



Chapter 57



Blood soaks my torn dress, drips from the sword in my trembling hands. The metallic scent fills my nose, my mouth, coating my tongue with the taste of death.

His sword felt unnaturally heavy in my hands.

And at my feet—Sahety.

His body was sprawled across the cool stone floor, motionless, his tunic soaked in blood that still seeped from the deep gash in his stomach.

I should have felt a relief. I should have felt triumph.

Instead, I felt nothing. Hollow.

I had killed him. And I would do it again.

A shift in the air—a presence behind me. I turned sharply, every muscle tensed, the sword still raised in my trembling grip. Amen stood there.

The sight of him hit me harder than I expected, the contrast between us almost startling.

Him, pristine in his royal attire, broad shoulders set with power, his golden pectoral gleaming in the dim torchlight.

Me, drenched in another man's blood, breathless, unhinged, the scent of death clinging to my skin.

His gaze fell to Sahety's corpse. Then—to me. For the first time in my life, I could not read him.

His eyes darkened, and a muscle in his jaw clenched as he stepped forward, slow, measured, his presence consuming

stepped forward, slow, measured, his presence consuming every inch of space between us.

"What happened?" His voice was a blade of its own—sharp, controlled.

I swallowed, the taste of iron still thick in my mouth. I wanted to answer, but the words refused to come. And then, I forced them out. "Sahety tried to rape me. I killed him."

The words hung in the air between us, heavy, suffocating.

A single beat of silence. Then—Amen roared for the guards.

His voice boomed, shaking the walls, shaking me. My breath hitched, my hands tightening around the hilt of the sword, my heart pounding.

Was this it? Was he going to punish me? Drag me before the court, declare me a murderer?

A knot of fear coiled in my stomach. But then—Amen moved.

Not toward me. Toward Sahety.

I watched, unblinking, as he knelt beside the corpse, his golden bracelets catching the light, his expression unreadable. He reached down and smeared his hand across the blood pooling on the floor. Sprinkled it on his body and face.

Then—he turned to me.

I froze as he stepped forward, the weight of his gaze holding me captive. He took the sword from my hands.

Gently. Deliberately.

My fingers uncurled slowly, as though releasing it would mean losing the only thing keeping me upright.

When the doors burst open behind us, he turned around, completely hiding me behind his broad back.

I stiffened. And then—Amen spoke.

"This man attempted to harm my concubine." His voice rang through the chamber, absolute, unwavering. "For his crime, he was executed on the spot—by my own hand."

A chill rushed through me. The guards did not question him. They did not dare. Amen's word was law.

"Take his body." His tone was cold, distant, as though he was speaking of nothing more than removing filth from his floor. "Inform his commander that Sahety was a traitor and will not receive the rites of embalming."

I shivered. He was condemning him—not just to death, but to oblivion.

"Burn him tonight." Not a single murmur of protest. "Scatter his ashes in the desert."

No tomb. No name etched into stone. No soul to journey to Duat.

Only nothingness.

As the guards drag Sahety's corpse away, my knees buckle. The world tilts sideways, but Amen catches me before I fall. His arms wrap around me, solid and warm, and suddenly I'm weightless.

~~Perhaps better protest being carried like a child. Should maintain some dignity. But I can't. I don't want to be strong right now. Don't want to be alone.~~

He takes me to the royal baths, where steam rises from perfumed waters. The warmth should be soothing, should wash away the horror of what happened. But it doesn't.

The moment my feet touched the ground, I trembled. I felt dirty, like Sahety's hands were still on me, like the stench of him was carved into my skin.

Amen said nothing.

He simply peeled the bloodied fabric from my shoulders, discarding it without ceremony.

I step into the water, but the warmth does not soothe me. I feel unclean, as if the filth of Sahety's touch has seeped into my very bones. My hands shake as I scrub at my skin, harder, harder, until it burns.

The memories swarmed, suffocating, twisting in my mind, refusing to leave me in peace.

And then, a touch—Amen. His hands were on me now, but not like Sahety's. He did not grip. He did not force. He simply washed away the blood.

Slowly, methodically, reverently, he erased every trace of what had been done.

"Amen." My voice breaks on his name. "I need to forget." I meet his gaze, hating the desperation in my words but unable to stop them. "Please. Help me forget the feel of his hands on my skin."

Commented [Ma1]:

Commented [Ma2R1]:

my skin.

His jaw tightens, something ancient and terrible flickering behind his eyes. Then he leans forward and presses his lips to my forehead.

The kiss is soft—not demanding, not possessing, but healing. His touch traces my skin like a prayer, replacing each memory of violence with one of devotion.

His fingers ghost over the bruises on my wrists, my arms, my throat. Not to claim, but to restore. To rewrite the story my body tells.

I close my eyes, letting his gentleness wash over me. Let it erase Sahety's rough hands, his cruel words, his attempt to own me.

When I'm calm—when the phantom touches finally fade—Amen carries me to his chambers. The bed is soft, the sheets cool against my skin.

He settles beside me, a silent guardian against the darkness. His presence keeps the nightmares at bay, letting me finally drift into sleep.

Darkness surrounded me—heavy, suffocating, yet strangely familiar.

I felt as though I was drifting through a space untouched by time, weightless, unbound, slipping deeper and deeper into the void. But I wasn't afraid.

Then, the dream changed.

I was no longer floating. No longer lost in the abyss.

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Instead, I stood in the middle of a grand hall, its towering columns stretching endlessly into the sky. The air was thick with something unseen, something oppressive, and the floor beneath my bare feet was cracked and lifeless.

And then—I saw him.

Amen.

But not as I knew him now. He was a child. No older than ten. And he was screaming.

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

A Chance Meeting



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