



Chapter 52



Nebetta had been murdered in the dead of night.

Not a poison. Not an accident. Not some quiet, untraceable death.

No, she had been butchered.

Whoever had killed her had stabbed her again and again, long after the first blow would have sufficed. It was rage that had guided the blade.

And yet—despite the sheer brutality of the attack, the murderer had vanished like a shadow, leaving nothing behind.

Grief burned within me, sharp and bitter, digging its nails into my ribs, twisting itself into something sharper.

I had not known Nebetta as well as I should have, but she had been kind.

She had been the only one who did not look at me with resentment. The only one who had spoken to me without cruelty or veiled intentions.

I had not forgotten that Nebetta had tried to warn me. I had not forgotten that she had feared for my safety. And now—she was dead.

Yet Heket and Meritaten wasted no time turning her death into a spectacle.

They slithered through the palace like serpents, their words dripping venom into the ears of nobles, priests, and courtiers alike. And they knew exactly where to direct their whispers.

"All these troubles began when Neferet joined the harem. That cannot be a coincidence."

"She has yet to undergo the first ritual of divine confirmation."

"How can Pharaoh be so certain of her favor when even the gods have not spoken?"

It was clever. Insidious.

Because while Amen's belief in me was unwavering, it would mean nothing if the rest of the court began to doubt. Without the blessing of Isis formally revealed before the priests, I was nothing more than a mortal woman in Pharaoh's favor.

And if I was merely mortal—if I was not truly chosen—then what else might I be hiding?

It was a slow-dripping poison. And the worst part? It actually worked.

Even those who had once remained neutral now regarded me with wary eyes, uncertainty creeping into their expressions. Doubt was a powerful weapon, and Heket and Meritaten wielded it with practiced ease.

But I would not be made a villain in this.

While they played their little games, I stepped forward to assist with Nebetta's embalming and funeral rites—a true act of mourning, of respect.

I bathed her cold body in sacred oils, murmured prayers to the gods to guide her soul safely to Duat. My hands did not tremble as I worked, though my heart was heavy.

But even this they turned against me.

"Why would she involve herself in the embalming? Does she wish to hide something?"

"Perhaps she wanted to ensure no evidence remained."

It was laughable. But I did not laugh.

I only listened. Through Werel, I gathered every whisper, every lie, every carefully placed seed of doubt.

But I did not retaliate. Not yet.

"Do nothing," I told Werel. "Just listen. And report back to me."

Let them talk. Let them stare. Their opinions were nothing to me.

The only thing that mattered was finding out who had truly done this.

Days passed. To restore some semblance of order, a new unit of guards was assigned to the Golden House.

Their presence was meant to reassure us, but I knew better. This was not about safety. It was about control.

The harem was assigned a new captain. A man with one good eye and a scar down his jaw—a soldier forced into retirement after a battle left him half-blind, they said.

When he stepped forward to introduce himself, my world stilled.

Sahety.

For a moment, I could not breathe. It was as if time had folded in on itself, dragging me backward. To another life. Another version of myself.

He had changed—older, rougher. The scar over his eye told me that he had seen war, had suffered losses. But none of that mattered. Not now.

All that mattered was that he was here. I did not linger to speak to him. I turned and walked away without a word.

The next morning, after another failed attempt at oneiromancy, I took refuge in the inner gardens. The air was thick with the scent of flowers, but I found no peace in their fragrance.

My mind was restless, my thoughts tangled. Apep, my puppy, nipped at my fingers, oblivious to the storm inside me.

Then, I sensed him. I did not have to look to know who it was.

Sahety approached cautiously, his steps slow, as if I were some wild animal that might bolt if startled.

"I wondered when you would come to me," I said without turning.

"I did not wish to force a conversation," he admitted.

"But here you are." My voice was colder than I intended, but I did not soften it.

A silence stretched between us.

Commented [Ma1]:

He sighed. "I did not choose to come here, Neferet. I was assigned."

I turned then, finally meeting his gaze. "And yet, you stay."

His expression flickered—something unreadable, something I did not care to decipher.

"I never wanted to leave things as they were between us," he said, his voice quieter now. "I regret what happened. I regret —"

I cut him off. "Don't."

His brow furrowed. "Neferet—"

"I do not care for your regrets, Sahety," I snapped. "They mean nothing to me. The past is dead. You do not exist in my world anymore."

His face hardened. He took a step closer. "And yet, I am here. And I will not let anything happen to you."

I laughed, bitter and sharp. "You? Protect me?" I shook my head. "I do not need you. I never did."

He did not flinch, did not move. But something dark flickered in his gaze, something dangerous. And then—just as quickly—it was gone.

"I am not your enemy, Neferet," he said simply. "Whether you want me here or not, I will watch over you."

Then, without another word, he turned and left.

I watched him go, my hands clenched at my sides, my chest tight with something I could not name.

I did not know when exactly the rage had taken root inside me. Became my everyday followings.

Perhaps it had always been there, waiting beneath my skin. But now, it burns hotter than ever. Every whisper, every plot, every veiled threat—I felt them all pressing down on me.

The only thing that soothes this burning is Amen. His touch, his voice, his presence - they're like cool water on scorched earth. But he's consumed by the crisis at our borders, and I'm left here to burn.

I don't need protection. I don't need anyone's sympathy or concern. I am not some delicate flower to be sheltered from the storm.

I am the storm.

Let Heket plot. Let Meritaten scheme. Let the entire court whisper their suspicions.

I will endure it all, and I will emerge stronger. Because Amen sees me for what I truly am - not a victim to be protected, but a force to be reckoned with.

Let them play their games. Let them think they have the upper hand.

They have no idea what I'm capable of. And when the time comes, they'll learn exactly why Isis chose me.

They have no idea what I'm capable of. And when the time comes, they'll learn exactly why Isis chose me.

Not because I am good. Not because I am pure. But because I am strong enough to burn this whole world down and rebuild it from the ashes.

End of The Chapter

A Chance Meeting



Comments

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