



For two days, I barely left my chambers. The scrolls given to me by High Priestess Merneith are my sole focus—particularly the ones on oneiromancy, the ancient art of dream-walking.

I pour over every word, absorbing the theories, the warnings, the methods. If what I suspect is true—if Isis is speaking to me through dreams—then I must learn how to listen.

The idea is both thrilling and daunting. Oneiromancy is a delicate and unpredictable art, one that even the most skilled priestesses struggle to control.

But if there is even a chance that I can use it to reach Amen, to uncover the truths that have been hidden from him, then I will try. I will master it.

Amen listens with intrigue as I explain my findings, his dark eyes flickering with curiosity.

"You truly believe you can enter my dreams?" he asks, watching me carefully.

I nod. "It may not work on the first attempt. My training in oneiromancy was never completed, and these methods are notoriously temperamental. But if the goddess is reaching out to me, then there must be a way to answer her."

He leans back, considering my words. "And you're certain this will be safe?"

I hesitate only for a moment before nodding. "It should pose no harm to either of us. And if it works, we might be able to learn something we wouldn't have discovered otherwise."

Amen exhales, rubbing a hand over his face before offering a smirk, though I can see the careful calculation behind his gaze.

"Very well, Sat net Aset. Let's see if you can invade my dreams."

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That night, I light incense in my chambers, letting the scent of myrrh and lotus fill the air as I prepared myself for sleep. My mind is steady, my breathing calm. I recite the ancient incantations, the words slipping from my lips like water, embedding themselves into my subconscious.

And then, I dream.

I find myself standing at the base of the Temple of Isis once more. The sky above is deep indigo, scattered with the distant glow of stars, their light reflecting off the water.

The Nile is red. Not with sunset, not with reflections, but with blood. It laps at the shore, staining the sand beneath my feet.

I do not flinch. I have seen this before. And then, a shadow moves beside me.

The red-haired man.

He is exactly as always—tall, regal, his sharp features illuminated by the flickering torches of the temple steps.

He watches me for a long moment before speaking.

"You're seeking knowledge beyond your reach." His voice is smooth, knowing. "Tell me, Neferet—do you truly believe you

can control dreams?"

I lift my chin, meeting his gaze. "I can try."

A low chuckle rumbles from him. "Then listen carefully."

He gestures toward the waters, and for the first time, I notice a child version of myself, playing with black Pharaoh's hound at the edge of the Nile. A small girl, her hair loose and wild, laughter spilling from her lips as running around the dog.

I shiver.

The red-haired man does not look at me, his gaze remaining fixed on the scene before us.

"Dreams hold power. They reveal truths that the waking world is too blind to see. The greatest oneiromancers of old learned how to navigate them—to walk freely through the minds of others. To do so, all they required was a single drop of their own blood, mixed into their sleeping draught."

I inhale sharply.

"Blood magic?"

He nods. "The dreamer must claim their own vision. If they do not, the dream will claim them."

I stare at him, at the shifting shadows in his eyes, and suddenly, I feel as if I am standing at the edge of something far greater than I ever imagined.

Then, just as quickly as it began—I woke up.

The sensation of something damp and warm against my

The sensation of something damp and warm against my cheek startles me. My eyes flutter open, adjusting to the dim light of my chambers, my heart still pounding from the remnants of my dream.

And then—I see him.

Amen is standing at my bedside, holding a small black puppy in his arms. The creature nudges its tiny nose against my cheek, its dark eyes curious and innocent.

A small black Pharaoh's hound.

My breath catches.

Amen watches me carefully, his lips quirking up into a faint smirk. "You looked troubled lately," he murmurs. "I thought perhaps a guardian might help."

I reach out, running my fingers through the puppy's sleek fur, still dazed.

The dream. The blood magic. The voice in the night.

Once again I can't remember its face. But I remember its words.

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

A Chance Meeting

Commented [Ma1]: