



## Chapter 14



The days stretch on in Amen's absence.

I do not seek him this time.

Whether he is preoccupied with matters of the kingdom, lost in the weight of his own secrets, or avoiding me after what happened that morning—I do not know. And I tell myself I do not care.

I buried myself in the palace archives, surrounding myself with ancient scrolls that smelled of dust and secrets. The priests had always controlled what magic I could learn, carefully measuring out knowledge like precious drops of water. But here, away from their watchful eyes, I could finally drink deep from the well of ancient wisdom.

Blood magic fascinated me most. Not the dark rituals that some feared, but the pure connection between life force and divine power.

The scrolls spoke of those who could speak with the dead, who could walk the thin line between this world and the next. My fingers traced the hieroglyphs describing their practices, remembering how naturally the visions had come when I tasted Amen's blood.

Was that my true gift? Not just seeing the future, but bridging the gap between life and death?

Lost in these thoughts, I barely notice where my feet carry and almost missed the sound at first. A low moan, barely audible through the thick palace walls.

A groan. Twisted, agonized.

I snap my head toward the source—the quarters of Meritaten.

I freeze, my pulse hammering against my ribs.

Another sound came - this one unmistakably a cry of pain. It raised the hair on my arms, made my heart stutter in my chest. Not pleasure, not passion - this was agony.

Before I could think, my feet carried me toward her door. The guards stepped forward, crossing their spears to block my path.

"Let me through," I demanded, trying to sound more confident than I felt. "Something's wrong. She needs help."

"No one enters without permission," one guard said flatly. But I saw the fear in his eyes, saw how his hands trembled slightly on his weapon.

Another scream tore through the air - raw, animal, terrifying. The sound wrapped around my throat like ghostly fingers, choking the breath from my lungs.

"Please," I whispered. "She's suffering."

The guards exchanged glances but didn't move. Whatever was happening behind that door, they'd been ordered to ignore it. The realization made my blood run cold.

One of them catches my shoulder stopping me when I was just about to enter the room.

"Let her go."

The voice that interrupts us is smooth, commanding.

Heket.

I turn just as she strides toward us, her expression cool but sharp, her kohl-lined eyes unreadable. The guards stiffen at her approach, exchanging uncertain glances.

"Lady Heket," one of them begins, but she silences him with a single raised brow.

"You will let her leave."

Her voice cut through the tension like a blade, her usual sharp beauty hardened into something fierce and dangerous.

The guards hesitated, but Heket's authority was clear. They lowered their spears before stepping aside.

I barely have time to process what's happening before Heket grabs my wrist and pulls me away, her grip iron-strong.

"Come," she mutters, quickening her pace.

I stumble after her, struggling to keep up, my mind reeling. "Heket— wait, what's happening? Meritaten, she—"

"Not there," she hissed, already pulling me away. "You don't want to see what's happening in that room."

I tried to resist, but she was surprisingly strong. "We can't just leave her—"

"Yes, we can. And we will." Her voice carried an edge of desperation that silenced my protests. "Unless you want to share her fate."

My heart pounds as she leads me down the winding corridors,

further and further from the main quarters, past the murals of gods with unreadable expressions, past the golden braziers casting flickering shadows against the walls.

We do not stop until we reach the secluded courtyard at the back of the Golden House—a small space enclosed by stone columns, hidden from the prying eyes of the palace.

Only then does she release me.

Only then do I see the tension in her stance, the way her fingers twitch at her sides, as if restraining some deep agitation.

"What did you hear?" she demands, her voice a whisper of urgency.

I stare at her. "Heket, what is happening?"

She exhales sharply, running a hand over her face before looking at me with something almost like pity.

"Forget what you heard."

I blink. "What?"

"You need to forget it," she repeats, stepping closer, her eyes locking onto mine. "Whatever you think you heard—whatever you believe is happening—you must not involve yourself."

**End** *of*  
*The* **Chapter**