved milk and meat essence. The effect of it on her was wonderful, since a few minutes after swallowing it she sat up in the coffin. Then we lifted her from that narrow bed in which she had slept for--ah! how long? and perceived that beneath her also were crystal boxes of the radiant, heat-giving substance. We sat her on the floor of the

sepulchre, wrapping her also in a blanket.

Now it was that Tommy, after frisking round her as though in welcome of an old friend, calmly established himself beside her and laid his black head upon her knee. She noted it and smiled for the first time, a marvelously sweet and gentle smile. More, she placed her slender hand upon the dog and stroked him feebly.

Bickley tried to make her drink some more of his mixture, but she refused, motioning him to give it to Tommy. This, however, he would not do because there was but one cup. Presently both of the sleepers began to shiver, which caused Bickley anxiety. Abusing Bastin beneath his breath for being so long with the fire, he drew the blankets closer about them.

Then an idea came to him and he examined the glowing boxes in the coffin. They were loose, being merely set in prepared cavities in the crystal. Wrapping our handkerchiefs about his hand, he took them out and placed them around the wakened patients, a proceeding of which the Ancient nodded approval. Just then, too, Bastin returned with his first load of firewood, and soon we had a merry blaze going just outside the sepulchre. I saw that they observed the lighting of this fire by means of a match with much interest.

Now they grew warm again, as indeed we did also--too warm. Then in my turn I had an idea. I knew that by now the sun would be beating hotly

against the rock of the mount, and suggested to Bickley, that, if possible, the best thing we could do would be to get them into its life-giving rays. He agreed, if we could make them understand and they were able to walk. So I tried. First I directed the Ancient's attention to the mouth of the cave which at this distance showed as a white circle of light. He looked at it and then at me with grave inquiry. I made motions to suggest that he should proceed there, repeating the word "Sun" in the Orofenan tongue. He understood at once, though whether he read my mind rather than what I said I am not sure. Apparently the Glittering Lady understood also and seemed to be most anxious to go. Only she looked rather pitifully at her feet and shook her head. This decided me.

I do not know if I have mentioned anywhere that I am a tall man and very muscular. She was tall, also, but as I judged not so very heavy after her long fast. At any rate I felt quite certain that I could carry her for that distance. Stooping down, I lifted her up, signing to her to put her arms round my neck, which she did. Then calling to Bickley and Bastin to bring along the Ancient between them, with some difficulty I struggled out of the sepulchre, and started down the cave. She was more heavy than I thought, and yet I could have wished the journey longer. To begin with she seemed quite trustful and happy in my arms, where she lay with her head against my shoulder, smiling a little as a child might do, especially when I had to stop and throw her long hair round my neck like a muffler, to prevent it from trailing in the dust.

A bundle of lavender, or a truss of new-mown hay, could not have been more sweet to carry and there was something electric about the touch of her, which went through and through me. Very soon it was over, and we were out of the cave into the full glory of the tropical sun. At first, that her eyes might become accustomed to its light and her awakened body to its heat, I set her down where shadow fell from the overhanging rock, in a canvas deck chair that had been brought by Marama with the other things, throwing the rug about her to protect her from such wind as there was. She nestled gratefully into the soft seat and shut her eyes, for the motion had tired her. I noted, however, that she drew in the sweet air with long breaths.

Then I turned to observe the arrival of the Ancient, who was being borne between Bickley and Bastin in what children know as a dandy-chair, which is formed by two people crossing their hands in a peculiar fashion. It says much for the tremendous dignity of his presence that even thus, with one arm round the neck of Bickley and the other round that of Bastin, and his long white beard falling almost to the ground, he still looked most imposing.

Unfortunately, however, just as they were emerging from the cave, Bastin, always the most awkward of creatures, managed to leave hold with one hand, so that his passenger nearly came to the ground. Never shall I forget the look that he gave him. Indeed, I think that from this moment he hated Bastin. Bickley he respected as a man of intelligence and learning, although in comparison with his own, the latter was infantile

and crude; me he tolerated and even liked; but Bastin he detested.

The only one of our party for whom he felt anything approaching real affection was the spaniel Tommy.

We set him down, fortunately uninjured, on some rugs, and also in the shadow. Then, after a little while, we moved both of them into the sun. It was quite curious to see them expand there. As Bickley said, what happened to them might well be compared to the development of a butterfly which has just broken from the living grave of its chrysalis and crept into the full, hot radiance of the light. Its crinkled wings unfold, their brilliant tints develop; in an hour or two it is perfect, glorious, prepared for life and flight, a new creature.

So it was with this pair, from moment to moment they gathered strength and vigour. Near-by to them, as it happened, stood a large basket of the luscious native fruits brought that morning by the Orofenans, and at these the Lady looked with longing. With Bickley's permission, I offered them to her and to the Ancient, first peeling them with my fingers. They ate of them greedily, a full meal, and would have gone on had not the stern Bickley, fearing untoward consequences, removed the basket. Again the results were wonderful, for half an hour afterwards they seemed to be quite strong. With my assistance the Glittering Lady, as I still call her, for at that time I did not know her name, rose from the chair, and, leaning on me, tottered a few steps forward. Then she stood looking at the sky and all the lovely panorama of nature beneath, and stretching out her arms as though in worship. Oh! how beautiful she seemed with the

sunlight shining on her heavenly face!

Now for the first time I heard her voice. It was soft and deep, yet in it was a curious bell-like tone that seemed to vibrate like the sound of chimes heard from far away. Never have I listened to such another voice. She pointed to the sun whereof the light turned her radiant hair and garments to a kind of golden glory, and called it by some name that I could not understand. I shook my head, whereon she gave it a different name taken, I suppose, from another language. Again I shook my head and she tried a third time. To my delight this word was practically the same that the Orogenians used for "sun."

"Yes," I said, speaking very slowly, "so it is called by the people of this land."

She understood, for she answered in much the same language:

"What, then, do you call it?"

"Sun in the English tongue," I replied.

"Sun. English," she repeated after me, then added, "How are you named, Wanderer?"

"Humphrey," I answered.

"Hum-fe-ry!" she said as though she were learning the word, "and those?"

"Bastin and Bickley," I replied.

Over these patronymics she shook her head; as yet they were too much for her.

"How are you named, Sleeper?" I asked.

"Yva," she answered.

"A beautiful name for one who is beautiful," I declared with enthusiasm, of course always in the rich Orofenan dialect which by now I could talk well enough.

She repeated the words once or twice, then of a sudden caught their meaning, for she smiled and even coloured, saying hastily with a wave of her hand towards the Ancient who stood at a distance between Bastin and Bickley, "My father, Oro; great man; great king; great god!"

At this information I started, for it was startling to learn that here was the original Oro, who was still worshipped by the Orofenans, although of his actual existence they had known nothing for uncounted time. Also I was glad to learn that he was her father and not her old husband, for to me that would have been horrible, a desecration too deep for words.

"How long did you sleep, Yva?" I asked, pointing towards the sepulchre in the cave.

After a little thought she understood and shook her head hopelessly, then by an afterthought, she said,

"Stars tell Oro to-night."

So Oro was an astronomer as well as a king and a god. I had guessed as much from those plates in the coffin which seemed to have stars engraved on them.

At this point our conversation came to an end, for the Ancient himself approached, leaning on the arm of Bickley who was engaged in an animated argument with Bastin.

"For Heaven's sake!" said Bickley, "keep your theology to yourself at present. If you upset the old fellow and put him in a temper he may die."

"If a man tells me that he is a god it is my duty to tell him that he is a liar," replied Bastin obstinately.

"Which you did, Bastin, only fortunately he did not understand you. But for your own sake I advise you not to take liberties. He is not one, I

think, with whom it is wise to trifle. I think he seems thirsty. Go and get some water from the rain pool, not from the lake."

Bastin departed and presently returned with an aluminum jug full of pure water and a glass. Bickley poured some of it into a glass and handed it to Yva who bent her head in thanks. Then she did a curious thing. Having first lifted the glass with both hands to the sky and held it so for a few seconds, she turned and with an obeisance poured a little of it on the ground before her father's feet.

A libation, thought I to myself, and evidently Bastin agreed with me, for I heard him mutter,

"I believe she is making a heathen offering."

Doubtless we were right, for Oro accepted the homage by a little motion of the head. After this, at a sign from him she drank the water. Then the glass was refilled and handed to Oro who also held it towards the sky. He, however, made no libation but drank at once, two tumblers of it in rapid succession.

By now the direct sunlight was passing from the mouth of the cave, and though it was hot enough, both of them shivered a little. They spoke together in some language of which we could not understand a word, as though they were debating what their course of action should be. The dispute was long and earnest. Had we known what was passing, which I

learned afterwards, it would have made us sufficiently anxious, for the point at issue was nothing less than whether we should or should not be forthwith destroyed--an end, it appears, that Oro was quite capable of bringing about if he so pleased. Yva, however, had very clear views of her own on the matter and, as I gather, even dared to threaten that she would protect us by the use of certain powers at her command, though what these were I do not know.

While the event hung doubtful Tommy, who was growing bored with these long proceedings, picked up a bough still covered with flowers which, after their pretty fashion, the Orofenans had placed on the top of one of the baskets of food. This small bough he brought and laid at the feet of Oro, no doubt in the hope that he would throw it for him to fetch, a game in which the dog delighted. For some reason Oro saw an omen in this simple canine performance, or he may have thought that the dog was making an offering to him, for he put his thin hand to his brow and thought a while, then motioned to Bastin to pick up the bough and give it to him.

Next he spoke to his daughter as though assenting to something, for I saw her sigh in relief. No wonder, for he was conveying his decision to spare our lives and admit us to their fellowship.

After this again they talked, but in quite a different tone and manner. Then the Glittering Lady said to me in her slow and archaic Orofenan:

"We go to rest. You must not follow. We come back perhaps tonight, perhaps next night. We are quite safe. You are quite safe under the beard of Oro. Spirit of Oro watch you. You understand?"

I said I understood, whereon she answered:

"Good-bye, O Humfe-ry."

"Good-bye, O Yva," I replied, bowing.

Thereon they turned and refusing all assistance from us, vanished into the darkness of the cave leaning upon each other and walking slowly.