

Chapter 93 93

Shilah turned slightly on the bed, her brows arching due to the sun's reflection on her face. It should prolly be from the window.

She tossed again and let out a sigh when her hand touched the soft pillow.

"Mmm" she moaned tiredly.

Suddenly, something occurred to her - how did she get to her room? Hold on...

She fluttered her eyes open and gasped when she found herself lying on the King's bed, in the King's room! Whaaaaa???

She sat up immediately, her eyes dilating in shock. Sheshe slept in the King's room???

How possible???? Looking around in shock, she discovered she was actually the only one there. Where was the King? What just...What just happened???

The last she could recall, he had told her a story which brought her to tears, then hugged her and....Oh, no! She had slept off on his chest!

She gasped and covered her mouth with her palm. How on earth did this happen???

Why would she sleep off on his....

Goodness! She brushed her fingers into her hair again, imagining how the King must've laid her on the bed to sleep. What was she even saying?? It's possible he asked her to go to her room and she dizzily refused. What has she done???

"Oh, Shilah!" She shook her head frustratedly as she left the bed and just then, the door of the bathroom opened with the King walking out c

No, no. She really didn't want to see him.

Her heart summersaulted in her chest as she watched him walking with those authoritative steps of his - dressed in royal robe, his long hair perfectly packed and his boots hitting hard on the floor as he walked towards his table.

He spared Shilah a glance but didn't stop walking. And quickly, Shilah sprang from the bed.

"Gr.... Greetings, My King" she stuttered nervously, head bowed.

"Greetings to you too, Shilah. Trust you slept well?" His warm reply wasn't what Shilah had been expecting. ③

She lifted her head slowly to look at him, then lowered it again.

"Y...Yes, I did" she lied.

Yes, she lied because she couldn't even recall how she had slept off in the first place!

Dakota said nothing as he stood in front of his table and arranged some scrolls.

"Uhm.... My King" Shilah itched her her nape.

"I'm.... I'm so sorry. I mean, I can't even recall how I had slept off. Please, it wasn't intentional, My King. I had no idea I'd slept off on the bed. I'm really sorry".

King Dakota paused and shot her a stare, then let out a scoff.

"If I didn't want you on my bed, you'd have woken up in your room, Shilah" he turned back to what he was doing, leaving Shilah tongue-tied.

Uh.... does this mean he wasn't angry and had no problem with her sleeping on his bed? Oh....

"Go and freshen up, Shilah and return when you're done" he further said as he took a seat.

"I'll be needing your help here today".

Help? Shilah thought.

What help??

"Um....Okay, My King. I'll take my leave now" she bowed and started towards the door; but getting to the door, she paused and stared at him.

"Thank you, Alpha" she added with a genuflect and finally left, while the Alpha King stared at the shut door for a while. 7

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Queen Nosheba smiled as she watched Raksha fixing his belt in a haste, sweat all over his neck.

The room was so cold and the bed looked rough as a result of what had just happened.

"This is the perfect meal I needed for breakfast" Prince Raksha teased as he started fixing his buttons and Nosheba laughed. 3

"You're always a joker, you know?" She replied, giving that seductive smile at him.

She watched him dress completely, and when he was done, he went close and kissed her lips.

"Always sweet. You know I love you, right?" He cooed.

"Of course, I do. And I love you too" she smiled.

He pecked her hair and finally left the room.

As soon as he was gone and Nosheba alone in the room, she sprawled her arms and legs on the bed and chuckled out. Oh, Raksha.

Few seconds later, she heard the door opening and quickly sat up to have a look. Oh; it was Nivea, holding her child.

"Are you done bathing her?" She asked as she stretched out her arms to collect the baby.

"Yes, My Queen. It's all done" Nivea nodded and gave the calm baby to her.

Nosheba's heart blossomed, staring at the pretty girl in her arms. Hm. With each passing day, she was getting to develop a soft spot for her child and didn't have that deep hatred she had developed for her the day she was born. She might be a really terrible mother...but at least, she was developing a soft spot.

"My Queen" Nivea suddenly called.

"I like the plan you have with Prince Raksha, but I'm just scared for you. What if you get caught by the King? You know the penalty for adultery is death and you also know how cruel the King can be when betrayed. I wouldn't want such thing happening to you, My Queen".

Nosheba smiled as she placed her baby to lie on her shoulder.

"Dear Nivea" she began calmly.

"Your concern for me is alarming and I really appreciate that. But you don't have to worry dear, because I'm extra careful. Yes, I have plans with Raksha, but I also have my personal plans to make sure nothing goes wrong" she paused and kissed her daughter's face.

"And talking about my personal plans...." She continued.

"I think it's time I have intercourse with the King because in a few weeks time, I should be taking in again" she concluded with a smile. 5

Definitely, she should get it done today.

Getting to the room, Shilah took her bath, had a change of clothes and found something to eat. And when she was done, she went over to Dyani's room to check up on her.

Dyani had so much to discuss with her as she had wanted to know how the date went. And of course, Shilah didn't leave any place unturned.

As they talked about it, Dyani accompanied her to the King's room and had to stop when they got to the door.

"We'll see later then. Bye" Dyani said. ②

"Yes, thank you" Shilah gave her a parting hug and watched her leave.

Afterwards, she turned towards the door and awaited the guard's permission to go in.

King Dakota was on his usual spot, writing, when Shilah walked in.

"You're back" he muttered with his attention still on the scroll in front of him .

"Yes, Alpha King" Shilah genuflected close to him.

And for the next few minutes, the King was silent.

Shilah stood patiently as usual, just watching as he wrote neatly on the scroll. His writing was so pleasing to the eyes; she didn't even get tired of standing and staring.

"You said you know how to write, and read, right?" The King finally stopped and looked at her.

"Yes, Yes, Alpha" she nodded quickly.

"Good. Cause I'll be needing your assistance today - have a lot to cover up". He picked a big book from the table and handed to her.

"I want you to go to the fifty-seventh page, and write out the content from there, down to this script". He pulled out a blank script and handed to her.

"Okay, Alpha. Thank you" Shilah bowed and made to sit on the floor.

"What're you doing, Shilah?" She froze when she heard him ask, his hand touching his forehead.

"Come sit over here" he pointed to the seat facing his and Shilah smiled and went over to sit.

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For a long time, Shilah and the King were both silent as they just worked dedicatedly.

It gave Shilah so much joy knowing the King had chosen her to assist him with such task, and also realizing how privileged she is to know how to read and write.

Even the King could notice the excitement on her face and it puzzled him to know how humble she was.

The silence went on for a while, until suddenly, a knock was heard on the door.

"Who's it?" Dakota lifted his head to ask and the door went open immediately with one of his guards coming in.

"Sorry for the interruption, Alpha King; but someone's here to see you. Queen Chajsk". He informed.

Shilah stopped writing the moment she heard the name. Queen Chaska?

"I do not want to see her" the King muttered adamantly, returning his gaze to the scroll in front of him.

"I understand, Alpha King, but she said it's very urgent" the guard insisted and that held Dakota for a while.

Urgent?

He sighed and leaned back on his seat. ①

"Let her in" he finally gave the approval and the guard bowed and left.

Shilah tried to concentrate on her task but couldn't as her mind had become divided. What if the Queen gets angrier seeing her there? And what was the urgency she had? ②

Chapter 94 94

The door went open with Queen Chaska walking in. But instead of having that expected happy expression that the King had finally agreed to see her, she was looking all moody. And it got worst when she found Shilah there as well.

What?? Shilah at the King's table? Writing? Hold on...was she really writing?? No way!

Shilah could notice the clear surprise on her face as she couldn't stop staring at her. She looked really pale. Casually dressed and pale. It was obvious she's been going through a lot.

"Greetings, Queen Chaska" she lowered her head and said, and that was when Chaska realized the mistake she had just made.

She should've greeted the King already!

"Greetings, My King" She turned to Dakota and bowed, hoping it was not too late.

Her head was just occupied with the confusing thoughts of finding Shilah with the King. That was the least thing she had expected. And to think she was writing??? Someone like Shilah shouldn't know how to handle a book since she comes from a poor family. What is happening?

"Go straight to the point, Chaska. Cause I have to get back to work" the King's tone was strict as he rolled up the scroll in front of him and took out another.

Chaska gulped hard and for once, took her gaze away from Shilah.

"Uhm.... My King, I... I actually wanted to speak to you alone". She stated lowly.

Shilah stopped writing, and so did the King who turned to look at her.

"Whatever you have to say, Chaska, say it here" he answered plainly.

And as he glared into her eyes, Chaska could see nothing but hate in them.

How did it get to this point? The King who had been so loving towards her, suddenly despises her? And now, the new wife from the slum gets to be treated specially? What humiliation??

Shilah felt unnecessarily guilty as she lowered her gaze to the table and resumed writing. She was trying so hard to focus.

Chaska, having no option, decided to go on.

"Uhm...." Her gaze was fixed on the floor.

"First, I want to thank you for letting me in. Secondly, I really want to apologize for...."

"I don't want your apologies, Chaska" The King cut her off.

"Just go straight to the point".

The pain was like a stab on Chaska's face.

She glared hard at Shilah; this was all her fault. ①

Taking another gulp, she returned her gaze to the floor.

"I've decided to go to see my sister ... for a couple of days" she spoke out. ②

"Lady Cami from Lord Ryder's clutch".

For a minute, the King was silent and just worked on the letters in front of him. But, Shilah was interested. She wanted to go see her sister? It was obviously out of shame as she couldn't face her people anymore. But she wouldn't be able to stay long our there, would she?

Chaska on the other hand, was really hoping the King would approve her request because she really needed some space. The trauma was just becoming too much for her. First, she had to deal with the King's anger towards her, then last night.... 3

Seeing Shilah and the King play those games the previous night had torn her apart. Everything....she just needed some space away from the palace to clear her head.

"You can do whatever you want, Chaska. But make sure you don't stay more than five days" the King gruffed, his cold voice stinging

Chaska's chest.

"Y...Yes, My King. Thank you" She bowed, turned around and left.

Shilah noticed the deep breath the King had taken before resuming word. And as she studied his expression and attitude towards Chaska, it only reminded her of how dangerous she heard he could be when hurt or betrayed. And it made her hope she never gets to hurt or betray him to arise such anger. 5

Chaska sniffed and wiped the tear that rolled down her cheekbone.

Her hands were crossed below her chest as she faced the window and gazed outside while Gina packed up her bags.

No matter how hard she tried, the memories from the King's chambers just wouldn't leave her head.

Recalling how Shilah had been sitting close to him and helping him out, it was something she couldn't understand.

The pain cracked her heart and made her realize how much of a loser she had been in the past few days. She was suddenly losing it. What was happening to her? 1

"My Queen, I'm done" Gina said from behind and the tired Chaska turned to see her truly done with the bags.

"Thank you, Gina. You can take them to the carriage" she muttered and turned back to the window.

"Okay".

Gina picked up the bags and turned towards the door. But for a second, she paused and turned to face the Queen.

"My Queen, are you sure you don't want me to accompany you?" She asked, and for the next few seconds, silence was Chaska's only response.

"Don't worry about it, Gina. I'll be fine" she muttered with a deep breath.

Gina knew better than to argue with the Queen. So, with a bow, she turned around and left.

. HOURS LATER

Shilah and the King had been working for such long hours and although it was laborious, Shilah still saw it as an honor and felt happy.

Shortly, she noticed the King had stopped writing and was just staring at her. Yes, She could tell he was staring at her; she just couldn't understand why and didn't want to look either.

King Dakota, leaning his back on his seat and in a relaxed mood, couldn't help staring at the lady as she worked diligently.

It didn't even matter to her that she had been writing for so many hours without rest. Instead, she wrote

with that satisfying expression on her face.

"How do you feel, Shilah?" He suddenly asked, making Shilah stop writing as she looked at him.

"My.... My King?" She didn't understand.

"How do you feel.... enjoying this privilege of writing when you know others can't?" He explained more and a nervous smile touched Shilah's lips.

Dropping the inked feather on the table, she itched the back of her neck.

"Well.... My King, I've always felt lucky and... privileged. I mean, I don't think I've ever seen anyone from my class that can read and write just like me. So, it's a privilege". She answered with a warm smile that triggered the King.

He thumb was touching his bottom lip. And after a split second, he stood up.

"Come with me, Shilah; I think it's high time we took a break". His hands crossed at his back, he started towards the door. ①

A break? Shilah thought.

She stood up enthusiastically and followed him out of the room.

One of the guards from the door accompanied them, while the other remained there at the door. And as they walked down the hallway, the passing maids kept greeting them with so much respect and admiration.

Walking beside the King, Shilah felt so honored as usual.

And to notice.... he's been a little softer with her. Although, he was still cold and grumpy, but there was a softer side of him she's noticed, especially after the previous night.

She fiddled with her nails as she walked beside him like a new bride. And finally, they came out to the open and started towards the horse stables.

"My... My King, are we going out?" Shilah had to ask as they had gotten close to the King's special horse - white and had a royal scarf around it's neck.

King Dakota said nothing at first as he touched the horse and scrutinized It to be sure it was in good state.

"No. I'll be teaching you how to ride a horse" he finally said. And holding onto the collar rope, he started walking away with it. ②

While Shilah followed.

Chapter 95 95

Learning how to ride a horse - Shilah thought. Wow.

It had actually crossed her mind anyway to ask one of the guards to teach her as it had become too embarrassing for her - always riding with Pishan or Prince Raksha each time they were going out. She needed to learn herself and was glad she finally had a teacher. But to think it was the King..?

Urgh!

The King walked in front while pulling the humble horse with him, and Shilah followed behind, admiring his features. Well, each time she was with the King, she just couldn't help the admirations as he was always too good - looking. Broad chest, muscled shoulders. It was just too attractive.

They walked for a few minutes and stopped when they got to the big open field. Oh...

Some guards were actually there, practicing with swords, but the moment they saw the King, they all stopped and kept their heads bowed.

"Greetings, Alpha King". They chorused.

Still pulling the horse, King Dakota walked towards them, while Shilah followed at a slow pace.

"I want everyone out!" The King spoke out when he got close enough.

And without hesitation, the men bowed and ran out of the field.

Wow.

Shilah looked around, now realizing she was the only one left with in the field with the King. Although, there was a guard standing at the extreme - the same guard that had followed them from the room.

"Come on, Shilah" Dakota urged, and taking a hard gulp, Shilah we went closer to him.

Okay; Now, what next?

"Riding a horse may seem difficult, but it's actually the sweetest thing to do" The King began, while Shilah listened attentively and with keen interest.

"First, you need to act cool with the horse you about mounting. If you mount carelessly on a strange horse, you might end up getting kicked off to the ground". ③

He paused and surveyed something on the horse.

"Make sure you're following up closely, Shilah. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to let me know".

"Yes, Alpha King. Of course" she bobbed immediately, her enthusiasm getting heated up.

Then, the King continued.

"The first thing you do to your horse, is brush it". Using his palm, he brushed the soft hairs on the horse.

"This makes it feel good, and relaxed".

"Okay.." Shilah nodded attentively. And indeed, the horse neighed like it was being pleased.

"When that is done, you put on the saddle pad" taking the pad from the floor, he placed it above the horse's neck.

"You place it on the neck, brush it down the hair and place it round on the middle of the shoulder. Come on, come do it".

"Huh?" Shilah wasn't expecting that.

"This is a class, Shilah and if you've been listening, you should know what to do" he sounded rather strict. Shilah itched her neck.

"O.... Okay" she went closer and got hold of the saddle pad.

Recalling what the King had said, she brushed it down it's hairy neck before placing it on the middle of it's shoulder.

Thank goodness she was literate enough to know a horse's shoulder. ①

"Good" The King murmured when she was done and she stepped away.

"And now, to the next" he picked up the saddle blanket from the floor.

"You place the saddle behind the shoulder blade. Come on".

Uh-uh. Again?

Shilah went closer and collected the saddle blanket from him. Hold on; he just said shoulder blade.

"Uhm... Sorry, Alpha King, but where's the saddle blade?" The innocence on her face when she asked the question got the King staring.

He was nearly tempted to smile, but didn't anyway.

"Here it is. It's also known as the scapula" he pointed out the position to her and Shilah nodded and placed the blanket right behind it.

"Thank you, Alpha King" she bowed.

King Dakota simply nodded and went on.

"Next, you connect your girth to your saddle belt so you don't fall off while trying to climb" he took up the girth from the floor and crouched next to the horse's feet.

"I'll just do this myself. So, you watch carefully" he told her as he connected the girth to the belt and Shilah could recognize the girth to be the place where the feet is being placed.

"With this achieved, the next thing you do is," he paused and took the bridle.

"Bridling" he connected it to the horse's head.

"This gives you control of the reins. Watch carefully, Shilah".

Shilah doubled attention as she watched how the King fixed the bridle. It looked a little difficult.

"And now" he stepped back to peruse.

"Your horse is ready for you".

Shilah nodded agreeably.

"It looks so beautiful" she commented with a smile.

King Dakota went closer again and touched it's hairy neck.

"The next step is mounting your horse. Watch carefully, Shilah. First, you need to place your feet on the girth"

Shilah watched intently as the King set his leg, and touching the reins carefully, he climbed on.

"You need to be as gentle as possible 'cause if you roughly climb on a horse you're not familiar with, you might end up getting kicked off".

"Okay" Shilah nodded eagerly.

"After settling on it", he continued.

"Next thing to do is hold the reins carefully with both hands and this way"

Shilah watched the position of the King's hands on the reins.

"Come on; get on" he cocked his head to the side.

"Uhm....Okay". Shilah swallowed hard and using his aid, she climbed onto the horse, sitting in front of him.

Oh, goodness!

This was her second time sharing a horse with the King, but this felt different...

The King's cold hand was touching her waist as he made to hold the reins.

"To move the horse, you pull the reins gently" he spoke calmly, and due to how close he was, Shilah could feel his cold breath on her neck.

It sent shivers down her spine. And her breath hitched when the horse took a step and started moving.

Wow. They were finally moving.

"T.... Thank you, Alpha King" she said shyly, enjoying the ride in front of him.

It had been a great class.

Dakota said nothing as he controlled the horse that walked steadily and they attracted a lot of attention when they got out of the field.

Oh! Shilah felt shy; so so shy.

And when they approached the gate, she became confused.

"My... My King, are we riding out?" She asked, tilting her head a little.

And calmly, the King replied:

"Yes; Now, we're riding out". 16

Chapter 96 96

Hands on her waist, Nosheba had a small smile on her face as she turned left and right in front of the mirror.

Her long tight dress was hugging her body perfectly and brought out those killing curves in her.

"Tell me, Nivea; how do I look?" Her tone was confident as she gave a back view in the mirror.

The maid, Nivea, was standing behind her.

"You look stunning, My Queen. Words cannot even describe you" she answered, swelling all the enthusiasm Nosheba had.

She smiled and touched her hair.

"Hm. I'm so sure the King would be unable to resist me today. Can't wait to get this done". She muttered to herself. And that was where Nivea had to chip in.

"Uhm... The King isn't in his chambers" she informed.

"I saw him riding out with Shilah not long ago".

Nosheba flinched and turned quickly to look at her.

"Shilah?" Her face wrinkled up.

"Where were they riding to?"

"I have no idea, My Queen. But it had gotten the attention of everyone outside" Nivea enthused.

Nosheba twitched her lips to the side in annoyance as she turned back to the mirror. Shilah again?? Why was Shilah taking much of the King's time lately?? Why?? ②

Taking deep breaths, she tried to calm herself. No way was she going to let this ruin her mood or plans. ③

"He can go wherever he wants with her, he'll definitely return. And when he does, I'd be waiting for him" she consoled herself with that.

Shilah's hair ruffled in the wind and perturbed the King's face as they rode on the horse at a really slow pace. Well, it was the King's idea to make it that slow.

They weren't saying a word to each other but had their eyes busy, staring at the beautiful sight in front of them. Shilah was bedazzled at the beauty of the place and had no idea such places actually existed in the mountain. How did the King know of such? ①

Urgh! What was she even saying?? This was his Mountain!

Pulling the reins, King Dakota finally pulled the horse to a halt and that was when Shilah snapped out of her thoughts.

"This is far enough" she heard the King mutter as he stepped down from the horse.

And when she tried doing same, she almost fell but was lucky enough to get caught by the King.

"Oh!" She had gasped.

"Shilah! Be careful" the King urged.

With his hand wrapped around her waist, their eyes got locked for a second.

"S...Sorry, My King" Shilah quickly apologized and moved away from him.

She gave a quick glance at her dress to make sure it was still in good condition. And with that confirmed,

she took a proper look around.

A cold air hit hard at her the moment she turned, and it wafted her hair from her face to her neck. It was so... beautiful.

It was a very large field - had a small portion of flowers by the side and some trees and some heaps as well. The field was just too green and looked more like a relaxation center and Shilah wondered why she never heard of it.

"During our leisure time, my mother would bring me here" she suddenly heard the King say as he walked up and stood on the same path with her. ②

Shilah's heart skipped a bit, but she didn't turn to look at him.

"She'd bring me over together with a basket of fruits, cakes and sweets. And right there", he pointed to a tree afar.

"We'd sit, eat and play. Most times, she'd read or tell me a story".

There was a small smile on his face, but Shilah didn't need anyone to tell her it was an agonizing wistful smile.

"After she died", he went on.

"I continued coming alone for ten years, and each time I did, it was like a torment for me 'cause every single thing reminds me of her. I... I'd come over, cry my eyes out and found it so difficult returning home.

"But after ten years, I figured I had to stop and live pass the pain. So, I stopped coming. But the pains... They can never be taken away, Shilah. Never".

His words were really hurting Shilah badly; she had to bit her inner cheek to control herself.

Glancing at him, she returned her gaze to the field and stared at the tree he had been referring to.

"I'm really sorry, Alpha King" she muttered.

But no pain is above healing. I believe...if you set your heart to it, you definitely will overcome it".

The King was silent. Then, after a while, he heaved and started walking towards the flowers.

Shilah stood behind and watched him as he walked so morosely. The King was having too many pains on him. His people sees him as a cold ruthless King, but truth was; he was a cold dying King.

If only she could bring back the lively King he was once was. If only she could bring back that man at the market place, permanently to life.

Perhaps...if he had a son. Yes; if he had a son, it could get better.

Oh! She's been praying about that already! Praying for the Spirits to get one of his wives pregnant with a male child. And since they've always answered her prayers, she was seriously hoping they would again, this time around. ⑥

They've answered her prayers on making him sleep, making him eat. So, giving him a male child shouldn't be something difficult for them. Hopefully.

King Dakota got to the sparkling flowers and crouched beside it with a smile, and in the next few seconds, Shilah joined him.

"We planted these together" he said with an icy wistful smile as touched some of them. ①

"Can't believe they're still glowing and in good condition after so many years". ①

Shilah also admired them, noting how beautiful and sweetly their fragrance wafted in the air.

"They're beautiful, Alpha" she stated lightly.

The King pulled one of the flowers out and standing up, he admired it. Shilah stood up as well.

"This was her favorite color" he cooed.

Goodness! The pain was just too much on this man. His mother must've really meant the world to him - Shilah thought. ⑤

The King rotated the flower in his hand. He'd really missed coming over. And doing so that very day, made him feel so relieved.

"Unexpectedly, he took Shilah's hand and placed the flower in it.

"It should go well with your hair" his words were almost muttered. ②

"Come on; it's time to leave". He started walking away, while Shilah stood there in astonishment.

He gave her a flower!

She gasped and stared preciously at it in her palm.

"I pray you heal from this pain, Alpha King". ①

And enclosing the flower carefully in her palm, she turned around and went after him.

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The ride back to the palace was so different from the first as the King had gotten really cold and affected by the field. Memories of his mother had never made him feel so good. And most times, he wondered how he was possibly going to heal from it. But one thing was sure - he didn't want to die this way.

Riding through the gate, all eyes were on them as usual as the people stared at the King in surprise, and stared at Shilah in admiration. None of his wives has been this favoured by the King; none at all - the people thought.

Getting to the point he wanted, the King stopped the horse and got down from it while Shilah did same.

"You' should go to your room and rest. I'll call you when I need you" he spoke in a brisk, ignoring the guards that were running towards him already.

"My King!" Shilah called just when he turned to leave and of course, the King stopped to look at her. ④

"Thank you for the flower" she said.

The guard who had gotten to where the King was, could hear her. And with a nod, King Dakota turned around and left.

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He walked into his cold quiet room and the first thing on his mind was getting a shower and a quick rest - even if he doesn't sleep.

He leaned on his table, heads down as he tried calming himself. And just then, a knock was heard on his door.

"Who's it?" He asked, sounding rather disturbed. And the door went open with one of his guards coming in.

"Sorry for the interruption, My King" he bowed.

"But Queen Nosheba's here to see you".