



Chapter 32



The dream returns.

The Nile stretches before me, not the familiar deep blue but dark and tainted with blood. The air hums with ancient energy, and the stars flicker dimly against the night.

A red-haired man walks beside me, his stride effortless, a Pharaoh's hound at his side. Together, they move as if they've walked this path countless times before. I follow without hesitation.

The Temple of Isis looms ahead, its white stone gleaming in silver light. It feels distant and untouchable tonight. Then I see her—another me—seated on the temple steps.

This younger version of myself is engrossed in her studies, hieroglyphs illuminated by moonlight casting shadows on her face. She is untouched by prophecy and power, finding solace in knowledge rather than seeking might.

A pang of bitterness curls in my chest for the girl unaware of fate's impending grasp.

Then, the man speaks.

"The magic of Isis runs deep, older than empires, older than kings."

His voice is rich, steady, filled with certainty. It does not comfort me, nor does it frighten me. It simply is.

"It is a gift, and it is a burden. A power meant to heal, to protect, to bind what has been broken. And yet, even among those chosen by the goddess, few truly grasp what their blood carries."

The younger version of myself turns a papyrus, her fingers trailing over the inked symbols.

"Your blood carries far more secrets and strength than you could ever imagine."

A shiver crawls up my spine despite the warm night air. The hound lifts its head, ears twitching, alert to something unseen.

Time stretches, suspends, and then the world cracks apart.

The blood-stained Nile surges, the temple dissolves into shadow, and the dream disintegrates.

I wake with a gasp.

My chamber is dark, heavy with sleep and an unidentifiable weight. My heart pounds as fragments of the dream cling like mist. But the details elude me.

Only the words remain.

I rise from my sweat-damp bed and step onto the balcony's cool stone, inhaling deeply for clarity or relief. The sky remains silent; stars show their usual indifference.

Your blood carries far more secrets and strength than you could ever imagine.

The echoing words burrow into my thoughts, and I rub my arms to dispel the feeling of being watched.

The full moon casts everything in silver light, just as it did in my dream.

A whisper drifts up from below, blurring the line between dream and reality. I think it is the wind. A trick of my mind, still tangled in the dream's hold.

But then I hear it again. Low. Amused. Calling my name.

I look down.

Beneath the balcony, bathed in the soft silver glow of the moon, sits Amen.

He sits astride a magnificent horse, holding the reins of a second mount. Even in the moonlight, I can see the mischief dancing in his eyes, that familiar half-smile that makes my pulse race.

"Shall I steal away a beauty for a midnight hunt?" he asks, voice smooth, teasing. Then, after a pause, his smirk deepens. "Unless, of course, you're worried about betraying your master?"

The teasing lilt in his voice catches me off guard. After days of careful distance and avoided touches, this playful invitation feels surreal.

"My master?" I whisper back, fighting a smile. "And who might that be?"

His grin widens. "A very powerful man, I hear. Quite possessive of his things."

"Things?" I arch an eyebrow. "Is that what I am?"

"Never." The word carries a weight that makes my breath catch. "You're far too wild to be anyone's possession."

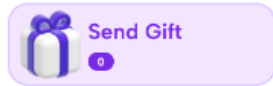
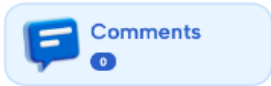
catch. "You're far too wild to be anyone's possession."

I wanted to refuse at first. But the night air feels charged with possibility, and the dream's shadows still cling to my thoughts.

"Give me a moment," I say, already turning to grab a cloak.

End of The Chapter

A Chance Meeting



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