

# THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER AMMON

DARK ADVENTURE RADIO THEATRE: THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER AMMON

Written by

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Read-along Script

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INTRODUCTION

SFX: static, radio tuning, snippet of '30s song, more tuning, static dissolves to:

Dark Adventure Radio THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Tales of intrigue, adventure, and the mysterious occult that will stir your imagination and make your very blood run cold.

MUSIC CRESCENDO.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

This is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre, featuring your host, Lester Mayhew. Today's episode: "The Temple of Jupiter Ammon".

CREEPY MUSIC.

LESTER MAYHEW

The celebrated author H.P. Lovecraft once said, "The lure of the unplumbed is stronger in certain persons than most suspect." From the ancient days when our forbears first emerged from caves, among us have been explorers, destined to seek out unknown realms. In today's story, just such an unflappable adventurer seeks to explore the unrelenting wastes of the Sahara Desert and discover the fabled treasure of history's greatest conqueror. Will his expedition yield untold riches and thrilling discoveries for science, or is it doomed to suffer an agonizing and tragic ending?

But first, a word from our sponsor.

SPONSOR JINGLE

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

Do you sometimes feel "on edge"? Nervous? So jittery that even a few cigarettes won't calm your nerves? Well, my friends, such wretched feelings are a thing of the past with Veronal. Veronal?

(MORE)

## LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

Yes, Veronal! Men of science in Europe have crafted soothing chemical compounds called "barbiturates" to calm excited nerves and help you sleep like a baby. No time to see a doctor? Don't worry! Veronal is available from your neighborhood druggist in both regular and Jumbo-sized bottles. Start taking Veronal today!

## ANNOUNCER

Don't let your neuroses and hysteria keep you from the restful sleep you deserve. Try Veronal tonight and you'll be sleeping like a baby.

## LESTER MAYHEW

And now, Dark Adventure Radio Theatre presents "The Temple of Jupiter Ammon".

MUSIC.

## THE SOCIETY

We hear a ripple of POLITE APPLAUSE followed by the WALLA of a large urban crowd.

## LESTER MAYHEW

A capacity crowd sits spellbound in the lecture hall of the National Geographic Society in Washington. The speaker is none other than the famous explorer and archaeologist, Count Byron Khun de Prorok, the dashing young man who plumbed the ruins of Carthage and found the tomb of Tin Hinan, the Algerian Queen of the Tuaregs. But it is not of his many past achievements that the charismatic adventurer speaks today. No, today he presents the plans for his next expedition....

Lively APPLAUSE. Prorok is a natural showman and gets that the people who sponsor his expeditions want to feel like they are on one.

## PROROK

...and your enthusiasm is appreciated. My new expedition will cross one of earth's most unforgiving stretches: the Libyan desert. Stretching from the Nile in Egypt to the more hospitable Sahara desert to the west, the Libyan desert is alluring, majestic, and filled with wonder and mystery. And it is pitiless. Thirst is the brooding shadow of dread that hovers over every caravan, and the dim trails are marked with bleached skeletons of man and beast.

Laing. Davidson. Barth, Rohlfs and Duveyrier. Warrington, Ritchie and Clapperton. Von Bary, Dr. Vogel and Overweg. Lt. Palat, Col. Flatters and the Marquis de Moires. And most recently poor Pere de Foucauld. What do these explorers have in common? They are all dead. All victims of the ruthless desert, cunning savages, and nature's cruelest expanse. The desert's martyrs. A man would have to be mad to follow them willingly into the world's most unforgiving territory. What prize could be worth so great a risk?

Ladies and gentlemen: I shall cross the Libyan desert to find the Tomb of Alexander the Great!

SHOCK and AMAZEMENT ripple through the crowd.

## PROROK (CONT'D)

In the fourth century B.C., Alexander the Great conquered his native Macedonia, Persia, the Levant and beyond. He invaded Egypt, and there traveled to a remote oracle - the most famous temple in the world at that time. Its priests boldly proclaimed the twenty-four-year-old emperor a god. Alexander went on to conquer the world - leading troops as far as the Indus.

(MORE)

## PROROK (CONT'D)

At the young age of thirty-six, the world's greatest military leader died under very suspicious circumstances, and the true location of his final resting place has been long a mystery. I alone have determined what I believe to be the secret location of his tomb at the Temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Lively WALLA of geographers!

## PROROK (CONT'D)

Jupiter Ammon! The ram-horned god of ancient Greece, Egypt and Rome, whose temple was the sacred refuge of the mighty Spartans. Jupiter Ammon! Whose mighty syncretic power fused the pantheons of the ancient world. With your support, ladies and gentlemen, I shall follow in Alexander's footsteps and lead an expedition of scientists across the scorching Libyan Desert and excavate the Temple of Jupiter Ammon! There we shall find the earthly remains of the world's greatest general and his astonishing horde of treasure.

The many comrades I named were brave and capable men; hearty and bold. How is it that I can succeed when those who have gone before met with agonizing deaths? My friends, I have you. With your generous support, my expedition will be the best planned, the best equipped, the best protected, the best documented and the most capable scientific expedition ever to brave the world's most inhospitable desert. What say you? Will you join me?

Passionate APPLAUSE. MUSIC.

## LESTER BRIDGE 1

## LESTER MAYHEW

With the support of a thousand armchair adventurers, Count de Prorok outfitted a team and led them to the seaside town of Mersa Metruh on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. Once the summer home of Egyptian royalty, the settlement was now little more than a few scattered ruins and a smattering of Western tourists. While final preparations were made to the expedition's equipment, Prorok excavated a few test pits in front of the team's motion picture camera.

## THE PITS

It's a chaotic soundscape: diggers shovel in archeological test pits. There's CAMELS and TOURISTS and a babel of people from all over the world. The WHIRR OF A MOVIE CAMERA.

## SCHÖTTLER

(with a thick German dialect)

Und ACTION! Ja... ja... You there, act like you are working.

## JIM

If you hadn't shanghaied me to take part in this little movie of yours, I would actually **BE** working.

## SCHÖTTLER

Your work is not photogenic. We must make our cinema document interesting for the people! Do something. Grab a shovel!

## JIM

I don't need a shovel. And this is no document! It's all fake!

## PROROK

(from below)

Get on with it, Whitman! You're wasting film!

Jim grabs a shovel.

SCHÖTTLER

Ja, now dig! And Count, come up the ladder now. Slowly! Good.

PROROK

Like this?

SCHÖTTLER

Ja - chin up, is good. You, Shovel Man, go look at the artifacts.

JIM

Me?

SCHÖTTLER

Ja! Go, while the light is good. Show the artifacts to him, Count. Ja, and talk to him.

PROROK

What do I say?

SCHÖTTLER

Doesn't matter - we are mit out sound.

PROROK

(to Jim, slightly  
overwrought)

Ah, Whitman. Well, these are very interesting figurines. Representations of the pharaoh. Not priceless, but this one's made of jade...

JIM

(annoyed)

They're ushabti - they represent field workers for the after life. And that one's green glass, not jade.

PROROK

(sotto)

Are you questioning my authority here? On camera?

JIM

Sorry but...

A TOURIST from New York walks into the frame.

MAX

Hey Trixie, look at this!  
Archeologists - just like Howard  
Carter!

TRIXIE

(off)

Take their pictures, Max!

PROROK

Sir, we're in the middle of--

MAX

Hey, whatcha got there, little  
mummies? Trixie, the archeologists  
found little mummies. She's nuts  
for souvenirs. How much?

JIM

What? They're not--

PROROK

This is an unusual jade piece from  
the seventeenth dynasty.

JIM

(scandalized)

Count--

PROROK

Come by our main tent and we can--

SCHÖTTLER

Ja und cut! Very good, Count. Now  
we move the tripod to shoot the  
camels and truck mit the boat on  
top -- AAAAAAH!

MUSIC HIT! They run to him.

PROROK

What happened?

SCHÖTTLER

My ankle is--

JIM

A scorpion! See there? He's been  
stung. Stand back!

MAX

(alarmed)

A scorpion? Holy hell! Come on,  
Trixie, let's go!



Tourists RUN. Some men on camels approach.

SCHÖTTLER  
Gott im Himmel, der Schmerz!

PROROK  
Little monster! Relax, I got it.

There's a CRUNCH as Prorok steps on the scorpion and grinds it into the sand.

JIM  
What kind was it?

PROROK  
The dead kind.

From the chaos at the sidelines, BASSEL SAEED tries to get Prorok's attention.

BASSEL  
(off)  
Count Prorok? A moment, sir!

PROROK  
What difference does it make?

JIM  
So they know what kind of antivenom he needs. There are different species. Surely you--

BASSEL  
(approaching)  
Count Prorok? Begging your pardon--

SCHÖTTLER  
Aaaaah!

PROROK  
Just take him to the medic. Let him sort it out.

JIM  
(with a sigh)  
Come on, Schöttler. I've got you.

They go.

BASSEL  
Sir? Count Prorok, I--

PROROK  
 (irritated)  
 What? Who are you?

BASSEL  
 Bassel Saeed, sir, Egyptian  
 Ministry of Antiquities. My  
 credentials.

PROROK  
 Ah. Well?

BASSEL  
 I'm sorry, sir, but it will be  
 necessary for me to see your  
 excavation permits.

PROROK  
 Mr. Saeed? As you can see, I'm  
 terribly busy here. Perhaps I could  
 entreat you to be my guest at  
 dinner tonight.

BASSEL  
 I fear there is some urgency,  
 sir...

PROROK  
 I'm sure we can sort out any  
 missing paperwork. We've been sent  
 by the Geographic Society. Surely  
 the Egyptian government wouldn't  
 want to stand in the way of such an  
 august institution with thousands  
 of members, would you? Of course  
 not. We'll get you what you need  
 and will see you tonight.  
 (calling off)  
 Captain! Take this gentleman here  
 and make sure he's on the list for  
 dinner tonight.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON-LAVIS is British ex-navy, now Prorok's  
 fixer.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS  
 Of course. If you'll come with me,  
 sir.

BASSEL  
 Oh, but...

PROROK

Find him a seat at my table, won't  
you Captain?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Right you are, Count Prorok.

BASSEL

(changing his tune)  
Oh really?

He leads him off. Grand MUSIC leads us into...

DINNER AT CLEOPATRA'S

In the remains of Cleopatra's palace, the chaos of the dig  
site is gone, replaced by MUSICIANS playing on ouds and  
flutes and chimes. Maybe the TINKLE OF A WATER FEATURE.

PROROK

My friends - we gather here tonight  
in the most picturesque of  
settings. Here, in this very villa,  
the fabled Cleopatra spent her last  
days with her lover Mark Antony,  
gazing out at the setting sun as we  
do now. From this scene of  
momentous historical events, we too  
are about to embark on a historical  
journey into the desert, to the  
temple of Jupiter Ammon!

Glasses CLINK in toast to AD LIBS of "Hear, hear!"

PROROK (CONT'D)

I urge you all to enjoy this last  
moment of luxury - from here on,  
the journey's a bit rougher.

LAUGHS. LETITIA D'AYALA, 49, Cuban art dealer, pipes up.

D'AYALA

To our fearless leader - the Count  
de Prorok.

Everyone AD LIBS TOASTS. CLINKING DISHWARE.

BASSEL

Imagine. Us dining in the palace of  
the great Egyptian Queen Cleopatra,  
eh Captain?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Beautiful building. You people should make it into a museum now that it's Egypt's again.

BASSEL

Perhaps we will. I'm just glad you people didn't remove the whole thing to London when you had the chance.

D'AYALA

She wasn't actually an Egyptian, you know.

BASSEL

(stiff)

I beg your pardon?

D'AYALA

Cleopatra. She was a Ptolemy. From Macedonia, just like our man, Alexander the Great.

BASSEL

And you are?

D'AYALA

Letitia D'ayala. From Havana.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Miss D'ayala is a dealer in art and antiquities, and a patron of the expedition.

Prorok swoops over to join the chat.

PROROK

And how's everyone enjoying the shawarma?

D'AYALA

It's lovely. Tell me, Count, do you speak Macedonian?

PROROK

No, afraid not.

D'AYALA

(a touch snide)

Of course. Shame.

PROROK

No. I learned a bit of Hungarian from my mother. And I picked up some German and Italian in my college days in Switzerland. Some basic Greek and Latin, of course. And my French improved when I lived in Carthage. But no...

(unable not to boast)

My Arabic isn't great, but I get by. I did pick up a smattering of Kanuri and Kanembu from my time with the Berbers of the Hoggar. I can discuss water and cows in Tebu but that's--

The door flies open and Captain SPORTARI of the Italian Army barges in, backed by two soldiers. He's dashing, handsome and charming. And a rat bastard. The MUSICIANS instantly stop playing.

SPORTARI

Mi scusi - per favore, keep your seats. Which of you is in charge?

PROROK

I am! Count de Prorok. And who the devil are you?

SPORTARI

(terribly gracious)

Capitano Matteo Sportari, signore. Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. My apologies, Count, but I'm afraid I'm under orders to place you, and your charming entourage, under arrest.

PROROK

What?

SPORTARI

Si. I regret the inconvenience.

PROROK

Under arrest for what?

SPORTARI

Violation of the 1909 Law Regulating the Inalienability of Antiquities and Fine Arts. You have no permits. This makes you tombaroli.

D'AYALA

What's that?

SPORTARI

Tomb-raiders, signora.

PROROK

I'm nothing of the sort! What are you playing at?

SPORTARI

Please, signore... I will ask the questions. You are under arrest for violating the laws of Italy.

BASSEL

Mm, no, I must speak here, sir. I represent the Kingdom of Egypt. You have no authority to arrest anyone here!

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Really, you're under British--

BASSEL

Not any more! Egypt is independent once again, and you--

SPORTARI

Actually, no. We are all of us in the province of Italian Cirenaica now.

BASSEL

What?

SPORTARI

An understandable mistake - this border has been vague in the past. But we have redrawn the borders and what was once a part of Egypt is now Italian territory.

PROROK

When did this happen?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Yes, how can you be so sure?

For the first time, Sportari's charm falls away to reveal that this is a man who could kill everyone here.

SPORTARI

I have a dozen armed soldiers  
outside with orders to shoot  
tombaroli on sight. I am sure.

(charming again)

We have a few questions for the  
expedition of the famous Count de  
Prorok.

PROROK

Yes, well I can--

SPORTARI

Please, stay seated. We will  
question you one at a time.

PROROK

Very well. Let's--

SPORTARI

No. I wish to start with...  
(casting his eyes about  
the room)

You.

JIM

Me?

SPORTARI

Come. This way...

Jim GETS UP and FOLLOWS him out of the room leaving behind  
the others in a CONCERNED WHISPER.

#### THE INTERROGATION

We hear Sportari RUSTLE through a file folder of information.  
Jim turns out to be a very folksy midwesterner. Polite and  
earnest.

SPORTARI

Please to sit down, James Whitman,  
phid.

JIM

Thank you. That's Ph.D.

SPORTARI

Si. So, you are an archeologist,  
no?

JIM

Yes, sir. I'm with the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Department of Anthropology.

SPORTARI

And tell me, Dr. Whitman...

JIM

Oh, no, please, you can just call me Jim.

SPORTARI

Just "Jim"?

JIM

Yeah. That's fine with me.

SPORTARI

I see. So tell me, "Jeem", why does the famed Count Byron de Prorok need another archeologist on his expedition? Surely he's qualified enough to--

JIM

You might be surprised.

SPORTARI

What do you mean?

JIM

Sorry... nothing.

SPORTARI

Mm, no. I do not like surprises. Are you saying Prorok is not qualified?

JIM

(uncomfortable)

For this expedition? Well... no. He's not. Really. Not at all.

SPORTARI

Go on.

JIM

No, I'm sorry, I shouldn't...

SPORTARI

Jim, please, you are under arrest for serious crimes. You must answer my questions.



JIM

Oh. Right. OK then... well, it's just, Prorok's not really an archeologist. Not in an academic sense. He's never studied it in a university. He's never practiced it scientifically. He's... what you said.

SPORTARI

Tombaroli?

JIM

Right.

SPORTARI

I read he excavated--

JIM

Carthage. "Excavated" might be an overstatement. He found some treasures there. And his work in the Hoggar, finding the tomb of Queen Tin Hinan... there was no real archeology at all, just... tomba...

SPORTARI

Tombaroli. I see. Hmm, this from a Hungarian nobleman.

JIM

(scoffs)

SPORTARI

Yes, Jim? Speak. I insist.

JIM

It's just... He's not Hungarian.

SPORTARI

No?

JIM

He was born in Mexico. And he's not a count. And he's not an archeologist. He's just... famous.

SPORTARI

Interesting. This is why you are here?

JIM

He spent some time in Carthage, but he doesn't know anything about Egypt. Or Rome. Or Alexander the Great. He just heard Alexander the Great may be buried at the Temple of Jupiter Ammon and he wants to get his hands on any treasure first! It's been years, years I've been trying to get funding for an expedition to the temple. I've got the expertise, the experience, the languages - I couldn't raise a fraction of the funds I'd need. Then he comes along, finds some gold jewelry out in the Sahara and the Geographic Society treats him like a king - and funds him like one.

SPORTARI

Everybody loves a celebrity, eh?

JIM

Yeah. Anyway, joining his expedition was the only way I'd ever be able to get here.

SPORTARI

I see. It's important to have good friends, no? You know who is interested in this expedition of yours, Jeem? Il Duce.

JIM

Mussolini? Benito Mussolini? He--

SPORTARI

Si. Very interested. It is his wish for Italia to be as great a power as the Rome of the Caesars. An expedition to the place where Alexander the Great became a god, led by the famed Prorok into Italian territory--

JIM

I see how it is.

SPORTARI

Si. I can be your friend too, Jeem.

BRIGHT MUSIC with an OMINOUS UNDERCURRENT.

LESTER BRIDGE 2

LESTER MAYHEW

The captain interviewed all the key expedition members late into the evening. The following morning Prorok reconvened the entire team at breakfast.

CHANGE OF PLAN

The WALLA of the whole expedition assembled again in the villa for breakfast.

PROROK

Good morning everyone. I have a few announcements. Effective this morning, our expedition has been officially renamed the Tripolitan Expedition to the Temple of Jupiter Ammon and will be conducted under the auspices of the Italian government.

BASSEL

What!?

The WALLA increases in intensity.

PROROK

The Italian government graciously offered to provide our expedition with additional security, in the form of Captain Sportari here and his men. As the safety of my team members is of paramount importance, I have chosen to accept their kind offer.

BASSEL

But you are guests of the Egyptian government!

PROROK

I'm afraid the Temple of Jupiter Ammon is in Italian territory now. But, provided that you agree you have no legal jurisdiction over our excavations, you remain welcome to travel with us.

BASSEL

If I refuse?

SPORTARI

Scusi, count - please, I will answer.

(to Bassel)

Do you have an Italian visa?

BASSEL

What? No. I'm an Egyptian in Egypt.

SPORTARI

Mm, unfortunate. At my word, you will be arrested as a spy and taken to Tripoli for trial.

BASSEL

This is an outrage!

A ripple of concerned WALLA.

SPORTARI

Be that as it may. I am not here to negotiate. Who also has a question?

Uncomfortable silence.

PROROK

In addition, Rome will have first claim of any artifacts we may find.

MORE CONCERNED WALLA.

D'AYALA

But Byron, that--

PROROK

Yes, Letitia, I know. But don't worry. There will be plenty of treasure to go around, I'm certain of it. Now I encourage you all to get a good last day of rest and drink all the water you can. Captain Johnston-Lavis, can you tell us what to expect?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

The next leg of our journey to Siwa is a distance of roughly 190 imperial miles traveling south by southwest. There is no road, only bedouin camel trails. Daytime temperatures will be above 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Night time temperatures fall below freezing.

(MORE)

JOHNSTON-LAVIS (CONT'D)

There is no cover, no shade and only a few cisterns which may or may not have any water in them.

JIM

Will the vehicles be ready to go?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Some of you already know Ali Ford, our chief mechanic. What do you think, Ali? Is the gear ready?

ALI FORD

One hundred eleven percent excellent, sir.

JIM

Well, that's something.

SPORTARI

Scusi, Count, I must tell you - the German camera man with the scorpion foot? Il doctore says he cannot continue on trip.

PROROK

Schöttler? But we've promised the Geographic Society motion picture footage. Our contract--

SPORTARI

Is no problem - I have solution. I wish for you to meet someone.

(off)

Barbarella, vieni qui, voglio farti conoscere il Conte. (Barbarella, come here, I want you to meet the Count.)

MUSIC sting. The room goes silent. There is a WOLF WHISTLE as Barbarella swoops into the room. She's a drop-dead gorgeous Italian movie starlet whose voice drips with seduction.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

(sotto voce)

She's a nice lookin' bird, ain't she, Jim my lad?

JIM

Yeah.

SPORTARI

Count de Prorok, may I introduce Barbarella Bucci.

BARBARELLA  
Incantato, conte.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS  
(star struck)  
Miss Bucci, um, I saw you in "The  
House of Shame" and... "Paprika".

Another WOLF WHISTLE from someone in the crowd.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS (CONT'D)  
You were--

PROROK  
Captain, we need a cameraman, not  
an actress.

SPORTARI  
Si! Barbarella, she can run the  
camera.

PROROK  
But, she's a... I mean, she... can  
you?

BARBARELLA  
Ma certo. Farò funzionare la  
cinepresa. (But of course I can run  
the movie camera).

PROROK  
That's... fantastic. But...  
(to Sportari)  
Does she speak English?

BARBARELLA  
Leetle beet.

SPORTARI  
So modest. She speaks English  
great. She's come here with me.

PROROK  
(realizing the  
implications)  
Oh... Oh.

SPORTARI  
I sent Herr Schöttler back to  
Alexandria to hospital. Barbarella  
will shoot the moving pictures for  
Rome.

PROROK

Yes, I suppose so.

SPORTARI

Is not a suggestion, Count. She will do this.

BARBARELLA

I shoot beautiful pictures. Everyone will love them!

Transition MUSIC.

LESTER BRIDGE 3

LESTER MAYHEW

Under the new command of the Italians, the expedition set out into the vast expanse of the Libyan desert. After days enduring the relentless heat and inhospitable terrain of one of earth's cruelest landscapes, the brave convoy made it to Djebel Sikander, a rocky landmark where they hoped to find rest, and water....

DJEBEL SIKANDER

WIND whips hot sand onto everyone.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

We're in a tight spot. The cistern here doesn't have enough to keep us all going.

SPORTARI

But how can that be? Why did--

PROROK

It's not like a well, Sportari, where water comes up from below. This here collects water from above. And as you can plainly see, there's precious little of it here.

SPORTARI

Si. So what do we do?

PROROK

If we turn back now, on half rations we can make it to Mersa Metruh and the expedition is over. It will be hard but we'll probably make it.

SPORTARI

Or?

PROROK

We press on to Siwa. Omar, you say there's another cistern between here and there, yes?

OMAR

Yes, sir.

SPORTARI

And what does this man know?

PROROK

This is Omar as-Senussi, our local interpreter. He knows this territory.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

Yes, but who's to say the next cistern will have any more water than this one?

OMAR

Yes, this I cannot know.

JIM

Quiet! Do you hear that?

The group instantly shuts up. WIND. The WEIRD SQUAWKS OF A RAVEN off in the distance.

D'AYALA

A raven!

SPORTARI

What?

JOHNSTON-LAVIS

How'd that blighter get all the way out--

PROROK

Shh.

DISTANT SQUAWK.



D'AYALA  
 (amazed)  
 It is just like the legend.

SPORTARI  
 What legend is this?

JIM  
 It's said that Alexander the Great  
 got lost on his journey to Siwa.

D'AYALA  
 But he saw ravens - saw them here.  
 He followed them and they led him  
 to Siwa.

JOHNSTON-LAVIS  
 But that's just an old cod, we  
 can't risk people's...

The bird FLAPS INTO VIEW. SQUAWK.

D'AYALA  
 I would not be so quick to discount  
 the tale.

SPORTARI  
 This bird... it needs water, no?

JIM  
 Yes. Yes, it does.

Pause.

PROROK  
 We follow it!

JOHNSTON-LAVIS  
 You've gone barmy! There are twenty-  
 five souls counting on you, sir!

OMAR  
 Wamin altajdif atibae mithl hadhih  
 albashayir! (It is blasphemy to  
 follow such omens).

MUSIC.

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW  
 Soon the party had split into two  
 camps.

(MORE)

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

A small group would follow the raven into the desert, while the rest would wait for a day. If no water was found, the larger group would return to the coast. The momentous stakes of the decision weighed heavily on them all.

Weird RAVEN sounds. WIND. A TRUCK.

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

The ominous raven departed the camp at Djebel Sikander shortly before dusk. Right behind it followed one lone vehicle. Seven explorers did their best to track the bird as the sun began to set over the endless sea of sand.

INTO THE DARK

The truck RUMBLES slowly across the wastes.

PROROK

There it is, Ali: one o'clock.

ALI FORD

Yes, sir, I see it.

SPORTARI

Whatever you do, don't lose sight of it.

D'AYALA

It won't let us lose sight of it.

SPORTARI

What?

D'AYALA

It is our guide, and it knows it.

SPORTARI

That is crazy talk, signora.

D'AYALA

Is it? We've followed it for over an hour. It can fly faster than we can drive. If it wanted to get away from us all it needs do is flap its wings. But does it?

BARBARELLA

No. You are right, Letitia. The bird, it stop. It wait for us to come.

JIM

It wants us to follow it.

SPORTARI

This is crazy! Why does a bird do this? What do you say, Count?

PROROK

I've seen things in the desert. Impossible things. Wonderful and terrible things. I can't explain them. All I know is our entire expedition hinges on it getting us to water.

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW

The light of a full moon allowed the team to drive through the night as the raven continued to fly short distances and then stop. Shortly after dawn, the team cleared the top of a large sand dune and looked out at the vast expanse before them.

WELL, WELL, WELL

The truck's ENGINE IDLES. WIND blows sand across the dunes.

PROROK

Where is it? Ali? Do you see it?

ALI FORD

No... Omar?

OMAR

La 'araa 'aya ghirbani. (I see no ravens.)

PROROK

Anyone? Keep looking.

SPORTARI

Nothing. Where has it gone?

BARBARELLA  
Merda. I don't see it.

D'AYALA  
I'm sure it's here. It must be.

JIM  
There!

PROROK  
Do you see it?

JIM  
No.

PROROK  
Dammit, man, we need--

JIM  
I see a cistern!

ALI FORD  
Yes, I see too. The stonework.

JIM  
Let's go.

The truck REVS up as it drives through the BLOWING SAND.

MUSIC.

SPORTARI  
What do you think, Count? Omar,  
grab the rope from--

JIM  
Shhh... Listen.

The weird GRONK of a RAVEN echoes up from the cistern.

D'AYALA  
I knew we would find it.

PROROK  
A bit eerie, isn't it? Omar,  
where's that rope?

OMAR  
(mutters a prayer)

PROROK  
Omar? What's the matter?

OMAR

Khamsin!

PROROK

Oh hell.

BARBARELLA

What is this?

ALI FORD

Khamsin, madame, is sandstorm.  
There - to the north.

SPORTARI

Where. I don't see--

PROROK

That. That brown wall. It's sand  
coming this way.

BARBARELLA

Santo cielo. (good heavens)

SPORTARI

Come, we get in the truck!

AD LIBS as the team SCRAMBLES. Prorok and Sportari start to  
climb into the truck.

ALI FORD

Sirs, no! Do not! It may be buried  
in the sand!

D'AYALA

Oh my god - my black book! I must  
have--

ALI FORD

I placed it under the seat of the  
lorry madame. There it will be  
safe.

D'AYALA

But the sand--

ALI FORD

Will not hurt a book. It does not  
need to breathe!

JIM

Come on, down into the cistern! Use  
the rope.

The WIND INCREASES. People SLIDE DOWN THE ROPE. SPLASH.  
GRONK! CHAOS. The wind HOWLS. Only Jim and Omar remain above.

JIM (CONT'D)

Omar, help me with the boat.

OMAR

What do you say? The boat?

JIM

The boat!

OMAR

You are mad, sir.

JIM

No, over the top! Keep the sand  
out. Throw the rope!

Thrilling MUSIC accompanies the WHIPPING WIND AND THE LASHING  
OF ROPES.

JIM (CONT'D)

Now you! Get in!

OMAR

la ya sayidi, ealayk 'an tadhhab  
'awla. (no, sir, you should go  
first).

JIM

In!

He shoves Omar into the well with a GRUNT. SPLASH. AD LIBS  
from below.

LESTER MAYHEW

The boat formed a kind of lid over  
the cistern, protecting the water  
from the raging sandstorm outside.  
Cold and wet, the team waited the  
storm out.

BARBARELLA

But now we have molta acqua.

PROROK

True. We can take on enough here to  
make it on to the oasis at Siwa.

SPORTARI

Thank you, God, for this.

JIM  
What about the others?

Pause.

PROROK  
We have the water to make it on to Siwa. If we go back, we might not have enough water for them. Or for ourselves.

JIM  
We just leave them? Aren't we obligated to try?

PROROK  
Obligated? Hmm. I have personally known six men who have died in this desert in efforts to help others. Good Samaritans, every one of them. Helping their fellow man. And now they are all dead. Is that what you have in mind?

D'AYALA  
No. This is not a good idea.

PROROK  
It pains me to say it, but I will not put your lives in danger for others who, for all we know, may not even want or need our help. We have come this far to find the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, and we will find it.

SPORTARI  
(trying to convince himself)  
My soldiers, they will keep the others safe.

JIM  
You're sure we'll be able to find Siwa?

PROROK  
Nothing is sure in the Sahara. But with enough water--

GRAWK. The cry of a RAVEN comes from above. Barbarella LAUGHS!

JIM

Our raven!

D'AYALA

Like magic!

OMAR

Hadiat min allah! (a gift from  
god!)

SPORTARI

The storm has passed.

PROROK

Let's get out of here.

MUSIC.

LESTER MAYHEW

After digging their truck out of a  
windblown dune and lashing the sand-  
blasted boat back on, the vehicle  
was able to resume its crawl across  
the trackless desert wastes. They  
followed the raven into a narrow,  
rocky ravine, carved millennia ago  
by a long-dead river. For hours the  
team's bones were rattled as the  
truck lumbered its way back into  
the open. Heat waves scintillated  
off the scorched earth.

PROROK

Ali, look, there, eleven o'clock!  
See the shimmer?

ALI FORD

Another mirage, sir.

OMAR

La, bal hu wahatun! (no, it is an  
oasis).

ALI FORD

He's right - it is the oasis!

SPORTARI

It is huge. That would have to be--

JIM

Siwa!

MUSIC swells!



BARBARELLA

Is lakes. Is so big. So much water!

LESTER MAYHEW

As they neared the oasis, they saw the Libyan desert stopped abruptly at the edge of a series of huge lakes surrounded by abundant palm trees. And nestled in among the lakes was a series of tall white buildings - the ancient city of Siwa.

The engine REVS again and the MUSIC SWELLS.

SALTY TEARS

Doors SHUT on the huge vehicle and the team runs into the water. SPLASH.

PROROK

Water! Glorious...

A SPLASH followed by COUGHING and SPUTTERING.

PROROK (CONT'D)

Salt! It's salt water!

BARBARELLA

No! Minchia! (fuck!)

SPORTARI

The lakes are all salt water?

D'AYALA

No. Herodotus wrote that some of the oases at Siwa were salt water but some were fresh.

JIM

We wouldn't see all these palm trees if they were all salt water.

ALI FORD

The trees are heavy with dates. Please to eat.

They ravenously eat the fresh fruit.

D'AYALA

God in heaven, it's good.

SPORTARI  
Grazie, Ali Ford, grazie.

BARBARELLA  
Mmm. So sweet. Delizioso.

OMAR  
shukran lak eali (thank you, Ali).

The wild fruit devouring ebbs.

PROROK  
We should press on to the city.

OMAR  
(to Ali)  
al'ahmaq - sawf yatasabab fi  
qatlina jmyean. lays ladayh  
'akhlaqu. (The fool - he's going to  
get us all killed. He has no  
manners.)

PROROK  
What's he saying, Ali?

ALI FORD  
Omar fears the Siwans may feel  
threatened if we enter the city  
directly.

OMAR  
My people, the Senussi, they are  
blood allies of the Siwans. I know  
them well. They will not trust  
white men.

ALI FORD  
The only white men they have known  
came here with the war and did not  
treat them kindly.

SPORTARI  
That was the British. I represent  
Italian army.

OMAR  
wakan al'iitaliawn 'akthar  
wahshiatan! (The Italians were even  
more brutal!)

ALI FORD  
That may be, Captain, but you are  
outnumbered now.

JIM

Omar, we should introduce ourselves more formally? Request audience with--

OMAR

The sheik.

PROROK

Right. We'll offer up gifts - that sort of thing?

OMAR

Yes. Siwans are traditional people. They prefer old ways.

PROROK

But where do we go now? Will they send a delegation to greet us?

SPORTARI

There. That hill. The English once had a military camp there - we will be outside the town.

D'AYALA

Djebel Muta. Herodotus wrote of it too.

BARBARELLA

Djebel Muta - che bello (how lovely). What does this mean?

D'AYALA

Mountain of the Dead.

Ominous MUSIC.

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW

Before long the team had set up a camp on the aptly named Mountain of the Dead. The mountain was honeycombed with graves and tombs populated by untold numbers of corpses desiccated over thousands of years by the unrelenting heat. Ali Ford and Omar were sent into Siwa to request an audience with the sheik. In the meantime, Count Prorok could wait no longer to ply his trade.

## MOUNTAIN OF THE DEAD

A BREEZE blows across the site, carrying ODD DRUMMING from Siwa a few miles off.

PROROK

Come on, Jim, grab a pick. Let's see what we can find here. There must be some nice pieces dating back to the Old Kingdom.

JIM

Don't you think we should make a map first, document this site? There are some Egyptian burials here, but I saw one over there that's clearly Roman. They've been burying people here for centuries. Millenia.

PROROK

Yeah, yeah... look at this:  
(kicking part of a skull  
with his boot)  
Random bones just sticking up out of the sand. If we're going to excavate, we may as well look for something valuable.

JIM

Valuable to science or...

PROROK

The camera's not running now, Jim. You can't tell me you wouldn't love to get your hands on something juicy from the age of the pyramids.

JIM

Sure, but there's other kinds of...

PROROK

Follow me. This passage looks promising. Grab a torch.

He strides off.

## SOME MORE TOMBAROLI

LESTER MAYHEW

Without hesitation, Prorok worked his way through a warren of crypts and tombs.

(MORE)

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

Jim, entranced by discoveries at every turn, followed slowly.

PROROK

(off)

Jim, get up here. I'm finally getting into something that looks worthwhile.

JIM

(sotto)

This is all worthwhile.  
Fascinating.

SHIFTING FOCUS TO PROROK. He WHACKS at a sealed stone doorway with a pick.

PROROK

(to himself)

If they went to this much trouble to seal this up,  
(whack - stucco flies)  
there's gotta be something good in here.

CLANG. Prorok GROANS as he tries to open a doorway.

PROROK (CONT'D)

Jim, get up here and help me open this tomb, the prybar is--

GRINDING STONE as the doorway opens a little.

JIM

(off)

Hold up. I found something. This might be a map - I'll be with you in a--

PROROK

Nevermind - I'll do it myself.  
(to himself, giddy)  
Ha! Look at all these mummies!  
Hello there. Hmm, with a staff of this size, this must be someone...

SHIFTING FOCUS TO JIM.

JIM

(to himself)

Maw, me jed-en-ek eeog-sootheth... eeog sootheth... That's a new one. And this thing... is that supposed to be some kind of octopus?

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

In the desert?

(calling out)

Count, what did you make of these hieroglyphs?

SHIFTING FOCUS TO PROROK. ROCK AND PLASTER TUMBLES DOWN from the ceiling. Wooden supports in the floor CRACK.

PROROK

What? Hurry up! Read it later!

(to himself)

Ha! You can see the plaster seam. This wall's going to--

He WHACKS the wall with his pickaxe. The wall CRUMBLES, as do the ceiling and the floor. Prorok SCREAMS into an AVALANCHE OF DEBRIS. Jim hurries to climb down to him.

JIM

(approaching from above)

Prorok? Can you hear me?

PROROK

Help! Ah - God, get them off me! Help me!

JIM

Are you alright?

PROROK

(spitting and sputtering)

The floor gave way.

He COUGHS.

PROROK (CONT'D)

Throw me a rope.

JIM

Didn't you see that warning?

PROROK

Warning? What warning?

JIM

Of course. You don't read hieroglyphs.

PROROK

(after a pause)

The rope. Throw the end down here.

MUSIC.

## CAMPS

Barbarella's camera WHIRS as it shoot movie film. Strange distant DRUMMING wafts over the lakes from Siwa.

LESTER MAYHEW

Back at the camp, Barbarella set up the motion picture camera to capture the sun setting beyond the oasis at Siwa.

SPORTARI

Barbarella, make sure you shoot the city. Il Duce will--

BARBARELLA

Mind own business, you. My movies - I make the beautiful scene.

SPORTARI

Si, si, si..

BARBARELLA

So much water, these lakes. The big ones they have um... isole.

JIM

Islands.

BARBARELLA

Thank you, Jim. Islands. All this water, the trees... It's beautiful, you know? Such life with a dead place all around.

JIM

Mm-hm. Any word from Ali or Omar?

D'AYALA

Not since they went into Siwa.

BARBARELLA

I hope no thing bad has--

PROROK

They'll be alright. Omar is Senussi. Their traditions demand that he be well treated.

JIM

You sure do talk like an expert.

PROROK

Something troubling you, Jim?

JIM  
Knowledge.

PROROK  
What's that?

JIM  
Archeology is about knowledge. Not  
treasure.

PROROK  
Knowledge is a treasure.

JIM  
I'm sure that's what you meant.

PROROK  
Something you wish to say to me,  
Mr. Whitman?

JIM  
No, I think you've made your point.

SPORTARI  
Please, signori... Treasure,  
knowledge, whatever we find here,  
it's all most welcome. But, I  
remind you that we're taking it  
back to Rome.

D'AYALA  
And of course, we can't know for  
certain that we'll find anything  
here.

SPORTARI  
Eh?

D'AYALA  
Alexander was anointed as a god  
here at the Temple of Jupiter  
Ammon, but it's not certain that  
his tomb is here.

SPORTARI  
What? How is it you only say this  
now?

D'AYALA  
Popular wisdom held that his tomb  
would be in the city that bears his  
name.



JIM  
Alexandria!

D'AYALA  
But his tomb has never been found  
there.

PROROK  
Believe me, many people have  
looked.

BARBARELLA  
So why here?

D'AYALA  
That he'd want to be interred where  
he became a god has a certain sense  
of poetry to it.

JIM  
That tomb we were in earlier. There  
was a painting - I think it was a  
map. If I'm right, there's tunnels  
and passages all over, connecting  
these burials all the way to the  
Temple of Jupiter Ammon.

D'AYALA  
And if we believe Quintus Curtius  
Rufus--

BARBARELLA  
Ha! A Roman! I believe him!

D'AYALA  
Yes, he placed the tomb here at the  
Temple of Jupiter Ammon.

PROROK  
So did Justin!

BARBARELLA  
Justin? Who is that?

JIM  
Marcus Junianus Justinus Frontinus.

BARBARELLA  
Another Roman. Meno male! (Thank  
god).

PROROK

Indeed. He's a Roman historian who claims Alexander was buried at the temple in Siwa!

D'AYALA

But those are the Latin authors. If we want the true understanding of his burial, you must read it in the Macedonian.

PROROK

You asked about Macedonian. You've read some Macedonian text?

D'AYALA

Indeed I have. Do you know Queen Arsinoë II of Thrace?

PROROK

Afraid not.

D'AYALA

Mmmm. She has some interesting things to say about Alexander and his tomb.

PROROK

You'll have to tell me all about it.

D'AYALA

You're such a dear, Count.

JIM

She married her brother, right? One of the Ptolemies?

D'AYALA

(a little defensive)  
You know about her?

JIM

Not much more than that, really. She might have known a lot about Alexander the Great.

D'AYALA

More than you can imagine.

PROROK

Perhaps you'd like to adjourn to my tent and we can--

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH over the rocky ground. Sportari COCKS HIS PISTOL.

SPORTARI  
Someone's coming!

JIM  
It's Ali. And Omar.

The two men approach the fire and the others gather around them.

PROROK  
Well, what's the news? Did you meet the sheik?

SPORTARI  
Will he see us?

ALI FORD  
The beginning was not so good. The townspeople were angry and threw old fruit and bad dates at me. But Omar spoke to them and we were taken to the palace, the Agourmi, and given audience with Sheik, Darius. He was pleased with your gift, sir.

PROROK  
Was he? Good.

JIM  
What gift?

ALI FORD  
The emerald ring that the Count found at Mersa Matruh.

JIM  
(choosing not to make a  
stink)  
Ah.

ALI FORD  
The sheik has invited us to come bathe at a place called the Fountain of the Sun.

BARBARELLA  
Scusi, cos'è "bathe"?

SPORTARI  
Nuotare. Swimming, yes?

D'AYALA  
In the Fountain of the Sun?

ALI FORD  
Yes, madam.

PROROK  
You know it?

D'AYALA  
It's a famous fountain and pool  
from antiquity. Herodotus wrote of  
it too, saying it was made to be  
cold during the day and hot at  
night.

SPORTARI  
Why would they need a pool for  
swimming? They have the beautiful  
oasis!

OMAR  
Pardon, sir, but crocodiles.

SPORTARI  
Ah. I see, pool is good.

PROROK  
(charmed)  
Letitia, you are a fountain - a  
fountain of information. It sounds  
perfect. Tell him I accept! We'll  
go bathing! I can finally get all  
of this accursed mummy dust off me.

MUSIC.

LESTER BRIDGE 5

LESTER MAYHEW  
The following day, the team piled  
into the truck and slowly drove  
through Siwa. The vehicle, the only  
one in the city, wended its way  
through a maze of ancient white  
towers with tiny windows. The  
Siwans scattered into hiding,  
peeking out at the foreigners with  
suspicion and contempt. With the  
heavy motion picture camera and  
tripod in tow, the team made its  
way to the famed Fountain of the  
Sun.

## POOL PARTY

The team approaches the pool.

BARBARELLA

No, stop here, behind trees. Is beautiful shot for the movie. We see the pool, but these people, they no see us. Matteo, help with the treppiedi.

SPORTARI

Si.

They move the tripod and start setting up the camera.

PROROK

It certainly is spectacular. When was it built?

D'AYALA

Herodotus described it in the fifth century B.C.

JIM

But it was already ancient then.

PROROK

Well, the fifth century is hardly--

JIM

No, look at the hieroglyphics on the walls there and there. That's Amun-Min, an Egyptian god of fertility and sexuality.

BARBARELLA

(impressed)

I see, he has a very big--

JIM

Yes. Sometimes the hieroglyphs explain themselves. But these glyphs have been here at least four thousand years.

D'AYALA

Amazing.

BARBARELLA

No, Matteo, move to the left. Too far. There - perfect.

We hear the CAMERA BEING SET UP and DISTANT LAUGHING AND SPLASHING coming from the fountain area. The camera WHIRRS ON.

ALI FORD

Count, you want I should send Omar to chase the people out?

PROROK

No, no, let them... Good god, where are their clothes? Are they...

ALI FORD

Yes, boss. They make love.

BARBARELLA

Is beautiful, no?

SPORTARI

Does it give you ideas, darling?

BARBARELLA

(playful)

Si, mmm, no, stop you. I working here!

Distant sounds of naked youth COPULATING.

OMAR

Women of Siwa who cannot have babies come here for sexing. The gods take away their barrenness. The young men come here to plant their seeds.

D'AYALA

(sotto voce)

They certainly do.

PROROK

(uncomfortable)

That's a masculine looking girl there. No wonder she's barr--

BARBARELLA

Scusi, Count, is a boy.

PROROK

But he's...

SPORTARI

Is a boy. See? Boy.

PROROK

For god's sake, turn the camera  
off.

It WHIRRS TO A STOP.

PROROK (CONT'D)

Good god! The degenerates!

OMAR

No, they are of good families. It  
is the way of Siwa. Men lay with  
men and with women. It has always  
been so.

JIM

Fascinating...

PROROK

Shameless! And in broad daylight.  
The Geographic Society will never  
go for this.

SPORTARI

Eh, who cares? In Italy this is no  
crime.

JIM

And yet, the Siwans, they're  
muslims, Omar?

OMAR

This has been the tradition here  
for ages before the birth of the  
Prophet. It has always been so and  
the people are none the worse for  
it.

PROROK

(louder)

Until God strikes it down like  
Sodom and Gomorrah.

Distant NOISES as the young couples stop coupling.

SPORTARI

Ah look - we have scared them off  
with all this noise. See? They have  
gone.

OMAR

Ah, here is come the sheik.

(calling off)

(MORE)

OMAR (CONT'D)

Esteemed Sheik Darius, may I introduce the celebrated Count de Prorok and his archeological expedition?

Darius speaks English well. He's a very young man but is already accustomed to dealing with slippery foreigners.

DARIUS

I welcome you to the Palace of the Agourmi. Please, come and eat.

FOOTSTEPS as the party moves to the table.

PROROK

Count Byron Khun de Prorok, at your service, Sheik. We thank you for your kind and generous hospitality.

DARIUS

Think nothing of it. The journey to Siwa is difficult in the best of times. Please...

PROROK

Mm, I have to say it smells wonderful. Something that's not out of our canned stores will be a welcome change.

SPORTARI

What is it?

OMAR

Kurat alfar mae alharisa. (mice with harissa)

BARBARELLA

Che ha un profumo delizioso. (That smells delicious)

SPORTARI

Polpetto? Meatballs?

DARIUS

You could call them that.

PROROK

Goat? Lamb?

DARIUS

It is said in ancient times Siwa was overrun with mice.

(MORE)



DARIUS (CONT'D)

So the sheik of Siwa traveled along the Nile to Memphis and returned with many cats.

SPORTARI

Of course.

DARIUS

They devoured the mice and the cats thrived. Soon there were no more mice, but Siwa was drowning in cats!

D'AYALA

I have not seen any.

DARIUS

Just so. For our people learned that when properly seasoned, cats are a delicacy.

SPORTARI

(appalled)

Oh no...

D'AYALA

Cat meatballs?

DARIUS

(amused)

This? Oh, no. In time, our people ate all the cats. And, of course, with no cats, the mice returned in great numbers.

JIM

Ah. You could call them meatballs.

DARIUS

Roasted with harissa - a local delicacy.

The team tries to feign some enthusiasm for the ensuing meal.  
MUSIC.

LESTER BRIDGE 6

LESTER MAYHEW

The visit to the Fountain and the ensuing banquet deeply disappointed the Count.

(MORE)

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

But those disappointments were nothing compared to the tour of the Temple of Jupiter Ammon that followed.

Sheik Darius led them through the Agourmi, a sad jumble of dusty ancient rocks unworthy of the term palace. Finally, they came to an unimpressive tumble of disused cyclopean stones - truly a ruin.

THE TEMPLE OF GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

DARIUS

Esteemed visitors, may I present The Temple of Jupiter Ammon.

The swell of MUSIC collapses into the sound of disappointed explorers.

PROROK

This? This is it?

DARIUS

Yes.

SPORTARI

Is... Where is the rest of it?

DARIUS

No, this is the only part left standing.

JIM

It's... destroyed. What happened here?

DARIUS

Ah, in 1897 the Ottoman governor of the province wished to build a grand and glorious headquarters for himself.

D'AYALA

But that wouldn't...

DARIUS

Dynamite. He wanted to harvest the stones for building. This is all that remains of the temple.

JIM  
Philistine!

PROROK  
It's... not what we were hoping  
for.

DARIUS  
No?

PROROK  
It's...  
(he sighs in despair)

JIM  
What about below? Under the temple?  
Are there any burials or...

DARIUS  
Mm, this is the best part. Below is  
most unfortunate. But come. I will  
show you.

JIM  
What about the Ottoman office,  
perhaps we could study the stones  
that were moved...

DARIUS  
If you wish. But it too is in  
ruins. The stone from the temple  
was too heavy for the governor's  
building. A poor design.

PROROK  
(under his breath)  
Of course it was.

The group WALKS through some echoing corridors.

BARBARELLA  
(quietly to Sportari)  
Matteo, questo posto è una  
schifezza (Matteo, this place is  
crap).

SPORTARI  
Si. Il Duce non sarà contento.  
(Yes. Il Duce will not be happy.)

DARIUS  
Come this way... down the steps.  
You can see, there are tunnels into  
the rock, but they were dug--

PROROK

Centuries ago. Look at these inscriptions in the stone. Very old.

D'AYALA

Do you think they could lead to the tomb?

PROROK

These holes? Hardly worthy of the world's greatest general. No, this is nothing.

DARIUS

Besides, too many spiders. Come, let us return to the palace.

The group follows Darius out. Jim and Omar linger behind. The FAINT SOUND OF WATER in the background.

OMAR

Forgive me saying, sir, but is it true you can read the old writing on the rocks?

JIM

The old Egyptian ones. But this, this isn't that.

OMAR

The Egyptian writing is pictures!

JIM

Right. And these carvings don't look old at all. They look a little like Tamazight.

OMAR

What is that?

JIM

The language of the Numidian Troglodytes.

OMAR

I do not know such people, sir.

JIM

Neither does Count Prorok. They were people that lived in caves, never coming out into the light.

OMAR

Oh yes! The cave men! We Senussi have legends of such people. They live like moles under the ground. I thought such people are only in stories. You have seen them?

JIM

Me? No.  
(hears something)  
What's that sound?

OMAR

Water, sir. Like a stream.

JIM

Hmm, I'll bet the fountain somehow drains into the oasis. Maybe through these tunnels.

OMAR

Perhaps.

JIM

But... I think someone's living down here too. Or did, until relatively recently. Omar, can we keep this between us for now?

OMAR

As you wish, Mr. Jim. But why?

JIM

The Count hates it when he finds out I know more than he does.

OMAR

I have seen this. I will say nothing.

JIM

Good man, Omar. Come on, we should catch up to the others.

Transition MUSIC leads us back to the Agourmi Palace.

WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?

DARIUS

I am afeared we have disappointed you, Count.

PROROK

No, no. Yes. I've done my research and I think it's here in Siwa - the Tomb of Alexander the Great. I'm sure of it!

DARIUS

What can I tell you? Alexander's fame has inspired many myths and legends for thousands of years. They can't all be true.

PROROK

History tells us this temple is where he went from being a man to being a god.

DARIUS

So they say. I am sorry. Truly. It is said he wished to be buried here. But if the Tomb of Alexander is here, no Siwan has ever seen it.

Prorok gives a dissatisfied SNORT.

D'AYALA

What about The Scepter of Ammon?

DARIUS

Mmm?

PROROK

What?

SPORTARI

Eh?

D'AYALA

The writings of Arsinoë II say that Alexander learned the secrets of the old gods here - gods older than Roman or Egyptian ones. Arsinoë says he learned to wield a magical scepter and it made him invincible.

SPORTARI

(interested now)

Invincible?

PROROK

I never heard of a Scepter of Ammon.

DARIUS

No? The story is well known here in Siwa. An army was sent across the desert to destroy the oracle here. A priest from the temple went forth alone to meet them. Before the enemy he used the scepter to call upon the god. The entire army was slain in a massive sandstorm. Only the priest survived.

SPORTARI

Il Duce would like the sound of that!

D'AYALA

King Cambyses II of Persia sent an army of 50,000 soldiers to conquer the Temple of Jupiter Ammon in 532 B.C. The army was never seen again.

PROROK

(impressed)

Where do you get this?

D'AYALA

Some day I will give you a book of Herodotus.

PROROK

Thank you, but I prefer to make my own legends.

DARIUS

This is no legend. I know for a fact this is quite true.

SPORTARI

How do you know?

DARIUS

The army is still there. In a valley east of Siwa.

JIM

The remains of 50,000 men?

DARIUS

Indeed. My men can take you there.

PROROK

I don't see the point, we're here to--

SPORTARI

I see the point. I see it very well. I would like to see this valley. Take us!

MUSIC transition.

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW

The following day a small caravan of camels set out from Siwa into the desert. Hours of travel brought them to a rocky bluff that looked down over a large valley filled with countless mounds of sand. The explorers made their way down amongst them.

ARMY OF THE DEAD

Hot wind WHIPS across the desert. Camels BELCH.

BARBARELLA

So many...

PROROK

Let's dig!

He TEARS INTO THE MOUND with a shovel.

JIM

Please, Count, you don't want to damage the remains.

PROROK

Give it a rest, Whitman. There are plenty to go around. What's one more or less?

Another shovel reveals the body beneath the sand. Everyone reacts with horror - MUSIC STING!

LESTER MAYHEW

The sand cleared away to reveal the desiccated remains of a Persian soldier, his face frozen eternally in a horrifying rictus of fear or suffering.



JIM

Maybe his tissues drying out make it look like he's screaming.

LESTER MAYHEW

Unearthing several more soldiers revealed them all in ghoulish poses of torment. The cumulative effect was profoundly disconcerting.

WIND. MOVIE CAMERA. Prorok continues to search the bodies for treasure.

BARBARELLA

Sono terrificanti! Il filmato li stupirà. (They are horrifying! The footage will amaze them.)

JIM

Look at them, weapons in hand. These men didn't just get lost and die of exposure. It's as if they all died at once.

SPORTARI

In action.

D'AYALA

In agony.

PROROK

(a little let down)

They seem to be common soldiers, nothing valuable on the bodies.

SPORTARI

Sheik, this scepter. Do the legends say what its powers were?

DARIUS

They say it could command a mighty djinn to slay enemies.

PROROK

And what became of this Scepter of Ammon?

DARIUS

Alexander was the last to wield it. They say it was buried with him.

PROROK

In a tomb that you claim isn't in Siwa.

DARIUS

I said only that no Siwan has ever seen it. No one has ever found it.

PROROK

Well no one like me's ever looked for it!

SPORTARI

And the Count now has the mandate of Il Duce. Do not forget, Sheik, that this land is under Italian control. I can have a battalion of carabinieri here presto.

D'AYALA

Sheik, the writings of Queen Arsinoë say that Alexander's tomb is situated at "the entrance to hell".

DARIUS

"Entrance to hell"? No, we have... wait, there is an old well on an island in the oasis. They called it The Well of Jehannam.

JIM

The well of hell.

PROROK

Why would they call it that?

DARIUS

It smells of old eggs, they say.

PROROK

Sulfur!

SPORTARI

You will take us there.

DARIUS

My men will not go to this island. It is muharam, forbidden.

SPORTARI

Nevertheless, you will take us there.

DARIUS

My people will prefer to face your carabinieri over the great crocodile with the mind of a demon that guards the oasis.

PROROK

Ha! Don't worry, Captain, we don't need them. I brought a boat! Who's crazy now?

Exciting transition MUSIC!

LESTER BRIDGE 7

LESTER MAYHEW

The boat had suffered damage in the sandstorm, but Ali Ford did his best to improvise repairs for the journey to the island. It could only hold four people, and the Count decided he would go first, with Sportari, d'Ayala and Omar.

ROWBOAT TO THE WELL OF HELL

HOT WINDS BLOW and the OASIS LAPS at the side of the boat. Prorok, D'ayala and Sportari are in the boat.

PROROK

(oh, the hubris)  
Everyone in? Jim, any sign of giant demonic crocodiles?

JIM

Not so far.

BARBARELLA

Do not leave me behind. I go with Matteo!

PROROK

I told you, I need you to shoot the footage of us rowing out to the island.

BARBARELLA

Then take Jim. Leave Matteo here with me.

SPORTARI

Sono il comandante, Barbarella.  
Vado avanti. (I am the commander,  
Barbarella. I go ahead.)

PROROK

Omar will row back and collect you.

BARBARELLA

Che palle! Dovrei venire con te. Il  
conte è un idiota. (what a pain in  
the ass! The Count is an idiot!)

SPORTARI

Basta, tesoro. Non preoccuparti,  
tornerò. And I have a gun. (That's  
enough, darling. Don't worry, I'll  
be back.)

PROROK

Ready. Come on, Omar, pull us out.

Omar SPLASHES in the water as he pushes the boat into the  
oasis.

OMAR

I do not like to be in this water.

PROROK

Come on now, jump in.

He SPLASHES ABOARD the boat and begins to row. The boat party  
moves further away from the shore. Barbarella sets up the  
motion picture camera and it WHIRS TO LIFE.

PROROK (CONT'D)

(moving out onto the  
water)

That's it. We're taking on some  
water, Omar. Row as fast as you  
can.

OMAR

I am, Count. I will!

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW

The distant rowboat appeared to  
have made it to the island, but it  
was too far away to tell more than  
that. As the sun began to set, the  
team waited for Omar to return.

## WAITING GAME

The WIND carries on it a STRANGE "SINGING" SOUND that one could imagine as the howling of demons in the desert.

BARBARELLA

Ali, what is this sound?

ALI FORD

(lying)

I don't know what you mean. I hear nothing.

It becomes slightly MORE DISTINCT.

BARBARELLA

That. Jim, you hear it, no?

JIM

Yeah. It sounds like... is it coming from that sand dune?

BARBARELLA

Yes. You are right. What is it?

ALI FORD

It is a curse. Bad luck. Bad for all of us.

JIM

No... I've read about this - singing dunes. When the wind passes over the sands just right, it makes a noise - vibration from the grains of sand. It's rare, but it's natural.

ALI FORD

(quite worked up)

No - it is **not** natural. Is *al-Azif*! Very bad sound. Some call it the cries of devils. It is the worst thing one could hear!

BLAM! A single distant gunshot echoes across the water.

BARBARELLA

Matteo!

JIM

Shhh.

They listen - only LAPPING WATER, DESERT WIND and demonic SINGING DUNES.

ALI FORD  
That was a gun shot!

JIM  
(yelling)  
Count! Can you hear us? Are you  
okay?

BARBARELLA  
Matteo!

ALI FORD  
Nothing. This is not so good. We  
are doomed.

JIM  
Don't say that. There's no boat,  
but we have to do something. It's  
salt water - we could swim.

BARBARELLA  
Is very far for swimming.

ALI FORD  
And crocodile devil. I too fear it.

A raven GRONKS near the truck.

JIM  
Our raven!  
(lightbulb)  
Come on, get in the truck!

BARBARELLA  
What?

JIM  
Hurry!

LESTER TIME

LESTER MAYHEW  
Jim sped back to their camp on the  
Mountain of the Dead. On the way,  
he told the others about the map he  
had seen in the tomb there...

THE LAND DOWN UNDER

They JUMP OUT OF THE TRUCK and scurry through camp grabbing  
supplies. WINDS BLOW, carrying a faint AL-AZIF.

JIM

If we can't cross the lake we'll go under it! The tunnels, they'd have to go right under the island the others are on. It's all connected. I saw tunnel entrances when we were at the temple of Jupiter Ammon. The troglodyte caves probably connect to them. Grab some electric torches!

ALI FORD

Please, no, sir. This is madness!

JIM

We can't just leave them out there. We have to do something.

BARBARELLA

Yes, Jim. I am with you. Matteo needs me.

ALI FORD

But if the tunnels have troglodytes...

BARBARELLA

Scusi, what is this troglodytes?

ALI FORD

Oh madam, they are creatures that live in caves. Too lazy to build houses or to farm - they eat earth and bugs. They are the lowest of the low.

BARBARELLA

But they are people?

ALI FORD

Barely. We should not go where they are. Truly.

JIM

Ali, they're just in old stories. Even Omar told me that.

ALI FORD

But old stories are sometimes true. Sometimes--

A PARTICULARLY LOUD GUST OF WIND boosts the dreaded sound of the SINGING DUNES.

JIM

You hear that? Your al-azif? You want to wait here? They need our help! Let's go!

THRILLING ADVENTURE MUSIC!

LESTER MAYHEW

Jim led the others into the tombs of the Mountain of the Dead. He found his way to the map he'd seen before, taking note of tunnels that could lead to the Well of Jehannam. Soon they were far underground, working the way through passages that were ancient, yet clearly not entirely abandoned.

The MUSIC takes a turn for the creepy and suspenseful as we head underground.

TROGLODYTES!

ALI FORD

Sir, we must have gone for miles. Are you sure this is the right way?

JIM

Um... I think so.

BARBARELLA

Che cazzo?! (what the fuck?)

JIM

We might be near. This glyph here, see, it's the symbol for a well and this... it's that name I saw before eeog-sootheth. But I can't be sure if it's the well of Jehannam or the Fountain of the--

A weird CHITTERING and MEEPING comes from the left.

BARBARELLA

Sh. You hear that?

ALI FORD

I did. I think the glyphs say we should go this way instead.

JIM

I think you're right.



They HURRY RIGHT down a passageway.

JIM (CONT'D)

I think just around the corner it should open up into...

They GASP. MUSIC HIT!

LESTER MAYHEW

The tunnel opened into a large chamber supported by massive columns. Huddled near them were nearly a dozen horrid humanoid creatures. The fearful things looked at the intruders with wonder and menace.

The things GURGLE and GROWL with something falling short of language.

JIM

Troglodytes. They're real!

BARBARELLA

Sono mostri! (They're monsters!)

ALI FORD

There's more of them behind us.

The troglodytes move closer and GLIBBER menacingly.

JIM

They're coming for us.

BARBARELLA

You two, shine your lights at me. I try something.

(turning her sexy Italian movie star abilities on full blast)

Ciao ragazzi! Ti piace ciò che vedi? (Hey boys! Like what you see?)

They MEEP in wonder and lust.

LESTER MAYHEW

The creatures had never seen anyone like Barbarella Bucci and stood agog. One reached out a foul hand to touch her.

BARBARELLA  
 (smacking his hand away)  
 EHI! Senza mani! (Hey! No touching)

JIM  
 I think they like what they see!

The things SQUEAK in wonder.

BARBARELLA  
 Ti piace ciò che vedi? Eh? (You  
 like what you see? Eh?)

JIM  
 It's working. Show them more!

BARBARELLA  
 Vuoi vedere di più? (You want to  
 see more?)

She RIPS HER BLOUSE open a little. The troglodytes REACT with  
 lusty amazement.

BARBARELLA (CONT'D)  
 Fatti da parte e lasciaci passare.  
 (Step aside and let us pass.) We  
 going now.

Jim and Ali Ford hustle along behind her. She BLOWS KISSES to  
 the Troglodytes.

BARBARELLA (CONT'D)  
 Alla prossima volta, cari. (until  
 next time, darlings).

They hustle out.

ALI FORD  
 (embarrassed and thrilled)  
 Madame, that was amazing.

BARBARELLA  
 Si, si. No different than Italian  
 film fans. Let's go. Which way?

JIM  
 Straight on. Look for anything that  
 could take us up. Stairs or...

BARBARELLA  
 I see them. Follow.

MUSIC. They RUN down a passage and find a stone staircase.

BARBARELLA (CONT'D)  
Una scala. (a staircase.)

ALI FORD  
They are coming after us.

BARBARELLA  
Always an encore.

JIM  
Keep going.

BARBARELLA  
It's blocked.

JIM  
Come on, push.

The three of them PUSH AGAINST A STONE DOOR. The FOOTFALLS and MEEPING of the pursuing troglodytes echo through the halls. The stone door moves a little but not enough.

ALI FORD  
They're coming.

JIM  
One more time - push.

The door SLIDES FURTHER.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Go, Barbarella!  
(she does)  
You too, Ali!  
(he does)  
Stay back!

Nasty troglodytic teeth GNASH and menace. One GRABS JIM.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Ah, it's got me!  
(struggling)  
Pull me through!

ALI FORD  
We have you!

The humans win the tug-of-war and JIM TUMBLES THROUGH.

JIM  
Push it closed!

The stone DOOR SLIDES SHUT, locking in the creatures. MUSICAL CLIMAX.

BARBARELLA  
Jim, your arm.

JIM  
I'll be okay. Are we...

ALI FORD  
I hear the water. I think this is  
the island and--

A RAVEN GRONKS off.

BARBARELLA  
Is the bird?

ALI FORD  
(scared)  
I... I don't know. I am smelling  
bad eggs.

JIM  
Sulfur. That's good. Come on, this  
way.

They make their way through the dense growth on the island  
toward the sound.

ALI FORD  
Look there, ruins, sir. What do the  
glyphs say?

JIM  
(awed)  
It's Alexander's tomb.

BARBARELLA  
You can read this?

JIM  
Well, yeah, but mostly it's because  
of him.

He points to a raven perched on the ruins. GRAWK.

BARBARELLA  
Is same bird? No, it cannot be.

JIM  
"...sacred and eternal resting  
place of that which was the great  
Alexander."

ALI FORD  
Blood!

BARBARELLA

What?

ALI FORD

The door, it is pried open. And  
there is fresh blood on it.

DRAMATIC TRANSITION MUSIC

TOMBAROLI REDUX

LESTER MAYHEW

The team descended into the tomb.  
But ahead of them, in the  
flickering light of their torches,  
they saw that a body lay motionless  
on the ground in a pool of blood.

ALI FORD

Omar! No! You've been shot!

OMAR

(dying)  
Ali, my friend, you are too late.  
Go, but do not trust--

He heaves a sigh and DIES.

BARBARELLA

I hear something. This way.

ALI FORD

Arqud fi salami, sadiqi aleaziz  
(rest in peace, dear friend)

LESTER MAYHEW

Barbarella squeezed through another  
recently opened door into a room.  
The light from the flashlight  
reflected back gold. Lots and lots  
of gold.

ALI FORD

Merciful Allah!

BARBARELLA

Cazzo! (damn!)

JIM

(gasping in awe)  
It's... a treasure room. Luxuries  
for the God Alexander in the  
afterlife. Prorok...

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

Prorok was right. We'll look later - they're not in here. There should be an adjacent burial -- yes, there it is. Come on.

BURIAL CHAMBER

JIM

This should be his sarcophagus, the coffin - where his body would be...

His voice trails off.

ALI FORD

Sir? What is the matter?

BARBARELLA

Jim? You read something?

JIM

It's... I don't understand. The dedications, the invocations carved on the walls... they're not to Jupiter Ammon or Ra or Horus...

BARBARELLA

Who are they to?

JIM

A monstrosity of the underworld. I keep seeing this name: Eeog-Sootheth.

ALI FORD

Prayers to a devil?

JIM

Looks like it.

BARBARELLA

Jim, you say this big box is for the body?

JIM

Yeah, why?

BARBARELLA

Is no body.

ALI FORD

Grave robbers?

A pathetic GROAN comes from a corner of the room.

BARBARELLA  
 It's il Conti! He's hurt.  
 (to him)  
 Count, can you hear me?

PROROK  
 (dazed)  
 Signora. Jim! Ali Ford!

JIM  
 Are you okay? What happened?

PROROK  
 They turned on me. Double-crossed  
 me.

JIM  
 D'Ayala?

BARBARELLA  
 Matteo? No...

PROROK  
 He's just here for the treasure.  
 Wants to take it back to  
 Mussolini...

JIM  
 Yeah.

PROROK  
 But she's out of her mind. She  
 wasn't looking for Alexander's  
 tomb. She's looking for his body.  
 She's mad!

ALI FORD  
 Here, sir, let me help you up.

Prorok grimaces as Ali Ford HELPS HIM to his feet.

PROROK  
 (with a groan)  
 Her book, by the Macedonian queen,  
 it's a bit history - it's black  
 magic and occult--  
 (aghast)  
 Where is it?

BARBARELLA  
 What?

PROROK

The body. The mummy. It was here.  
In the sarcophagus.

JIM

Alexander? When?

PROROK

A few minutes ago, before she hit  
me.

BARBARELLA

I look when we come in. No one is  
there.

SPORTARI

(way off)  
Aaaagh!

BARBARELLA

Matteo!

She runs into the Ritual Vault as the MUSIC SWELLS in a  
THRILLING MANNER!

SHOWDOWN

LESTER MAYHEW

Firelight flickered across the gold  
surfaces of a grand and glorious  
ceremonial room. At one end of the  
chamber was a magnificent statue of  
the famed Alexander the Great, and  
before it was a spectacular pool  
inlaid with lapis lazuli. Standing  
in the pool was Sportari. His hands  
were clutched to a ceremonial  
dagger stabbed into his chest. His  
blood streamed into the pool.  
Behind him stood Letitia d'Ayala,  
eyes wild.

BARBARELLA

Matteo, no!

She DASHES to him in the water; he COLLAPSES in her arms.

SPORTARI

(feeble)  
Barbarella, tesoro...



D'AYALA

Iä Yog-Sothoth. Neblod zin.  
 (in Macedonian)  
 Vie ste portata i klučot! (You are  
 the gate and the key).

PROROK

I told you, she's gone mad. She's  
 going to the statue.

JIM

That's it. The Scepter of Ammon!  
 It's in the statue's hand!

PROROK

(weak)  
 Don't let her get it. Stop her.

JIM

Ali! Help me! We have to -- Ali?

LESTER MAYHEW

Ali froze in his tracks as he saw  
 there was one more person in the  
 room than there should have been. A  
 decayed corpse draped in rotting  
 burial shrouds shambled forward. As  
 she grabbed the scepter, the mummy  
 moved towards d'Ayala.

PROROK

(mind blown)  
 Good god - the mummy, it's moving,  
 walking.

D'AYALA

My sacrifice has brought him back!

JIM

It's - Alexander the Great! Alive!

The mummy makes a FEARFUL UTTERANCE as it lumbers towards  
 d'Ayala and the scepter.

D'AYALA

The scepter is no longer yours. It  
 comes from Yog-Sothoth! It was  
 yours but now it is mine to  
 command!

(in declarative  
 Macedonian)

Ve povikuvam. Ja povikuvam mo□ ta  
 na žezolot na Amon.

(MORE)

D'AYALA (CONT'D)

(I call upon you. I call upon the  
power of the scepter of Ammon.)

BARBARELLA

Porca puttana! (you bitch!)  
(in English)

You kill Matteo. Now I kill you.

And with that she STABS d'Ayala with the dagger. D'ayala  
GASPS.

D'AYALA

No. Almost in my gra--

She dies.

PROROK

The mummy, it's going for the  
scepter. Stop it!

Scary MUMMY NOISE. THRILL INSPIRING MUSIC.

JIM

Are you mad?

PROROK

Alexander, he's going to use it.

JIM

What?

PROROK

The scepter... like on those  
soldiers in the desert!

Alexander makes a MUMMY NOISE and the SCEPTER RINGS.

JIM

Into the pool, now. Barbarella, get  
into the pool!

BARBARELLA

What?

JIM

Get in the pool - it's going to use  
the scepter! Grab Ali!

BARBARELLA

Come, you!

SPLASH!

With a mighty SOUND DESIGN, the mummified remains of Alexander the great ACTIVATES THE SCEPTER OF AMMON.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

(in Ancient Egyptian)

H3! Drp htp dy nrswt mdw. Ewg  
 swthth kt nt tm rdy pr hf3w!  
 (Behold! Once again I wield your  
 scepter - I call upon Eeog-Sootheth  
 and invoke thy wrath!)

The words ECHO through the chamber as a SUPERNATURAL SANDSTORM OF COSMIC DOOM manifests! Scary MUSIC helps. The wind grows in intensity. COUGHING.

LESTER MAYHEW

As the mummy's incantation echoed through the chamber, the quivering beams of the flashlights caught the golden glimmers of a growing supernatural sandstorm! Count Byron Khun de Prorok lunged at the mortal remains of Alexander the Great to wrench the scepter from his bony grasp.

PROROK

Give it to me!

JIM

Count! No!

LESTER MAYHEW

Jim looked frantically around, and saw Captain Sportari's Beretta pistol lying where it had been dropped. He grabbed it and aimed!

JIM

Prorok! Look out!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

LESTER MAYHEW

A cloud of dust and fragments of bone flew as the bullets blasted into the head of what had been history's greatest military leader. The mummy lurched and staggered.

PROROK

It's mine!

MUSIC STING!

LESTER MAYHEW

The Count wrenched the scepter from the mummy's hands and tumbled to the floor. As the mummy began to crumble, Jim dashed forward and dragged Prorok into the pool.

BARBARELLA

What now?

JIM

Take a deep breath and dive. We're going to swim out the drain! One, two, three!

The MUMMY WAILS and the roaring winds are MUTED into the UNDERWATER SOUNDS OF BUBBLES AND SWIMMING. A HEAVY STONE DRAIN falls over. MUSIC SUGGESTS THAT EVERYONE HAS DROWNED.

A few moments later the team SPLASHES at the surface of the oasis, gasping for air. MUSIC OF TRIUMPH!

BARBARELLA

(spluttering)

We... is this the... Yes, is island - there.

JIM

Look! The boat!

ALI FORD

It did not sink!

The Count BOBS to the surface, SPLUTTERING for air.

JIM

Count? Give me your hand. What are you... is that the scepter? You still have it?

PROROK

You're damn right I do.

LAST GASP

LESTER MAYHEW

The battered survivors crawled into the nearby rowboat and pushed off. Prorok clutched the mighty Scepter of Ammon to his chest. Ali Ford pulled on the oars as Jim tried to comfort the grieving Barbarella.

BARBARELLA  
 (weeping)  
 Oh Matteo! Mio amato!

JIM  
 I'm so sorry, Barbarella. He was--

A SWISH in the water breaks the quiet rhythm of the oars.

ALI FORD  
 (terrified)  
 Jim?! Allah fi alsama' ma hadha?  
 (God in heaven what is that?)

Suddenly the ROAR OF A GIANT DEMONIC MONSTROSITY. MUSIC!  
 SPLASHING!

BARBARELLA  
 Aaaah! Il cocodrillo!

PROROK  
 That's no croco--  
 (he screams in terror)

LESTER MAYHEW  
 The little boat bobbed and twisted  
 as a monstrous creature reared out  
 of the water. A mass of twisting  
 appendages writhed furiously as it  
 attacked the boat!

ALI FORD  
 Aaaaaaaaaah!

JIM  
 Son of a--

SPLASH, SLURP. BLAM! BLAM! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

JIM (CONT'D)  
 Oh hell!

MUSIC! MONSTER ROAR! HUMANS SCREAM!

LESTER MAYHEW  
 As the monstrosity rose up to make  
 a final attack, Count Prorok swung  
 the Scepter of Ammon, smashing it  
 with the mighty weapon!

PROROK  
 Begone, foul apparition!

ANGRY AQUATIC HORROR! THRASHING and SPLASHING!

JIM  
Count! Look out!

LESTER MAYHEW  
Countless squirming tentacles  
wrapped themselves around the  
scepter and ripped it from Prorok's  
grasp. The water churned as the  
horrific thing disappeared beneath  
the surface.

PROROK  
Row, Ali! Get us the hell out of  
here!

MUSICAL RESOLVE.

SUNRISE

LESTER MAYHEW  
Back at their camp at the Mountain  
of the Dead, the weary crew tried  
to recover.

A SOFT DESERT BREEZE blows. A small FIRE CRACKLES as the sun  
begins to rise over the distant dunes to the East.

ALI FORD  
I'm cold.

BARBARELLA  
Come, Ali. Sit by the fire. Share  
my blanket.

PROROK  
Coffee?

ALI FORD  
Yes, please, sir.

JIM  
Well, you did it again, Count. This  
time you explored the Temple of  
Jupiter Ammon. You found the Tomb  
of Alexander the Great.

Prorok laughs slightly but it dies away to something just  
short of a sob.

PROROK  
And we have nothing to show for it.

ALI FORD  
Except pain.

BARBARELLA  
Grief.

JIM  
Fallen friends.

BARBARELLA  
What the *fanculo* was that thing in  
the water? No cocodrillo!

JIM  
I'll be looking into that. Clearly  
D'ayala knew plenty more than she  
let on.

PROROK  
The guardian of the lost tomb of  
Alexander the Great.

JIM  
It... should remain lost.

BARBARELLA  
Si.

ALI FORD  
I hope someday Allah the Merciful  
will allow us to forget what we  
have seen.

PROROK  
But... no, I think you're right.  
(at a loss)  
Now what?

JIM  
We load up on fresh water and cross  
the desert. Back to Mersa Matruh,  
then on to Alexandria.

BARBARELLA  
Meh - maybe we go somewhere else.

All CHUCKLE.

PROROK  
Jim, I owe you an apology.

JIM  
How's that?

PROROK

If it weren't for your ability to read... what was it again?

JIM

Tamazight.

PROROK

Yes, that, and hieroglyphics and the rest of it... I'd be dead now. Knowledge has value. Maybe more value than treasures. I should have listened to you all along.

JIM

It's kind of you to say that.

PROROK

No, no, I mean it. You're a better archeologist than I'll ever be.

JIM

(with a wink)

Finally something we can agree on.

PROROK

Ha!

JIM

But you... you have your own skills.

PROROK

(pause)

I've been thinking...

JIM

Yes?

PROROK

I could use a man like you on my next expedition.

JIM

Another expedition? I don't think so.

PROROK

Hear me out. I have a treasure map that will lead us on to the lost city of Ophir - the site of King Solomon's Mines!

Emphatic conclusion MUSIC.



## CLOSING

## LESTER MAYHEW

You've been listening to "The Temple of Jupiter Ammon" - an all new Dark Adventure story brought to you by our sponsor, Veronal! A few tiny tablets at bedtime and you'll be out like a light.

I'm Lester Mayhew. Until next week, this is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre reminding you to never go anywhere alone; if it looks bad, don't look; and save the last bullet for yourself.

## MUSIC.

## ANNOUNCER

"The Temple of Jupiter Ammon" was written and produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman. Original music by The Remarkable Composer. The Dark Adventure Ensemble featured: Many Fine Actors. Tune in next week for "Aliens at the Alamo", a fantastical tale a fearsome frontier fighting.

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