



Chapter 55



I expected punishment.

I expected to be dragged before the court, stripped of my finery, forced to kneel while the concubines whispered their poison into the ears of the Pharaoh.

I had left Heket beaten, bloody, barely able to stand. If nothing else, they would demand retribution for that.

But when I arrived at the royal audience, I was met with silence.

The harem was absent.

The courtiers, the priests, the murmuring nobles who had once relished in my growing scandal, who had gossiped and speculated over Nebetta's death—they were here.

And yet, the women who had so desperately sought my downfall had been denied the chance to stand against me.

Instead, Amen alone stood before me. My breath hitched as our eyes met.

His gaze lingered, unreadable, his expression as calm as ever. But I could feel it—the weight behind it. The power.

For the first time, I truly understood. They were not judging me. They were waiting to be judged.

The Pharaoh himself dismissed every accusation against me with a flick of his hand, his voice measured, unyielding.

"These are slanderous lies," Amen declared. "The accusations against Neferet are nothing more than an attempt to sow discord where none exists. I will not allow it." His tone never

wavered, his conviction absolute. "She was with me during the days in question. There is no possibility that she was involved in Nebetta's death."

A heavy silence fell over the court. I kept my posture straight, my expression smooth, but inside, my pulse roared in my ears.

"Thank you, my Pharaoh," I manage to say, my voice steady despite my racing heart. "For your trust in me."

His eyes hold mine for a moment longer, something unspoken passing between us. Then he turns to address the gathered courtiers.

"Do not waste my time with false accusations again," he warns, his tone hardening. "Especially not while Egypt faces greater threats."

A quiet but unmistakable chill settled over the gathering. His meaning was clear. This is my decree. Let no one challenge it.

I did not bow. I did not lower my gaze in feigned humility. Instead, I met his eyes—steady, unwavering. And I let my silence say what no words could.

You have shown your trust in me. And I will not fail you.

Just like that, it's over. No punishment. No consequences. Just Amen's word against all others, and his word is law.

I leave the audience chamber in a daze, my mind spinning. This makes no sense. Even with Amen's favor, surely there should be some price to pay for what I did to Heket?

I moved quickly, ignoring the wary glances from passing servants, pushing through the corridors with determined

strides. As I neared my chambers, a voice stopped me.

I find Werel outside my chambers, deep in conversation with Sahety. They stood outside my doors, speaking in hushed tones. The moment Sahety caught sight of me, he gave a brief, almost imperceptible nod to Werel—then turned on his heel and left without a word.

"What happened?" I demand once we're alone with Werel.
"How is this possible?"

Her eyes dart around, checking for listeners before she speaks.

"It was Sahety," she whispers. "The letter, Meritaten and Heket were plotting against you. He confronted them before the audience."

Understanding dawns slowly. "He blackmailed them."

She nods. "If they pursued charges against you, their own crimes would come to light. Not just slander, but murder. Nebetta's murder."

The pieces click into place. Sahety didn't just save me from punishment—he forced my enemies to withdraw completely.

"Why?" The question slips out before I can stop it. "Why would he help me?"

Werel gives me a long look. "Perhaps because he remembers who you were before all this. Or perhaps because he sees who you're becoming."

I turn away, unable to face the implications of her words. I don't want Sahety's help. I don't want his protection or his

don't want Sahety's help. I don't want his protection or his redemption.

And yet...

My hands still ache from violence. The rage still burns in my chest, barely contained. I am becoming something dangerous—something that even I don't fully understand.

But for now, at least, there is peace in the Golden House. Heket and Meritaten have been silenced. Their plots are exposed. Their power diminished.

I listened in stunned silence as Werel continued to reveal the truth.

Sahety had orchestrated everything. Not the deception—but its downfall.

The hired assassin they planned to present to Amen? The one they meant to coerce into falsely confessing that I had paid him to kill Nebetta?

Sahety had already found him. And if they forced him to speak, he would not testify against me.

He would name them. They had no choice.

They had been backed into a corner, forced to withdraw their accusations before they could even be made.

They lost. I won.

For the first time in weeks, the tension in the harem cracked. The whispers ceased. The threats withdrew.

The whispers ceased. The threats withdrew.

For the first time in weeks, I could breathe.

I closed my eyes, inhaling deeply, exhaling slowly. Then, my hands clenched into fists.

This was not Sahety's victory. He had not done this for me. He had done it to keep me indebted. To make himself useful. To make me owe him something.

But I would never owe him.

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

A Chance Meeting



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