



Chapter 20



The sharp sting of the blade against my skin fades beneath the fire building inside me.

"You think you're special to him?" Heket's voice dripped venom. In the dim light, her beauty had turned sharp as a blade. "You think your precious magic will save you?"

The cold stone pressed against my back as her knife bit into my skin. But something strange was happening inside me - a slow burning that had nothing to do with fear.

A slow, unfamiliar heat coils in my belly, not from panic but from something far deeper, far darker. With every insult she spits, something inside me awakens.

"Heket," I kept my voice steady despite my racing heart. "This won't solve anything."

"Won't it?" She pressed closer, her grip painfully tight. "I've watched you swan around this place like you belong here. Like being his newest toy makes you better than the rest of us."

Her breath is hot against my face, her grip still tight on my wrist, the blade trembling slightly against my throat.

"He looks at you like you're different," she continued, pressing closer. "Like you're the one who'll finally save him. But you're nothing. Just another sacrifice waiting to happen."

Each word should have frightened me. Should have made me shrink back, make myself smaller.

The knife trembled against my throat, drawing a thin line of warmth.

Blood. My blood.

And suddenly, that burning inside me had a name: fury.

The realization hit me like temple bells at dawn - she wouldn't actually kill me. Couldn't. Even in her jealous rage, she knew what murdering another of Pharaoh's concubines would mean.

This was just theater. A desperate attempt to make me feel as powerless as she did.

But I do not tremble. I do not fear her.

She thinks I'm weak. She thinks I'm an easy target.

How dare she.

How dare this bitter, broken woman think she could intimidate me? I wasn't some helpless noble's daughter, raised on poetry and palace politics. I was supposed to become a priestess of Isis, touched by the goddess herself.

I felt the blood trickling down my neck, and something clicked into place. Power surged through me, ancient and familiar, like remembering a spell I'd always known but never spoke.

"You should be more careful with blood, Heket." My voice came out steady, cold as desert nights. "Or didn't anyone tell you what the priestesses of Isis can do with it?"

She faltered, uncertainty flickering across her face. "What are you-"

"Our blood is blessed by the goddess," I continued, feeling that power building with each word. "It can heal... or it can

burn like venom in the veins of our enemies."

Before she could react, I reached up and pressed my palm against the cut on my neck. The blood felt hot, alive with possibility. Then, moving faster than thought, I grabbed her knife hand by the wrist.

The effect was instant.

Heket screamed, jerking back as if struck by lightning. The knife clattered to the floor as she stared at her wrist in horror. Where my bloody fingers had touched her skin, an angry red burn bloomed like a curse made flesh.

"You—" she stammers, her voice shaking. "You filthy demon!"

The hatred in her expression deepens, but it is undercut by the unmistakable tremor in her voice.

I tilt my head, stepping forward slowly, savoring the way she instinctively flinches back.

"Perhaps you should be more careful who you threaten," I murmur, my voice cool and deliberate. "Priestesses of Isis practice real blood magic. And unlike your rotten words, Heket—our magic actually leaves scars."

The look she gave me then wasn't just fear - it was recognition. And then, without another word, she turns and flees into the night, disappearing down the corridor.

I watched her go, feeling strangely calm despite the blood still warm on my neck and hand.

Lifting my hand, I stare at my fingers, still coated in my own blood. The power is still there, humming beneath my skin,

Lifting my hand, I stare at my fingers, still coated in my own blood. The power is still there, humming beneath my skin, demanding to be acknowledged.

A shiver runs down my spine.

What exactly have I awakened? And why does it feel so... right?

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

A Chance Meeting



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