



Chapter 25



The Nile runs red.

Dark, shifting waters lap at the shore, thick as freshly spilled blood. A heavy silence lingers over the riverbanks, broken only by the occasional ripple in the current. The air is dense, heavy with the scent of iron and something older, something unnatural.

The scent of blood lingers thick in the air, cloying and heavy, sinking deep into my lungs with every breath I take. Yet, I do not choke. I do not falter.

I walk along the shore in silence, my bare feet sinking into wet sand, the cold water curling around my ankles with each step.

A lone figure stands in the shallows, the water curling around his ankles like grasping fingers. His presence is both eerie and mesmerizing—tall and imposing, with a powerful frame draped in a long, tattered black cloak that flutters in an unseen wind.

His hair is a deep, unnatural crimson, cascading in waves down his back, the color of dried blood beneath the moonlight.

By his side, a large black Pharaoh's hound pads silently through the shallows, its sleek form moving with predatory grace. Its glowing amber eyes are fixed on the distant horizon, as if waiting for something.

They walk together along the river's edge, their pace unhurried, their steps precise. The man moves with an effortless confidence, his bare feet sinking into the wet sand, yet leaving no footprints behind. The hound matches his stride, silent and watchful.

The three of us move in quiet harmony, the rhythmic crash of the river filling the void between us. The air carries no sound

the river filling the void between us. The air carries no sound beyond the water. No birds. No insects. No voices.

Somewhere beyond us, the world shifts. The darkness bends, revealing the towering columns of the Temple of Isis, the sacred shrine standing like a silent sentinel against the backdrop of the endless night sky.

We reach its entrance, but we do not step inside.

Instead, we stop in the shadows of its towering pillars, watching—waiting—as something flickers beyond the temple's great archway.

A vision.

I see myself, walking through the temple in the delicate silks. And him.

Amen.

I see us as we were on that fateful night—the night I first met him. The hushed conversation beneath the moonlight. The whispered secrets, the careful dance of curiosity and restraint.

The way his gaze lingered on mine, drawn not by duty, but by something neither of us could yet name.

The way he kissed me as dawn approached.

I watch it unfold as if through another's eyes, reliving every stolen glance, every breathless word exchanged in the sacred stillness of that night.

The memory is so vivid, so painfully real, that I almost reach out, almost step forward to relive it—

Then, finally, the red-haired man speaks.

"You can resist it all you want, little priestess... but you will not escape it."

His voice is deep, rich as wine, yet it carries an undertone of something more. A whisper of thunder before a storm.

I turn to him, my lips parting, but no words come.

"No matter the circumstances," he continues, tilting his head ever so slightly, "you will fulfill the fate the gods have carved into your very soul."

My throat tightens.

"And if I do not?" I whisper, my voice barely audible over the wind.

The man smiles, slow and knowing, a hint of amusement flickering in his crimson gaze.

"Then you will drown with him."

The temple, the river, the very air around me seems to pulse with his words.

"You cannot fight what the gods have ordained." The red-haired man's voice cut through the vision like a blade. "Your fate was sealed the moment you were marked by Isis."

"Who are you?" I whispered, though part of me already knew.

"A messenger. A warning." He smiled, and in that smile I saw eternity. "The young Pharaoh's curse grows stronger with each passing day. And you must embrace the power in your blood."

The hound growled, low and terrible. The sound made my bones ache.

"You wish to save your young Pharaoh from his dreadful fate?" he muses, stepping closer, the hound padding forward in tandem with him. "Then act, Neferet."

The air is suddenly thick, suffocating, the red haze of the river casting eerie shadows across his face.

"Strengthen your knowledge."

The Pharaoh's hound steps closer, its breath warm against my bare legs. Its presence sends a chill through me, an omen more powerful than words.

"Master your blood magic."

The temple's walls shimmer, hieroglyphs glowing to life—symbols of power, of sacrifice, of divinity and death entwined.

"Refine your skills. Become more than a mere priestess, more than a concubine who clings to the Pharaoh's touch."

The words slice through me like a blade, leaving something raw and exposed.

"You must become a force that even the gods themselves will acknowledge."

His smile fades, and something colder, darker, settles over his expression.

"What happens if I fail?"

Commented [Ma1]:

"Then you both fall." His voice carried the weight of prophecy. "Your bodies will dissolve into the Nile's embrace, your souls lost forever. There will be no peace for you, no weighing of hearts, no eternal rest. Only endless wandering in the spaces between worlds."

The images flash before my eyes—Amen, his body sinking into the Nile's depths, his golden mask shattering on marble floors, his soul lost to the dark.

And me, sinking beside him, our bodies turning to nothing but silt at the bottom of the river, our blood mixing with the water, swallowed by eternity.

"You will never reach the shores of Duat."

The weight of his words crashes over me, suffocating, unforgiving.

The shadows surge forward, wrapping around my vision like a drowning tide. The last thing I see is the red-haired man watching me, his smirk unwavering as he murmurs his final warning—

"Wake up."

A sharp gasp rips from my throat as my body jolts awake.

I bolt upright on the floor near bed, my heart hammering against my ribs. My breath is ragged, my skin slick with sweat. I clutch at my pounding heart, my mind reeling.

The dream lingers, vivid and haunting, its weight pressing down on me like a premonition.

I glance around my chambers, the dim light of early dawn barely spilling through the sheer drapes. The world feels eerily still, as if the dream has followed me into waking.

I can still feel the sand beneath my feet, still taste the iron in the air, still see those haunting crimson eyes.

I press a trembling hand to my forehead, trying to steady myself.

"Was that truly a message from the goddess?" I whisper aloud.

But deep down, I already know the answer. I have been warned. The path ahead is clear. If I wish to save Amen... if I wish to defy the cruel fate looming over us both...

Then I must be ready.

No more waiting. No more ignorance. No more fear.

I stand up straight near the bed, pushing away the weight of sleep. The stolen scrolls from the Temple of Isis remain where I left them, scattered across the cushions, their ancient texts glowing faintly in the soft morning light.

My fingers tighten.

I will learn the truth.

I will master the magic that flows through my veins.

I will not allow us to be lost to the Nile's depths.

I felt them, scattered across the cushions, their ancient texts glowing faintly in the soft morning light.

My fingers tighten.

I will learn the truth.

I will master the magic that flows through my veins.

I will not allow us to be lost to the Nile's depths.

The gods may have dictated this destiny... But I refuse to let them decide how it ends.

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

A Chance Meeting



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