



## Chapter 46



"Amen, no." My voice cuts through the silence, firm, unyielding.

He doesn't look at me. His gaze remains distant, unfocused, his fingers curled into tight fists at his sides. His entire body radiates exhaustion—defeat.

But I will not allow it.

I take a step forward, refusing to let him retreat into his own darkness.

"Everything that has been done for your survival, for the future of Egypt, will mean nothing if you simply give up now." He tenses at my words, but my voice rises, trembling with emotion, with something raw, something furious. "You cannot just brush this aside. You must find the strength to keep fighting—to the very end."

I step closer, so close that I can feel the heat radiating from his skin, can see the flicker of something unreadable in his eyes.

"And on this path," I whisper, my hand lifting, my fingers ghosting over the sharp line of his jaw, "I will not leave you."

I let my touch linger, let my thumb trace the edge of his cheek, let myself memorize every angle, every curve of his face.

"I will not allow you to die in suffering," I murmur, softer now, but no less certain. The pounding of my heart is deafening. My entire being trembles with the weight of the next words—the words that spill from my lips before fear can stop me. "Not the man I love."

His eyes widened, his breath caught somewhere between disbelief and something far deeper. He stares at me, stunned,

breathless.

I see it in his face—the war within him.

The conflict, the hunger, the longing, the fear. His entire body tightens, as if restraining himself, as if he does not trust what he will do if he moves, if he breathes, if he dares to speak.

His jaw clenches. His hands tremble at his sides. And then—slowly, hesitantly, he lifts one hand, his fingers brushing over mine where they still rest against his face.

Amen's eyes darken, his throat working as he swallows hard. When he finally speaks, his voice is barely louder than a whisper, rough and raw with emotion.

"I fell in love with you long ago." The words strike me like a sudden gust of wind, stealing the air from my lungs, sending a violent tremor through me. "Back when you were just the savvy, beautiful girl I met in the marketplace."

His gaze locks onto mine, unwavering, heavy with the weight of all that he has kept hidden.

"Even now," he murmurs, his voice hoarse, his fingers grazing over my skin—light, fleeting, hesitant.

As if he is afraid to touch me. Afraid of what it might do to him. Afraid of what it might mean if he lets himself fall completely.

"You are the only thing that soothes me." His thumb brushes the edge of my jaw, the warmth of his touch sending a shiver down my spine. "You hold me here, Neferet. You keep me standing in the world of the living."

I swallow, my breath catching in my throat.

His hand trails down my arm, slow, deliberate, like he is memorizing the very shape of me, grounding himself in the reality of my presence.

"Our magic—our resonance," he continues, his voice thick, heavy with meaning, "it is undeniable proof."

I can feel the heat of his body, the barely restrained tension thrumming beneath his skin. Then, his fingers tighten around my wrist, his grip firm but careful, searing into me like fire.

"I know now..." His forehead presses against mine, his breath warm against my lips, his voice so quiet I can barely hear it over the sound of my own heartbeat. "You are the one the gods have chosen for me."

A shudder rolls through me, a violent reaction to the depth in his voice, to the conviction in his words.

His other hand moves, slipping into my hair, tilting my face up to his, his breath mingling with mine.

His lips hover just above mine, and I swear, I can feel the battle raging within him—the desperate war between control and surrender.

"And no matter what happens," he whispers, his voice trembling, his fingers curling deeper into my skin, "I will never give you up."

His lips crash into mine, claiming me with a desperation that is almost painful. There is nothing hesitant about this kiss. No hesitation. No restraint.

It isn't just a kiss. It is fire. It is fate.

It is the collision of two souls drawn to one another beyond reason, beyond understanding.

His hands bury in my hair, pulling me closer, deepening the kiss until there is nothing left between us but heat and longing. My hands grip his shoulders, fingers digging into the taut muscle beneath, feeling the tension there, the war within him.

He kisses me like he is trying to brand me into his very existence.

Like he wants to pour every unspoken word, every suppressed emotion, into this moment.

I melt against him, pressing my body to his, needing more, needing to feel him completely. His hands slide down my back, pulling me flush against him, his breath ragged as he drinks me in.

And then, just as suddenly as it started, he stops.

Pulling away with a sharp breath, his forehead still resting against mine, his hands shaking as he grips my arms.

"We can't," he says, his voice raw, strained. "Not here. Not now."

Frustration coils inside me, but I understand. He is still afraid —afraid of losing control, of what his power might do to me. But this time, I refuse to let fear dictate our choices.

I reach up, cupping his face between my hands, forcing him to look at me.

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I reach up, cupping his face between my hands, forcing him to look at me.

"Amen," I whisper, tracing my thumb over his cheekbone, "we are stronger together. You know this. I know this."

His eyes darken, his hands tightening on me.

"I won't let you fall," I tell him. "I won't let you give up."

His throat bobs, something fierce and unreadable flashing in his gaze.

"I have some ideas," I finally say, a small, knowing smile playing at my lips.

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

A Chance Meeting



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