

STREET & SMITH'S

LINK KNOWN

SEPT. 1939

20c



**NONE
BUT LUCIFER**

by H. L. Gold and
L. Sprague de Camp

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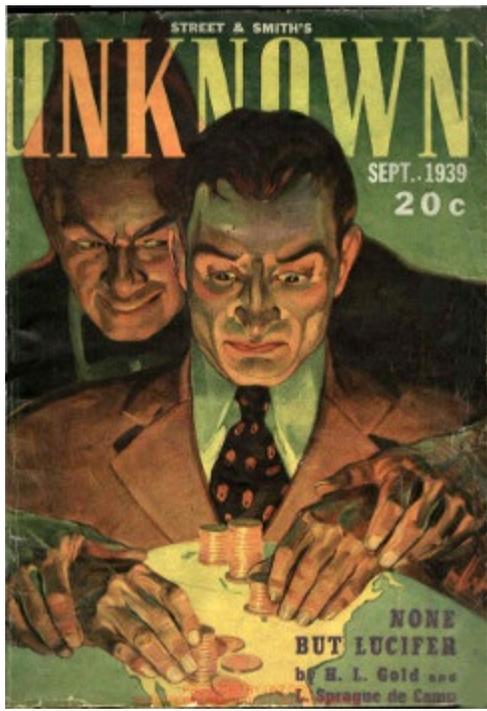
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World's Pharaoh

By

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Peter Manx Annihilates Time and History as He Streamlines the World of Yesterday

Pete Manx had a headache. The headache's name was Dr. Horatio Mayhem. The worthy doctor was driving customers away from Pete's lucrative concession in Funland.

"Shoot till you win!" Pete bawled. "Knock over a milk bottle--it's easy. Prizes for one and all! You can't lose!"

Mayhem's small, scrawny figure bobbed about excitedly.

"A word with you, Mr. Manx. I must have a word with you."

"Shoot till you win!" Pete squalled, and to Mayhem: "Go 'way. You bother me. *Prizes for--*"

Mayhem took out a wallet big enough to choke a politician and began to count out vast quantities of currency. Pete gulped, stared at the money, and beckoned to his shill.

"Take over, Joe. I'll be back. C'mon, Doc." His squat form vaulted the counter; he collected Mayhem and the dough and led the jittery man of medicine to a quiet spot behind the booth. "Now spit it out. What's eating you?"

"I need your help," Mayhem said. "I'm in trouble."

Pete's gaze clung lovingly to the greenbacks. "Yeah?"

"I'll pay you well. Just for a little bit of help. Not much. A--an experiment--"

"Whoa!" Pete said, backing away. "You tried that on me before. Sending me back to Rome in your time machine. Landing me in a circus full of starving lions. Ixnay. Not for me. Not twice."

"It isn't a time machine," Mayhem snapped. "There's no such thing. My device simply sends your consciousness into the central time-hub around which time itself revolves. You didn't travel in time. Your mind merely took possession of the brain and body of a Roman citizen."

Pete laughed bitterly. "Yeah. Me and your pal Professor Aker. I still think it was a dirty trick--sending us both back in time like that."

At mention of Aker's name Mayhem had turned slightly green. He hesitated, licked his lips, and finally said:

"Uh--that's just the trouble, Pete. The professor and I got in a slight--er--argument, and he contended my device was a fake. Claimed it was hypnotic in nature. Ha! I--well--I had occasion to prove my point."

"Oh-oh," Pete whistled. "I bet you sent the prof back to Rome again."

"Not exactly," Mayhem denied, looking worried. "Egypt was his destination."

"A nice place for a vacation. I hear the weather's swell there. Pyramids and stuff, huh?"

"Egypt was a slightly different place under the Pharaohs. A bit--er--savage. The professor is a rather impractical man, I fear. A man of science, true, but he hasn't sense enough to come in out of the rain."

"Does it rain in Egypt?" Pete asked blandly, and, without waiting for an answer, went on: "Your machine works both ways, don't it? Why don't you bring the prof back?"

"I can't" Mayhem moaned. "Time is curved, like space, and I should be able to bring him back. But the device had a breakdown. It'll take weeks to repair. I can still send minds into the past,

but I can't bring them back. Not till I've got a certain part that has to come from London, and even then it'll take time. Aker got into all sorts of trouble in Rome, you know. He may be killed before I can get him back from Egypt."

"Well, I won't rat," Pete grunted. "And they can't hand a murder rap on you without a stiff. Cheer up."

"But everybody knows I experimented on Aker. They're asking questions already. Pete, you got along all right in Rome. I want you to go back to Egypt, find Aker, and keep an eye on him till I get the machine fixed."

"Glad to have seen you again," Pete said. "Good-by."

"You won't do it?"

"Do I look like I just got out of the ninny-bin?"

"Ninny-bin?"

"Booby-hatch. Nut-house. Don't you understand English?"

"Yes," Mayhem said with wasted irony. "I understand English. And I'll pay you five thousand dollars to help me out."

Pete shook his head slowly. "I could use that *dinero*. I could go to New York and open a concession at the Fair. Cripes, if it was anything else--but it's suicide. Not for little Pete. Sorry, Doc."

Pete turned away. Then he stopped. Something was digging painfully into the small of his back. He stood perfectly still.

"I didn't think it of you, Doc," he said reproachfully. "Pulling a rod on me. It ain't friendly."

"You," Dr. Mayhem observed, "are going to--er--take a ride with me. The gun will be in my pocket. If you make any outcry I shall shoot you in the most painful spot I can. If you keep quiet, you'll get five thousand dollars eventually."

"It will buy me a swell tombstone," Pete said thoughtfully.

"Shut up," Mayhem requested. "And start walking."

It was not a nice-looking laboratory. Pete wondered why scientists always had a lot of wires and cables and such stuff around. Probably for a front, he decided. As a barker of some years' standing Pete knew the value of a good front.

Right now he sat uncomfortably in a metal chair, straps holding him firmly by wrists and ankles, and wondered when the Doc was going to turn on the juice. Mayhem was doing horrible things to a switchboard in the corner. Pete shuddered and said wistfully:

"It ain't right. You know it ain't, Doc."

"Shut up."

"I'm a free citizen of the United States of America. I know my rights and you can't--"

"You'll be a citizen of Egypt as soon as this tube warms up. Damn that rheostat."

Not knowing what a rheostat was, Pete did not answer. Finally he burst out:

"Hey Doc! I just remember I can't talk Egyptian."

"You won't have to," Mayhem explained. "I've improved my device since I sent you to Rome. When your mind enters the brain of an Egyptian, it will automatically hook up with the memory center. That's as well as I can explain it to you. I don't quite understand it myself. You'll be able to talk and understand Egyptian, all right."

"It ain't right," Pete said glumly. "You can't get away from that."

Mayhem attacked an insulator. "Now remember what I told you. I can't bring you or Aker back for weeks. It'll be your job to find him and keep him out of trouble till I get my repairs done. All set?"

"No!" Pete cried in a heartfelt manner.

Bang!

Mayhem had pressed a button. Things began to happen with unpleasant promptitude. Pete's inner consciousness suddenly fled from his unprepossessing body and was projected into another time-sector.

Once, to his regret, Pete Manx had sampled a curious concoction made chiefly of tequila, vodka, and absinthe. His sensations were rather similar now. Only the elevator was spinning around instead of rising and falling. Then he decided it wasn't an elevator. It was his brain, revolving rapidly inside his throbbing skull. Pete had never heard of centrifugal force, but he was worried about how long his abused brain would be able to hang together.

He opened his eyes and looked at the biggest room he had ever seen. Towering pillars upheld a roof that seemed slightly under a mile high. There was a throne on a raised dais at one end of the room. A bearded man sat there, on his head the Uraeus crown of Aegyptus.

Cheops, the Pharaoh, plucked a flea from his whiskers, examined it intently, and finally disposed of the unhappy creature in no uncertain manner. Then he looked up and said:

"We have little patience with blasphemers. This Theth-Aton must die."

Pete discovered that the room was filled with a multitude of people, both male and female, wearing garments he could not help considering slightly indecent. There was a time and place for all things, including strip-teases. Pete blushed and dropped his pike.

"Brainless offspring of a crocodile," said a gigantic Nubian standing near by. "You're a fine soldier."

"Soldier?" Pete gulped, realizing he was speaking Egyptian.

"One of the Pharaoh's own guard," said the Nubian. "Now pick up your pike and keep quiet or I'll impale you myself."

Pete recovered his weapon and took his place in the line of stolid guardsmen who lined the frescoed walls. He stared at Cheops and at the chained malefactor who stood before the dais, held by two brawny Egyptians.

The malefactor was lean and scrawny as an eel, and a dirty white beard drooped disconsolately over his bare chest. He was tastefully clad in a loin-cloth and a golden earring.

"Blaspheming the gods is a dangerous thing," Pharaoh remarked.

"He made false prophecies," somebody put in. "He said there *were* no gods."

"That's bad," Pete said to himself. "A man ought to learn to keep his mouth shut."

"Well, throw him in a dungeon," Cheops decided. "He shall die at the full of the moon. In some interesting and unusually painful manner."

Then Pete got a shock. The malefactor, Theth-Aton, began to bawl:

"You can't do this to me! I'm not an Egyptian! It's a frame-up--"

Theth-Aton was talking English!

"Professor Aker!" Pete cried, forgetting his caution. "Hey, Prof! Is that you?"

Aker recognized the phraseology, if not the voice, of his former companion in Rome. He whirled.

"Pete! Pete Manx!"

"Oh, for Set's sake," Cheops growled. "What in the name of the sacred ibis is this? Bring that man forward."

Pete was escorted firmly toward the dais. The Pharaoh scrutinized him carefully.

"Who are you?"

"Uh--Puto-Manes is the name," Pete improvised. It didn't sound very Egyptian, but was the best he could do at short notice.

"Do you know this criminal?"

"Sure. He's an old buddy of mine."

Cheops rubbed his nose. "Indeed."

"Yeah. He ain't an Egyptian. He's an American citizen. You see--" Forthwith Pete rashly launched forth into an explanation of Dr. Mayhem's experiment. When he had finished there was a dead silence.

"Mad as a camel," Cheops remarked at last. "We'll see how a little hard work affects you. By rights you should be skinned alive for not falling on your face before the throne. But in view of your evident madness we shall be merciful. Set him to work on the Pyramid. The audience is ended."

Pete was dragged away protesting. Professor Aker was also led off, presumably to a dungeon. Cheops continued investigating the fauna in his beard.

Pete Manx sweated and toiled in the hot African sun. One of a group of two hundred, he was pulling a gigantic block of stone over greased rollers. He panted and puffed wearily, with one eye alert for an overseer.

"Manx on a chain gang," he groaned. "I'll never live it down. Cripes!"

"Put your back into it, Puto-Manes, thou lazy relative of a decayed hippopotamus," said an overseer, flicking a lash painfully on Pete's back.

A tall, sour-faced slave beside Pete, who name, it seemed, was Aha, whispered:

"Keep your face down when you talk. You're new here, aren't you?"

"I've been yanking at that pebble for ninety-seven years," Pete said bitterly.

"What were you before? A Puoni? One of the Red Sea races?"

"A shavetail," Pete said, remembering the Nubian's words, in the Pharaoh's throne-room. "And a sucker."

"Your words are strange," Aha murmured. "But *I* was a priest of Ra."

"Ra?"

"Ra."

"You sound like a college punk at a football game," Pete observed, but Aha, not understanding, merely smiled in a friendly fashion. The conversation continued. Pete learned, finally, that Ra was the chief god of Egypt, that Aha had been fired from his job for taking bribes too openly, and that the hierarchy of priests didn't like Cheops.

Peter had an idea. "And you're a priest?"

"*I was.*"

"I mean you still got the ear of the main guy? The--well, high priest?"

"If necessary. But he can't and won't help me."

"Well," Pete said, "maybe you can. There's a lot of slaves working on this pyramid, ain't there?"

"Thousands. They are like the sands of the Sahara in number."

"Swell! Now listen--here's my idea...."

Some time later they brought Pete Manx before Cheops again. Pete was distressed and angry.

"Hey, what's the idea of this!" he demanded, rattling his chains. "You said you wanted to talk to me."

"I do;" Cheops smiled, "and I will. After that you will die very painfully. Because of you, all my slaves are squatting on the Pyramid and refusing to work."

"It's a sit-down strike," Pete explained. "We want fair hours, better food, and pay."

"What you'll get," said Pharaoh, "is skinning. After that we cut off your eyelids, smear you with honey, and leave you pegged out on an ant-hill. You slaves are getting above yourselves. You seem to forget that I am a god."

"Okay," Peter said stubbornly. "You're a god. And I'm boss of the Pyramid Union. I'll compromise if you will."

"Take him away and skin him," Cheops ordered. "Then shoot arrows at the slaves till they resume work."

Soldiers seized Pete. His heart sank. Thinking faster than he had ever done before, he wrenched free and cried:

"Hey! Hold on a minute! Gimme a chance. I wasn't trying to stir up trouble. I was just trying to

get a word with you, and this was the only way I could do it."

Cheops fingered his beard. "Say your word, then, and begone."

Pete stood silent. His tongue felt dusty. There seemed nothing at all to say. In this crucial moment his wits deserted him. How could he possibly induce Pharaoh to change his mind?

It just couldn't be done. And that meant--the ant-hill. An unpleasant death. Pete felt very sorry for himself. He was too young to die, he thought. Sadly he remembered his concession at Funland, his years spent barking and shilling, the new derby he had bought recently and not yet worn, the concession at the New York Fair that he could never start now...

Lightning struck. Pete's jaw dropped. Into his mind a blinding flash of inspiration had penetrated.

"Well?" Cheops asked impatiently.

"I got a proposition to make you," Pete burst out. "Why let the contractors gyp you out of your eye teeth and waste time building a pyramid just for the looks of the thing? What good is it?"

"It is to be my tomb," Pharaoh said. "Skin him."

"Hey, hold on! Why wait till you're dead to be glorified? Why not use the Pyramid as the base for a--a World's Fair in honor of yourself? The biggest celebration that ever hit Egypt or anywhere else. People will come from all over, and the gate'll be tremendous. Build an Aquacade in the Nile--put a Perisphere beside the Pyramid--feature a Little Egypt--a Dude Ranch--all in honor of Cheops!"

"Take him--" Pharaoh began, and then paused. His dark eyes snapped and sparkled. Thoughtfully he fingered his beard.

"Tell me more of this," Cheops said.

When a Pharaoh did anything, he did it in a big way. And Cheops, having fallen hook, line and sinker for Pete's scheme, provided the barker with all the resources of Egypt. It didn't matter that from the Middle Kingdom to the Delta the land was groaning beneath burdensome taxes. Cheops simply slapped on a few more, and, at Pete's suggestion, introduced a sales tax. Grain and wheat took a sharp rise. Property values increased. Shipmasters grinned in their beards and spoke of prosperity being just around the Delta.

"Advertising does it," Pete told Cheops. "You gotta let the world know about this."

Pharaoh gave orders. His armies in foreign lands were provided with huge sheets of papyrus, which they plastered through foreign kingdoms. Messengers and couriers raced about the Mediterranean bearing tidings of Egypt's fair. Cheops proclaimed a year's amnesty. During that year all men might come in peace and view the wonder of the age, the World's Fair.

"What a gate!" Pete chuckled, looking into the future. "You'll clean up. I mean--your treasury will groan beneath golden burdens."

"It had better," Cheops said. "Or I'll skin you regardless. Anyway, it isn't the money so much as the fame. All will realize I am the greatest king since history's dawn."

Pete got the proscribed priest Aha paroled and enlisted his aid. He also tried to pull political

wires in favor of the unhappy Professor Aker, but Pharaoh was adamant.

"Our word, once given, is law," he declared. "Theth-Aton must die, as I ordained. I advise you not to speak of it again."

For a while Peter suffered the monarch's displeasure, but by dint of inventing a simple insecticide and applying it to Cheop's beard, he was able to bask once again in the latter's favor.

"The lousy old goat," Pete growled to Aha in private. "I'd like to have him on the Bowery for ten minutes. He wouldn't last long in Hell's Kitchen."

"You blaspheme," Aha said reprovably, though not without a sour smile. "However, it is true that the priests don't like the airs Cheops gives himself. Being a god is all right, but it can be carried too far."

Pete snorted. "I'm building a whole World's Fair for him, and what's my rake-off. He lets me live. And if I fall down on the job I'll be skinned alive. What kind of a deal is that?"

Aha considered. "Puto-Manes, I may be able to help you. The priests are powerful here. If you wish to speak with this Theth-Aton, I can, perhaps, arrange it."

As a result of this conversation, Pete was conducted the next night into an underground passageway, through a labyrinth of secret tunnels, and into the dungeon where Theth-Aton was imprisoned. Aha, bearing a torch, stood guard. Pete hastily deposited some food and drink he had brought, and roused the sleeping captive.

Professor Aker was in bad shape. He looked like a skeleton. But he sat up quickly, rattling his chains, and stared at Pete.

"Manx! Thank God you've come. Get me out--it's been hell here."

Pete was oddly touched.

"Can't do it," he said shortly. "Your chains are riveted on, Prof. Here's a file, though. It'll take time, but keep working."

Aker groaned. Pete sat down in the filthy straw and told him everything that had happened.

"So that's that," he finished. "I'm okay for a while, but I can't get you out of stir. Unless you can help."

"Me help?" Aker asked bitterly. "How?"

"Cripes, you're a scientist," Pete protested. "You ought to be able to figure out something. I can get you anything you want, almost."

"I haven't the materials," Aker said desperately. "I can't make a gun. I can't even make a battery. There's no zinc--not in this barbarous age."

"Can you make poison gas?" Pete suggested.

"Without electricity? It can't be done."

"If you only had electricity--" Pete pondered. He looked up as Aha called softly. "Okay, Aha. What a name!" he confided to Aker. "But he's a right guy. Now you just sit tight and use that file. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Bring some more food," the Professor said sadly.

"Sure," Pete nodded, and peered closely at the prisoner's beard. "I'll bring some insect-powder, too."

Scratching himself in a distraught manner, he hurried out.

Not for nothing had Pete studied closely the blurbs on the New York Fair. He knew the exhibits and attractions by heart. And he set to work to bring them to life in Egypt.

Not all were practical. Some were impossible for one reason or another. Gardens on Parade fell flat. Cheops spoke scornfully of flowers. Pete suggested bull-fights instead. Toreadors went into training.

The House of Jewels was another lemon. Pharaoh did not look with favor upon the idea of exhibiting his treasures to the common herd. Moreover, some of the jewels were sacred. The priests had their own treasure, but they said they weren't interested if the king wasn't. It was the amusement center that roused Pete to heights of genius.

After setting the engineers to work on the Perisphere that would rise beside the Pyramid-Trylon and be equipped with a scenic railway track, he returned to the Nile, had the crocodile and hippopotami cleared out, and went to work. There were casualties, of course. The crocodiles saw no reason for leaving their homes. They stuck around and ate the slaves. This distressed Pete so much he took to riding a camel about the fair grounds.

It was impossible to create an Aquacade in the river itself. The supply of swimmers wouldn't have held out, for one thing. Pete had a vast swimming-pool excavated, filled through a canal leading to the Nile, and stationed guards to keep out the crocodiles.

The performers practiced day and night, under the supervision of Aha, who showed unexpected agility in the water. But presently a herd of hippopotami discovered the pool and it took weeks to drive them out.

Pete re-invented musical instruments. He successfully constructed drums, cymbals, harps, flutes, and even metamorphosed a trumpet into a cornet, but, to his disgust, found himself unable to develop a saxophone. But this was, perhaps, just as well.

Several orchestras came into being. Surprising talent was unearthed. One youth showed signs of developing into a semi-prehistoric Benny Goodman, and his swingy cacaphony started a jitterbug craze that nearly got Pete into trouble with the authorities. Such goings-on were either witchcraft or madness, it was contended, and Egypt would be a laughing-stock.

Pete built a Parachute Jump, using an obelisk for an axis, which was a tremendous success. He tried a Dude Ranch, which closed for lack of business. The Seminole Village, where brawny Egyptians wrestled with crocodiles, attracted children only, for a while. Later word got round that occasionally the moppets were falling in and being devoured by the crocs, and after that Pete had to hang out S. R. O. signs.

He made a Stratoship, which killed a surprising number of people until Pete took the precaution of strapping them in. And he planned a Sun Valley of snow sports, which drew vast crowds. There wasn't any snow, of course, but polished marble ramps took its place, and toboggans, sleds, and ski-jumpers were risking their necks on it.

But Pete's greatest triumph was in the culinary line. He introduced the hot-dog and the

hamburger. Both proved extraordinarily popular. Due to a misconception, a great number of canines were slaughtered at first.

Meanwhile Pete was racking his brains for some way to save Professor Aker. The unhappy scientist's demise was scheduled for the formal opening of the Fair, when a large number of criminals would be killed. It was only by accident that Pete happened to remember something he had read about the Zoological Wonders show and its marine marvels at the New York Fair.

He was immediately inspired to activity. With the aid of Aha he sent forth men on secret errands. When they had returned successful, he went down to Aker's dungeon and interviewed the professor again.

"It might work," Aker said doubtfully, after Pete had explained. "After all, it works at the New York Fair."

"It's got to work," Pete snapped. "Lord knows when Mayhem will get his machine fixed. And if my plan don't go, you're sunk. I can't do it alone, anyway. I'm no scientist. You tell me what to do and I'll do it."

"The priests approve," said Aha, who was also present. "If it succeeds, they will support you both and reinstate me. They will help insofar as possible."

"And we got to hurry," Pete said. "We only got a week."

"Well," Aker pondered, "let's take the throne first...."

The fair opened with a bang. Incredible throngs came, saw, and were conquered, amazed, and delighted. They wrecked their nervous systems on Pete's hellish amusement devices and did shocking things to their stomachs with his weird foods. They skied and tobogganed and fell off sleds, got friction-burns on the slides, roller-coasted through the Perisphere, gaped at the Aquacade, shagged and trucked and swung to music both sweet and hot, and finally clustered in the huge throne room for the big event--the slaughter of the malefactors.

Despite the size of the great chamber, only a portion of the multitudes could crowd in. Pete was among these. So was Aha, and a sly-looking old fellow who was the high priest of the Sun-god Ra.

"All set?" Pete whispered to Aha.

The other nodded. Here and there about the room priests were distributed, and Aha made a covert signal to them. And now a hidden orchestra played "Ra Save the Pharaoh," and Cheops appeared and took his place on the throne.

The prisoners were dragged in, fully fifty of them, scrawny, miserable wretches who looked ready to welcome death as a relief. Among them was Professor Aker. Pete waved at him.

"Now for the slaughter," Cheops said, with all evidence of satisfaction. "We'll start, I think, with a little dismemberment."

A leather-aproned, half-clad giant approached and dragged one of the shrinking prisoners erect. By some awful chance, it was Professor Aker. The man of science yelled mightily for aid. The giant gagged Aker by the simple expedient of stuffing the prisoner's beard into his mouth.

Pete whistled softly. The high priest took his cue, strode forward, and held up a warning hand.

"Hold!" His great voice bellowed out, filling the throne room. "Hold, Pharaoh! In the name of Ra!"

Cheops' small eyes blinked warily. "Well?"

"I bear a message from the Sun-god. He sayeth this: 'Free the prisoners!'"

The Pharaoh remained motionless for a dozen heartbeats.

"It is not the wont of great Ra to speak in matters temporal," he said finally.

"I, high priest of Ra, bear his word. Even Pharaoh must obey."

"Is it so?" Cheops asked with deadly softness. "Now I think you are lying. There are prophecies and prophecies. Some are true. Some are not. Why has not Ra spoken of this before?"

"Do you question the voice of the god?"

For answer Cheops nodded to his guard. The brawny giant took a firm grip on his sword and hoisted Professor Aker erect.

"I call on Ra!" the high priest shouted. "Judge between the Pharaoh and your servant."

Simultaneously a man behind the throne-moved swiftly. A leathern cord whipped about Cheops' waist and bound him tightly to the ornate chair. Over the room a hushed stillness fell.

"What blasphemy is this?" Cheops snarled. So swift had been his captor's movement that few had seen Pharaoh fettered. But the leathern thong was pitifully weak—for a keen knife gleamed now in Cheops' hand.

"I call on Ra!" the high priest roared again. And simultaneously the Pharaoh screamed, and the knife fell clattering to the stones.

Cheops' body arched and strained convulsively. His hands tightened on the arm-rests of the throne. His face was a mask of agony.

"Judge!" the priest shouted, his eyes upturned.

Pharaoh fell back, sweating and choking. In the paralyzed silence his voice fell with icy clarity.

"Slay me this priest!" he thundered.

His last word was lost in a hoarse scream. Once more his body arched against the restraining strap. He wriggled and squirmed like a hooked fish. And he yelled bloody murder.

But the imperial guard was roused now. They rushed forward in a body, pikes raised. Pete's dulcet voice rose.

"Give 'em hell, boys!" Mr. Manx roared.

The priests scattered about the room went into action. They whipped out curiously-shaped contrivances and fitted them over their mouths and nostrils. From small bags they withdrew, glittering spheres and smashed them on the floor. Instantly a choking, acrid odor filled the chamber.

Pete, too, had donned a mask. He snatched a pike from a spitting, gasping guardsman and smashed the man over the head with it. Aha, too, was busy, but as he had forgotten his mask,

he didn't last very long. In the midst of the mêlée the high priest stood unmoved, his dignity somewhat marred by his gas mask.

Cheops was still screaming shrilly. Pete's smile was maliciously appreciative as he glanced at the throne.

The battle did not last long. The soldiers were speedily rendered unconscious. Great fans cleared the atmosphere. And the multitude paused in their flight and waited, ready to depart again at the first sign of hostility.

"Extinguish all lights," the high priest bade. This was done. In utter darkness the great voice went rolling on. "Ra, Lord of Egypt, Thou whose dwelling is the life-giving Sun, judge now between Pharaoh and thy servant."

Simultaneously blinding, dazzling light blazed through the room. It came from a globe suspended near the ceiling. It was too bright to look upon, and with a stifled cry practically everybody in the room fell on their faces.

A roaring, distant voice thundered:

"Pharaoh must obey my priest!"

The high priest turned to Cheops, who lay lax in his throne.

"Will you obey your god?"

Cheops strove to speak. Pete, standing behind the throne, pressed a lever and involuntarily the Pharaoh yelped.

"Yes," he cried hastily. "I'll obey."

"Will you free these prisoners and bow to the rule of Ra's priests?"

"I--yes!"

"Swear it by Ra!"

There was utter silence. Cheops gritted his teeth. He drew a deep breath, and then met Pete's eye. Pharaoh deflated visibly. "Yes," he muttered. "I swear it--by Ra!"

Bang!

Pete Manx opened his eyes and looked at Dr. Mayhem. He was back in the laboratory. Ancient Egypt, Cheops, high priest and Aha--all were gone. Pete clutched his aching head, rose unsteadily, and demanded a drink.

It helped. He steadied himself in his chair and regarded Mayhem closely. The doctor had a black eye.

"Where'd you get the mouse?" Pete demanded. Then, as a thought recurred to him: "Where's the prof? Is he back?"

Mayhem gingerly touched his eye. "Er--yes. Professor Aker arrived back half an hour ago. I started my machine as soon as I'd finished my repairs. What happened?"

"Didn't the prof tell you?"

"No," said Mayhem, again fingering his discolored eye. "He was--ah--somewhat unreasonable."

I fear he lost his temper."

"For two cents," said Pete. "I'd lose mine. First, do I get that five grand you promised me?"

"Of course. My check. Here."

Pete sighed. "Well, I can keep my temper for five thousand fish. And as for what happened--"

He explained. Mayhem listened, open-mouthed. And, finally, the doctor burst out with questions.

"Bombs? Gas bombs? What--how--"

"Tear gas. Ammonia. The prof told me how."

"But you can't make ammonia gas without electricity--"

"We had it," Pete grinned. "That's how we lit up the big bulb in the ceiling. And we had Pharaoh's throne wired up, too. A regular hot squat--electric chair to you, Doc."

"But--*how*? There were no facilities in Egypt for the development of current, were there? You couldn't have used static electricity."

"Doc," Pete said, rising, "I am going to use this five grand to start a concession at the New York Fair. Drop in sometime. I'll show you around the dump. There's one show called Zoo--Zoological Wonders you hadn't ought to miss."

Mayhem stared. "Eh? What do you mean?"

"They got some swell stuff there. Pandas and things. And," said Pete, starting for the door, "they also got an electric eel that gives off enough current to play a radio and run a toy train. If one eel can do that, Doc, two dozen of 'em can do--*pu-lenty*! I had those eels wired for business!"

[The end of *World's Pharaoh* by Kelvin Kent]