



## Chapter 95



"Do you ever wonder about the nature of curses?" Neferet asked.

Her voice, soft and musing, broke the stillness as she laid curled against me on the bed. Skin warm beneath my hand as I traced idle, tender circles across her bare spine.

I hummed noncommittally, unwilling to shatter the fragile serenity of night with heavy thoughts. "What about them?"

"Whether they're truly punishments... or simply balance," she continued, her voice distant, almost philosophical. "Osiris's fragment gave you power, but at terrible cost. Seth's possession nearly destroyed me... yet granted abilities I never imagined."

I pressed a kiss to her temple.

"Interesting perspective," I murmured. "Though I'd gladly give up all of it, all the power, for an ordinary life, an ordinary death, if it meant sharing it with you."

She shifted to face me, her green eyes darkened with something intense.

"I've been thinking," she said, urgency creeping into her voice. "About destiny. About the meaning behind everything that's happened."

I watched her closely now, unease prickling the hairs on the back of my neck.

Neferet's body remained relaxed against mine, but her eyes

gleamed too brightly and in their depths, crimson flickers danced.

Subtle, like dying embers.

Yet this alone made the pit of my stomach twisted.

"I got the meaning behind the vision I had," she said, her words tumbling faster. "The one from our first night. When we stood on the balcony, watching the city. I understand it now."

I sat up slowly, careful not to startle her.

"Neferet," I said gently, reaching for her hand, "perhaps we should rest more before—"

"No," she interrupted, startling me with the force of it.

She sat up, clutching the sheet against her chest, her gaze blazing with conviction.

"I accept it now, Amen. I'll set us free."

She rose from the bed in a fluid, purposeful motion, walking toward the far wall where a gleaming artifact hung.

The ornate Hittite sword I had once showed her.

"Neferet," I warned, my heart hammering against my ribs.

Her fingers closed around the hilt. In an instant, I was on my feet, blood roaring in my ears.

Seth. It had to be Seth resurfacing, forcing her hand.

"Put that down," I commanded, calling on my Pharaoh's voice, the one that brooked no defiance. "Seth, I know you can hear

me. Release her, now!"

But when Neferet turned to face me, it was not Seth's malevolent sneer that greeted me. It was my beloved bride herself.

Her beautiful face was drawn in sorrow, her green eyes brimming with love... and terrible resolve.

"It's still me, my love," she whispered hoarsely. "For now at least. But he grows stronger with each hour, I can still feel it."

I took a cautious step closer, palms outstretched.

"Please," I said. "We can find another way."

Tears pooled in her eyes, glistening as they fell.

The sword gleamed coldly in Neferet's hands. I froze, my blood draining from my veins faster than I could breathe.

When I stepped toward her, desperate to stop whatever madness gripped her, she raised the blade between us, the tip quivering inches from my heart.

"I'm so sorry..." she said, her voice heartbreakingly steady despite the tears shining in her eyes. "But this is the only way. Both our curses, yours from Osiris and mine from Seth, they can end with a single sacrifice."

My heart lurched painfully against my ribs. In one searing moment, I understood.

She consider to take my life.

The realization struck like a physical blow, stealing the air from

my lungs. Not because I feared death, but because I saw the agony in her and saw that she believed this was mercy.

That my death would free us both.

"Neferet, no," I said, holding out my hand, my voice breaking on her name. "Whatever you're thinking—"

"I've seen it, Amen," she interrupted fiercely. "I've seen this path in Seth's mind. Divine law demands balance. Something given... for something taken."

She was trembling now, from the weight of terrible purpose.

I could have fought her.

Could have summoned the strength of Osiris to wrest the sword from her hands.

But as I looked into her tear-filled eyes, saw the love and devastation mingling there, I knew: I couldn't take this from her.

I couldn't add another chain to the countless ones already wrapped around her soul.

If she believed this was the only way, then I would meet it head-on.

"Alright then," I whispered, stepping closer, the point of the sword now a breath away from my chest. "If a sacrifice is needed... I offer myself freely."

She faltered, the blade in her hands wavered.

For a fleeting instant, I dared hope she might cast it aside



and collapse into my arms. But then her face hardened with unshakable resolve.

"You must live," she said, voice so soft it barely carried. "Egypt needs you, the world needs you. You *are* the balance."

I closed the last of the distance, reaching for her.

The tip of the sword is already digging into my chest, right above my heart, and I can feel a thin trickle of blood running down to my stomach, but I can care less.

"There is no world worth living in without you," I swore.

"Nothing matters *without you*."

A sad smile curved her lips.

"You say that now," she murmured. "But someday... you will find purpose again. You must."

Tears streamed unchecked down her cheeks, sparkling like tiny stars against her beautiful dark skin.

Before I could reach her fully, before I could rip the sword from her trembling hands, she whispered:

"I love you, Amen. I always will. In this life... and whatever comes after."

Then, in one swift devastating motion, Neferet turned the blade inward and slashed across her own throat.

Blood spurted in a bright, horrifying arc and the sword clattered from her fingers.

For a fraction of a heartbeat, the world stood frozen. Silent.

For a fraction of a heartbeat, the world stood frozen. Silent. Unreal.

Her body crumpled to the marble floor and within a second I was on my knees. Skidding across the floor, catching her in my arms before her head could strike the stone.

"Neferet!" I roared.

But the name felt ripped from my throat, useless against the flood of her blood.

I pressed my hands to the wound, trying to staunch the impossible flow. Praying, bargaining with any god that would listen.

"No, no, no," I begged, rocking her against my chest. "Stay with me, Neferet. Please, stay!"

Her blood was everywhere now, soaking my hands, my robes, the floor. Her green eyes fluttered open for the barest second, locking onto mine.

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

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Comments

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Gifts

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