



Chapter 50



I feel how the dream was slipping out of my grasp, unraveling like a thread pulled too tight.

The more I tried to focus, the more chaotic everything became—the shadows shifting, the whispers growing into an unbearable crescendo, the weight of the unknown pressing in on me from all sides.

I clenched my fists, forcing myself to breathe, to steady my thoughts.

I had come here with purpose, with control. I would not let the dream bend to forces I did not understand.

"Enough," I willed myself to say, but the word came out weak, barely more than a breath.

The shadows did not heed it. They did not even hesitate.

Panic coiled in my stomach, and frustration flared hot in my veins. I could feel the magic inside me, feel it clawing at the edges of my mind, desperate to be wielded, but something blocked me—something held me back. I was powerless, and I hated it.

Amen stood before me, unwavering, his posture commanding even against the writhing figures closing in. But they were not stopping. They were not obeying.

A sharp rage tore through me, fierce and unrelenting. I refused to stand by. I refused to let this power consume him.

Without thinking, I stepped forward, out from behind his protective stance. The fury in my chest erupted in a single, searing command.

"Stop!"

The sound of my own voice rang like thunder through the hall, reverberating through the marble, echoing in the very air around us. A force, raw and unseen, rippled outward from my body, crackling like energy against my skin.

Instantly, the figures halted. The silence that followed was suffocating.

The shadows stood motionless, frozen mid-step, their unnatural forms stiffened like statues in the midst of some twisted march.

I could feel the weight of Amen's gaze on me. Slowly, I turned to face him.

For a long moment, he simply stared, something unreadable flickering behind his dark eyes. Then, after what felt like an eternity, his lips curled into a slow, amused smirk.

"Impressive," he murmurs. His voice carries a note of praise, but beneath it lies something else.

Curiosity. Fascination.

He steps closer, his presence grounding me. "You commanded them." His dark eyes flicker over the motionless spirits. "Not with magic. Not with blood. Just your voice."

I swallow hard, my throat still raw from the sheer force of the command. "I—I don't know how I did it."

Amen tilts his head, studying me. "Perhaps you don't need to know. Perhaps it is simply what you were meant to do."

Something about his words sends a shiver down my spine.

We moved cautiously around the frozen apparitions, our gazes studying them closely. Their faces, twisted and hollow, became clearer in the flickering dreamlight. And yet, not all of them were unfamiliar.

"These are not just spirits," Amen murmured, his voice contemplative. "They are echoes of the past." He reached out, his fingers brushing the edge of one of the figures' cloaks. His expression darkened. "I know some of them."

I tore my gaze from the empty, shadowed sockets of the spirits and looked at him sharply. "You do?"

He nodded slowly, his eyes distant. "Former rulers. High priests. Soldiers of the past." His jaw tightened. "They have appeared to me before. Even outside of dreams."

A cold dread settled in my stomach.

"They're a manifestation of my curse," he continued. "They try to warn me. Of what, I do not always know. Sometimes, they merely whisper. Other times, they do nothing but watch."

Amen stops beside one of the spirits, his brows furrowing in recognition.

"I know this man," he says quietly.

I turn my gaze to the frozen figure before him—a regal-looking man clad in faded royal linens, his hands curled into fists at his sides.

"He was a High Priest," Amen continues, his voice distant, as if recalling a memory long buried. "One of my father's advisors."

He died... years ago." His expression darkens. "Poisoned by his own servants."

A chill creeps through me. "And now he's here."

"They've always been here. Ever since I came of age." Amen exhales sharply. "It is part of my curse. They come to me—those who have died unjustly, those whose souls refuse to rest."

I glance around at the unmoving spirits, unease coiling in my gut. "Then why now? What changed?"

Amen's gaze flickers toward me, something unreadable passing through his features. He doesn't answer.

If these spirits were connected to his curse, why had they not obeyed his command? Why had my voice been the only one to stop them?

Before I could ask, before I could attempt to grasp the enormity of it all, the stillness shattered.

The frozen figures lunged. It was as if the dream itself had turned on us.

The nearest spirits surged toward Amen, their bodies shifting into dark tendrils, twisting and curling around his arms, his legs—dragging him down.

I cried out, reaching for him, but the moment my fingers brushed his, his body was pulled deeper, the marble beneath him dissolving into nothing but dark water.

"Amen!"

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

"Amen!"

I threw myself forward, desperately clawing at the void where he had been. My hands plunged into the dark pool, but it was endless, depthless, swallowing him whole.

"No, no, no—"

The voices rose again, chanting in a language I did not understand, their tones filled with triumph.

I fought against them, against the pull of the dream, against the sickening helplessness gripping my body.

Then a sudden jolt. The world twisted. And I woke up.

Air floods my lungs as my body jerks upright, my chest heaving as if I have just surfaced from drowning. My skin is damp with sweat, my heart hammering in my ears.

For a moment, I do not know where I am—everything is too dark, too suffocating, too real.

Then, beside me, Amen jolts awake, choking on his own breath.

Water spills from his lips. I freeze in horror.

For a brief moment, he is still trapped in the nightmare—his body convulsing, his breath coming in ragged, broken gasps as if he had truly been drowning.

I reach for him, pressing my hands to his face. "Amen! Breathe!" My voice trembles, but my grip is firm. "It's over. We're awake."

"We're awake."

His body shudders beneath my touch. He coughed violently, his body shaking as if he had truly been drowning.

Then, finally, his breathing slows. The tension in his muscles loosens as he collapses against me, his forehead pressing into my shoulder, his body trembling in the aftermath.

My hands found his shoulders, my fingers gripping him tightly, steadying him.

"Breathe," I whispered. "You're here. You're safe."

His hand clutched mine, grounding himself.

After several tense moments, his breathing slowed. His head fell forward, his loosen long hair brushing against my bare skin. He was trembling.

Guilt swelled in my chest, a heavy, suffocating weight. "I failed," I murmured. "I was supposed to control it—I was supposed to help you, and I—"

Amen lifted his head, his fingers tightening around mine. "No," he said, his voice rough but steady. "You did not fail."

I shook my head, my eyes burning. "I couldn't reach you. I couldn't stop it."

"You did more than anyone else ever has," he murmured. "You stopped them. You commanded them. That alone..." He exhaled, something like awe in his gaze. "That alone is incredible."

I swallowed hard, searching his face. He meant it. Truly.

I swallowed hard, searching his face. He meant it. Truly.

Still, the lingering horror of what had just happened gnawed at my insides.

His fingers brush against my wrist, his touch warm despite the chill still clinging to my skin.

"We saw more tonight than ever before. That means we're getting closer to understanding what this curse truly is." He offers me a small, weary smirk. "And besides... if you weren't there, I wouldn't have woken up."

I exhale shakily, trying to let his words soothe the storm inside me. He is right. We made progress. But still—something about that dream haunts me.

The spirits knew him. They wanted him. And they were stronger than before.

That thought unsettles me more than anything else.

As we neared the palace gates, the air around us was still thick with the remnants of the dream—the weight of what we had seen, what we had felt.

My fingers still tingled from where they had gripped Amen's wrist in the dream, and the ghost of the voices still echoed faintly in my ears.

Then, just as we stepped onto the stone pathway leading toward the palace entrance, hurried footsteps broke through the quiet. A servant, his breath ragged, nearly stumbled in his haste to reach us. His wide eyes flickered between Amen and me, his face pale with urgency.

me, his face pale with urgency.

"Your Majesty," he gasped, bending slightly at the waist. "The general Ahmose seeks you immediately."

Amen's expression hardened in an instant, his body shifting from a state of quiet exhaustion to rigid attention. The dream faded from his mind, replaced by the weight of reality.

"What has happened?" His voice was sharp, commanding.

The servant swallowed hard, lowering his gaze. "There has been... an urgent development. A sudden shift in stability along the kingdom's borders."

A cold knot of dread tightened in my stomach.

Amen's jaw clenched. Without another word, he turned and strode toward the palace.

End of *The* **Chapter**

A Chance Meeting



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