

A morous Passageways



The Seven
Wonders
of the
Ancient
World

Gynnara
Tregarth

MENKAURE'S
GIFT

Foreword by
Ciar Cullen

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Amorous Passageways - The Great Pyramid Of
Giza

Menekaure's Gift

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ISBN: 1-55410-610-9

Cover art and design by Martine Jardin

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Published by eXtasy Books, a division of Zumaya
Publications, 2005

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FORWARD: THE ORIGINS OF THE WONDERS

BY CIAR CULLEN

Psychology, the occult and numerology aside, we can possibly blame the ancient Greek mathematician Pythagoras for some of this affinity for things in quantities of seven, the prime number he favored and considered 'not too big and not too small'. The number was firmly established in Greek literature by the time the historian Herodotus (484 BC-425 BC) listed seven great ancient 'sites' in his *magnum opus*. (Some scholars attribute this list to a mechanic named Philo of Byzantium.).

So what's so wonderful about these wonders? Did they all really exist? Who built them, and why? For one thing, all seven wonders are big—really big by ancient standards—and opulent, each requiring years, even decades of labor and unfathomable financial resources. Thus they represent the pinnacle of human achievement at the time Herodotus listed them.

Two are tombs, two are statues of gods, one is a temple, one a lighthouse and finally, a fantastic garden. Two are in Egypt, two in modern Turkey, two in Greece, and one in modern Iraq. Ironically, the oldest of the wonders—the Great Pyramid of Giza—is the sole survivor of the ages. But researchers have

unearthed fairly convincing evidence for the rest of the structures either in ancient literature or through archaeological investigations. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon remain the most shrouded in mystery.

One interesting note: the oldest, the Great Pyramid, was already about two thousand years old when the next oldest (likely the Temple of Artemis) was erected, and already nearly three thousand years old at the birth of Christ. The Pharos Lighthouse was constructed not much longer ago than two thousand years. The wonder, magnificence, mystery and sheer romance of these great works of art and architecture increase with each passing century.

Within this series are seven tales of love and wonder. Perhaps by reading these stories you'll now be able to remember the names of the wonders, and become a believer in the magical power of the number seven. If you still have trouble, try this visualization: You are an ancient sailor, traveling the Mediterranean. You spot a lighthouse (1) and head for port. You steer your ship between the legs of the great Colossus of Rhodes (2). You disembark and head down the paved road. You are flanked by two tombs—a great mausoleum on the left (3) and a huge pyramid (4) on the right. You proceed up the hill and encounter two gods. On the left, Artemis (5) resides in her temple. On your right is a massive enthroned Zeus in his temple (6). You rest from your long hike under a flowering fig tree in the luxurious gardens of Babylon (7), where you await the arrival of your true love.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD - THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA

“Man fears Time, yet Time fears the Pyramids.” This apt Arab proverb summarizes the complete fascination people through the ages have with the massive structures that dominate the necropolis of Memphis, today part of greater Cairo, Egypt. During his lifetime, the Fourth Dynasty Egyptian pharaoh Khufu, or Cheops, commissioned his own tomb (around 2560 BC). Probably taking over two decades to construct, at 482 feet the monument ranked as the tallest structure on earth until the eighteenth century. The structure is large enough to cover, at the same time, the churches of St. Peter’s (Rome) and the cathedrals of Florence and Milan, and Westminster and St. Paul’s in London. Each side of the pyramid is oriented on one of the cardinal points of the compass. The pyramid is the only wonder to have survived largely intact into the modern era.

DEDICATION:

To the ancient Egyptians, may your names bring you eternal happiness. I remember you.

To my family – I love you and owe you more than I can ever thank you for.

To my soul siblings and more – I love you. Thank you for your love and support. May the gods and goddesses bless you always.



CHAPTER ONE

“What a glorious morning,” Aline Seaver exclaimed as she watched the sun rise in the east from her hotel room. Being in Egypt was a dream come true. Granted, she had slaved and saved for two years for this opportunity, but now she had a month to enjoy the land of pharaohs. Brushing her long hair from her face, she wondered if the anticipation of coming to Egypt was the reason for the unusual dreams that had been visiting her over the past few months. Though she knew they were dreams, they had seemed quite real...especially the ones about that gorgeous high priest of Ra. However that was neither here nor there, she arrived last night in Cairo and today was the beginning of her adventure. *First stop – the Giza pyramids and the Sphinx.*

She showered, dressed and practically ran downstairs for a quick breakfast and to load up on bottled water. Her family had urged her to be centrally located so they could contact her in case of an emergency, and she had to admit, this hotel was one of the best she had ever stayed in. Smiling at the

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clerk behind the desk, Aline waved to him as she shrugged her backpack over her shoulder and started heading out towards the Giza plateau by bus.

* * * *

Walking along the Giza plateau, Aline gaped at the sight before her. The pyramids stood before her like the proud, everlasting monuments to pharaohs they were. Her feet went forward, her mind trying to comprehend the sheer majesty that was the only lasting wonder of the ancient world. All the facts regarding the pyramids of Khufu, Khafre and Menekaure filled her mind as she closed the distance between her and the place of dreams—the last living example of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World.

Three pharaohs of the fourth dynasty, all related, had built lasting monuments to honour their passing into becoming the imperishable stars, and she was here to see their legacy. They had gone against tradition of building their funerary monuments at Saqqara. Here and now time had proven them wise, as they had lasted for over four thousand years. For so many years she'd been an armchair amateur archaeologist, but now she could finally live out part of that dream and see all of what Egypt offered.

Suddenly the sheen of the heat took on another look, one that wasn't normal to anyone but her. *No, not now! I don't want a vision! Please don't do this to me in public.* Her sight shifted from this world to another realm. Though upset, Aline knew it wouldn't hurt

her, even if it could be a nuisance, as she was engrossed with the vision rather than life around her.

She'd gone about four months without her psychic Sight flaring up out of control, but now something seemed to call to her in this desert land. She had hoped the change of scenery, even in this ancient land might not set off her special skills of Seeing into the past.

Workers stood in front of Menekaure's pyramid, waiting for something. The sun was high overhead, beating down on them as they waited with the last of the Tura limestone. She knew that it would give the pyramid the same look as Khufu and Khafre's. It'd shine like a white beacon, thus upholding the new solar cult status. She wondered what exactly was going on and what part she'd play in it.

Soon the high priest of Ra and others came out, gesturing for the workers to finish the project. As the entourage walked past her, the high priest gestured to her. This was the man from her dream!

"Come with me, Aline."

"Who are you?"

"You know who I am and what I mean to you." His dark eyes pierced her lighter violet ones as the sun seemed to brighten the area around them. "Why must you be like this at this time of sorrow?"

As suddenly as the vision appeared, it dissolved into the last bit of mist that surrounded the pyramids this early morning. The journey of coming back from a vision took just as much energy as when it called to

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her. All she needed was a few minutes and she'd be back to normal. She just wished she understood the meaning of what she saw. A voice sounded out, catching her attention.

"Are you okay, Aline?" The voice sounded just like the one in the vision.

Looking up, she saw the man almost as he had looked in the vision, except for the change of clothes. His hair was a dark brown; his skin tanned by the sun, and his eyes a dark mocha that enhanced a body that only the ancient gods could make. Her mouth went dry and she tried to speak, yet nothing but a croak emerged. The vision had once again left its mark, making her very thirsty in a land that was known for only one source of water.

"You must be parched. Let me get some water from my pack." With a swift movement, he removed his backpack, unzipping it and rummaging. "Here you go," he said, handing her a chilled water bottle.

"Thanks," she croaked. Breaking open the seal, she greedily sucked a couple of mouthfuls of water. "How do you know my name?"

"The same way you knew that I'd be here." He flashed a dazzling white smile.

Aline gaped at him. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Are you telling me that you didn't have dreams of me for the last few months, dreaming of our coming together, here after so many millennia apart?" His head tilted, questions filling his dark eyes.

"I don't know you or how you know about my dreams, but you better tell me now." As she struggled

to stand, he offered his hand. Taking it, she stood up shakily and looked around. "I'm serious. You best explain what the hell is happening and why you know me."

"Come." His fingers intertwined with hers as he led the way. They made their way closer to the one place she had been heading to originally. Finally, he stopped as they stood before Menekaure's pyramid. "Do you *see* yet?"

Her eyes gazed up at the monument, her heart contracting in intense sorrow. Once again, she saw the past through a thin overlay. She missed the pharaoh, the man who had allowed her more freedom than was normally allowed, even though she was among his concubines. Aline blinked, thinking deeply on what she just realized. Her Sight allowed her to recall a life she hadn't been aware of, but perhaps explained her fascination with Egypt. "I was one of his concubines for a while, until he let me go to marry another."

"Indeed. Do you remember anything else?" His voice had a tinge of something in it—perhaps expectation? She wasn't sure.

Aline shook her head. "No. Just this deep sadness for the passing of Menekaure. He shouldn't have died alone like that. His wife had gone to see her parents and I had gone to be married. Most don't realize how good of a pharaoh he truly was."

The man stood next to her, unmoving except for the hand caressing hers. Somehow it felt right. He was right, she knew him on some level. *Perhaps we*

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were together during the time of Menekaure? Would that please me to have been his lover, his wife? A shiver ran through her body as she imagined them together naked, making love. This dream-come-to-life man made her want all the girly things she always turned her back on.

A squeeze on her hand brought her back to the here and now. His deep, dark eyes pierced hers. "Now what, Aline?"

"How do you know my name is Aline?" She bit the inside of her lip. "How come you know more about me than I know about you?"

"You don't remember me." His voice flattened, disappointment coating his tone. A lock of dark hair fell across his stormy eyes before he looked away.

"I wish I could. You look like the man from my dreams, from the vision I just had, but who are you, really?" Reaching out, she placed her hand on his arm. Strength radiated from the flexed muscle beneath the shirtsleeve. "Please, I want to know. I want to know why you seem so familiar, yet I can't recall who you are or your name."

The man said nothing, but escorted her into the line so they could get a chance to go inside. Both listened to the guide as he escorted a group of tourists inside, showing them the various points of interest. Allowing herself to be absorbed into the enjoyable storytelling style of the guide, Aline pushed aside the questions she had about her companion. Though it bugged her that he wouldn't tell her his name, she understood his disappointment.



* * * *

After two hours of exploring around the three major pyramids and the necropolis areas, Aline found herself escorted towards the Sphinx. Though he hadn't told her his name, he was an excellent guide. Her instincts and the visions she saw said she knew him then, even if he was quiet about his identity. When she figured their end location, she questioned him. "Why are we going to the temple area?"

"Because it was one of your favourite places while you were in his harim and afterwards. It gave you peace when nothing else would." She felt him squeeze her hand as they walked into the Sphinx temple area.

It felt good to be walking at his side. She wasn't sure why, but Aline knew that being at his side was such a rare privilege back then that she wasn't going to give this up that easily. The warmth from his palm against hers and their fingers intermingled made her feel both comforted and turned on. Occasionally his arm brushed against hers, causing shivers of desire to shoot through her body. He was as gorgeous in modern clothes as he was in ancient garb. She was drawn to him, but was it for the right reasons and not just lust? Though lust wasn't bad, she did want more.

"Tell me your name."

"In this life, my name is Paul Azi." He pulled her closer against his body as they descended into the Sphinx enclosure. "I'm half Egyptian, half English."

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“Wow. You’ve managed to keep to Egypt even through all this time?” Her voice was low as they wandered among the other tourists. Her training with her family had been far from normal, especially in the esoteric, but how else had she learned some control of her Sight? But this was a spectacular achievement—to keep to one’s homeland through many rebirths. “How have you been able to do that?”

“Due to my request for it to be so, each rebirth since my *ba* hasn’t been united with my mummified form. I didn’t want to go to the other realm without you by my side forever.”

Aline stopped dead in her tracks. Her eyes searched his face for any signs of his lying to her. His voice was filled with too much determination for him to be faking. “You mean you’ve not moved onto the Otherworld because of me? Why would you do that?”

“*Hobb. Love.*”

She stepped back against the rounded limestone. Extraneous thoughts regarding the erosion process brushed through her mind as she tried to comprehend Paul’s meaning. The idea that his *ba*, his soul that should have united with his body, thus allowing him to cross over into the Otherworld, hadn’t gone where it was supposed to just floored her. There were spells to prevent that. The Book of the Dead had contingencies for this, didn’t it?

“Because of love, you refused to go to your House of Eternity?” She stumbled over the words, part of her denying that anyone would do that, but at the same time knowing that he had. For her. *Oh, shit, wow.*

Paul reached out and pulled her close, forcing her head up so their eyes met. His breath was warm against her face as he spoke. His lips brushed against her cheek. "Yes, I did it for love of you. Things weren't easy for us. Even Hemieniu, the great architect of the pyramids, would've had a hard time with what we went through and our lives were relatively peaceful. When you died and we couldn't get you to the priests of Anubis as fast as it should've been done, it wasn't worth going to eternal life if you wouldn't be there. So as we've gone around this wheel of life—something so foreign to our ancient beliefs—I've waited to find you."

A sob ripped from Aline's throat as she spun out of his grasp. Racing forward, she moved unseeingly around tourists until she was near the front paw of the Sphinx. Crying, she laid her head against the stone and tried to find her emotional balance. Never before had she dealt with anything remotely close to this. Helping deal with ghosts, finding closure for people who had dead loved ones—yes. Seeing scenes from the past in order to aid those missing or killed—yes. Being pulled into something seemed like a movie—no. But now, knowing that this man, Paul, had given up his eternal happiness to wait for her had her blubbering like a child. No one had ever cared for her in this life that much, and he based all of this on one past life together. What the hell was going to happen to them now? Did they even have a chance at a future? Did she want that chance with him?

Wiping away the tears with her palms, Aline

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inhaled and exhaled, concentrating on her breathing. She needed to get a hold of herself. Granted, his action was one of the most romantic things she ever heard, but still, he shouldn't have risked his own happiness like that.

How could I have forgotten a love like that? Why would I have forgotten a love like that? Questions. That's all she had right now...questions, no answers, and a desire for the man next to her. Each moment she spent near him, she wanted to touch him and be touched by him. She wanted to kiss him, have his skin sliding against hers, to know that he was real, not just a dream anymore. Yet beyond all of that, she needed answers so she could make peace with this unsettling knowledge he'd given her.

One of her friends had joked about her finding love among the pyramids, but Aline doubted anything like this is what was meant. Finally, when she thought she found her balance internally, she looked around. As she turned towards the Dream Stele that rested between the Sphinx's paws, she saw Paul watching her. Hesitantly, Aline stepped forward and put out her hand. *If he's not willing to meet me on this, we can't have a future. I need him to give me some time and to help me understand.*

He nodded and approached. "I didn't mean to scare you, Aline."

"I know, Paul. How come you have your complete memory of that time?" She walked towards the stairs that would lead them out of the enclosure. The place was too filled with traces of memories not quite

remembered and emotions that threatened to overwhelm her. She wanted to cry, but she needed answers on why she felt like doing so. "We need somewhere quiet where we can talk for a while. Any ideas?"

"There's a restaurant nearby where we can eat and talk, or I can take you to my apartment. Whatever feels more comfortable for you."

"Restaurant." The word tripped quickly off her lips. "It's not that I don't trust you, it's just that I don't know you enough to calm my slightly shattered nerves."

"I know this is fast and furious. I never meant for all of this to come out in this way. Please believe that." His sincere tone told her he wasn't lying. It gave her morale a much-needed boost.

"I do believe you. Let's go eat and we'll see what happens from there."



CHAPTER TWO

The lunch was perfect—lightly spiced meat with vegetables and a fruity, non-alcoholic drink to top it off. During the meal, Paul spoke more about his life now, including the fact that he was a conservationist for ancient objects. He often worked on various sites or in the Cairo museum for preservation and restoration purposes. Aline liked knowing that he worked with antique objects found. It made her feel closer to him in this world.

She shared pieces of her life, including her folks, her brother and sister, and her closest friends. Smiling, Aline recounted, “They were all worried that once I got here that I wouldn’t come back, so they forced me to get a return flight booked so they knew I was coming home.”

“Sounds like your family is protective.”

“They’re loving. Good people, definitely. My friends, too.” She knew she sounded defensive, but she couldn’t help it. She loved her family and knew their faults better than anyone. But still, they did care.

“And how will they feel that I’m in your life?”

Her eyes met his. "What do you mean?"

"I'm not going to just walk away from you now that I've found you. I want to be part of your life." His hand clasped hers as his lips kissed and nibbled her inner wrist. "Don't send me away to be without you."

Nodding, she caressed his face, reveling in the warmth amid the hard planes. He was a classic beauty regardless of nationality with his high cheekbones, straight nose, dark cocoa eyes and closely cropped dark hair. Just looking at him gave her a rush of lust. But beyond that, his caring and concern pulled at her heart. *Could it be possible to fall for someone in an instant, even with knowing them from past lives? Do I want to explore this?*

"I know this isn't easy, that I've rushed you, but seeing you in person after having the dreams with you, it was hard to wait."

"Understandable. I just wish I understood why you remember and I don't." She sighed as she leaned back against her chair. "It's frustrating to only have the visions, the dreams, but no real remembrance."

Paul gave her a look that made her feel cherished. She wasn't sure exactly what it was that made her feel that way, but all she knew was that he seemed to comprehend the reason she felt like she did. She took his hand and squeezed it.

"Perhaps we can get it so you can remember. I know a couple of trained hypnotherapists and regressionists. We could ask them to regress you so you could recall the life completely."

Aline shook her head as Paul paid the bill. "I'm not

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sure I want to do that. How do I know the memory isn't going to be implanted by someone who knows what you saw?"

"You don't trust me to play fair." His voice was tight with some emotion she couldn't quite make out.

Looking down at their hands together, she sighed. "No, it's not that I don't trust you to play fair, but I want to make sure that my memory isn't helped along. I barely know you even if my body responds. I want to be sure, Paul. Surely you can understand that."

"I know. It's just hard after waiting for so long; I never thought our coming back together would have problems. I should've known the gods wouldn't let it be that easy." His voice sounded saddened and dejected.

"I know a couple of people who do regressions," Aline said quietly as she released his hand and rubbed her cool fingers together. "Though I don't know them personally, friends of mine do. One of them is here in Cairo. Let me go back to my hotel and see about making an appointment."

Paul acquiesced easily. "As you wish." He paid the bill, then escorted her back to the hotel. She sensed his anger in his stiff back and how little he spoke during the ride.

Once there, they went up to her room, then Aline booted up her computer and retrieved contact names and numbers. Without looking at him, she took the phone and dialed up, speaking quickly and accurately in Egyptian Arabic to someone on the line. Her

insides trembled doing this, and the air in her bedroom seemed laden with something she couldn't quite define. Fear, perhaps even worry was the emotion weaving itself around her. Even Paul looked darker, scarier than he had prior to coming into her room. It had to be her nerves. The idea of letting someone she didn't know well hypnotize her gave her the jitters. Once she was done making the arrangements, she hung up the phone.

"There. Done. I'll be going to see Dr. Ikram tonight."

"I'll go with you."

"No, I'd prefer you didn't, Paul." Aline looked away from him, her words pouring out in a rush. "This is a personal thing, one I don't want you influencing. You can come see me afterwards—it'll only take an hour or so—but I want to do this alone." She handed him a piece of paper with the address and phone number of where she would be.

"I see."

"No, you don't," Aline ground out with a sigh. "You think because you are who you are and that I should know you that you can overrun me. This is not the past, Paul. This is the present. I need to do this alone so I can figure out for myself what I want, what I believe."

"What if you don't want to believe, then what?" His voice was hard, cutting like a sword.

"I don't know." She felt pain clench inside her stomach. This wasn't the reaction she'd expected, but then again, she honestly didn't know Paul. Not really.

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His look was one of anger, disappointment and sadness. There wasn't anything she could do about it, though. She had to do this her way or she'd always wonder. No matter how she tried to clarify that point, it seemed to anger him. Why? What was the big deal?

"You know something, Paul? I don't get why you're bent out of shape over this. What's so wrong with me wanting to find the answers without you?" Aline crossed her arms over her chest and stood looking at him, trying to keep strong.

"There is nothing wrong with you learning the truth on your own, as long as it's the truth and not just perceptions."

"Uh-huh. Do you think I wouldn't take that into consideration? I guess I'm too stupid to consider that aspect, right?" Turning away from him, she looked out the window. "Perhaps you need to leave."

Paul grunted. His hand touched her shoulder. "I don't think you're stupid. It's the fact that sometimes our memories aren't the truth of an incident. But I'll go. I've left my card on how to contact me on your nightstand."

His hand disappeared and with it, some of the warmth that flooded through her with its contact. She bit back the words on her tongue asking him to stay. *Can I handle this and not misinterpret what I find out? I know I'm strong, but with the visions it's different. This is my life in the past we're talking about. What if...what if he did something against me, and those I loved?*

Sighing, Aline decided to nap before her appointment with Dr. Ikram. As she began to dream,

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she whispered, “Thoth and Isis, please grant me wisdom tonight.”



CHAPTER THREE

Reclining back in the softest chair known to man, Aline exhaled in contentment. Dr. Mahora Ikram was a sweet Egyptian woman whom her friend Riana had recommended for past life regressions at one time or another. Aline hadn't felt the urge until now. Now she wanted, no, *needed* to know about the past and her part in it. Paul played a big part, she couldn't deny that, nor had she said anything about him in explaining things to Mahora. But there were her visions. She'd had them since she was child, and if they were due to past lives, it would help her to accept them easier if she knew more on why she had them.

As she relaxed, Mahora sat down in a similar chair in front of her. Her dark gaze held Aline's tightly. "You're an interesting woman, Aline." Her tone was musical, yet sensual to Aline's ears. It was also very relaxing. "Why don't you make yourself comfortable in the chair in whatever manner is easiest for you. When you're ready, let me know. We'll begin with some light meditative states that I know you're

familiar with."

Grinning, Aline nodded. "I'm ready now. This chair has got to be the most comfortable piece of furniture to ever exist. Can I have it?"

"No," Mahora laughed. "However, I'll give you the catalog so you can order one in the colour you want. They're a tad expensive, but really worth it. Their couches are almost better than a bed."

Together, they began doing the slow, concentrated breathing exercises that relaxed both the mind and the body. They also spoke on what to expect from the silver astral cord connecting the astral body to the physical body and how to maneuver in the astral realm. Mahora darkened the room until the only illumination was a set of candles in hurricane lamps. The dimmed environment allowed her to relax and concentrate on the guided meditation that Mahora led. Once she had reached a light trance state, the hypnotherapist began guiding her towards a deeper alpha state, one that would allow her to access levels within her that she hadn't explored.

Slowly, Aline sank into heightened awareness while her body seemed to fall asleep. On some level she could hear Mahora speaking to her, but otherwise, she allowed herself to wander, checking her astral cord like she had been taught. As she finally separated the astral body and the physical body completely, she heard Mahora's voice.

"Aline, I want you to walk down the hallway behind you. Notice how your lifeline leads that way?"

"Yes." Aline started walking down the hallway,

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noting the doors and various shaped mirrors that filled it. "What are all these doors and mirrors for?"

"They are all reflections of your past and your past lives. Search for a door or mirror that reminds you of Egypt, Aline." Mahora's voice was so warm, lulling.

Nodding, she looked at each door and mirror. Some seemed to have pictures of parts relating to this life, but others were different, one looked like it had a Greek key design, and another seemed to have a Romanesque theme. One of the mirrors seemed to even have a Baroque feel to it. She meandered among them, her hand gently caressing as she kept looking for something Egyptian.

Then she saw it. The door was shaped like a pyramid, glistening white, and upon it was carved a name in hieroglyphics. Reading the name of Merinefrot, Aline shivered, as it seemed to be a name she remembered. Pushing the door gently, it opened to her touch.

"That's right, Aline. Enter the door and tell me what you see inside," Mahora commanded softly.

First thing Aline noticed was the increase of temperature, as if someone coaxed up the thermostat a bit. Though she realized she was in ancient times, it reminded her to be grateful of air conditioning when she awoke. The next thing was murmuring. There were voices speaking quietly behind the linens that blocked her view. Carefully, she parted them and peeked in. A couple lay naked on a bed as they kissed and touched each other.

Suddenly, Aline was no longer looking at them,

but inside the woman—her body on fire with the drugging touches of the man beside her. It was no longer like watching a film; she was part of it, memories flooding back into her mind as her body reacted to the touch of this gorgeous man.

"Look at me, Meri," he huskily whispered as he licked her throat. Warmth filled her body as her hands slid down his back.

"Yes, Anskhepre?" Her eyes locked with his as his hands cupped her breasts. Desire pooled between her naked thighs as his fingers kneaded her nipples.

"I want you to be mine. I've asked Pharaoh Menekaure to give you to me." His mouth slid over one nipple, his teeth rasping against the taut, aching tip.

"You've asked him for what?" she asked, her body bowing as his mouth suckled tightly.

"For your hand in marriage." His mouth whispered downward. "I love you, Meri. I don't want you here among his concubines."

She nodded, her hands gripping his shoulders as he continued his downward exploration of her body. "I love you, Pre. Always and forever."

Nothing else mattered as his mouth closed over her damp slit. The only thing that existed was this moment, this joining. His fingers stroked her bare skin, then slid deep inside. Her body bowed at the exquisite pleasure of having him suckle her clitoris while his long, lean fingers thrust deep in her pussy. Finally she could take no more.

"Pre!" she shouted as her climax rolled through her body. The sensation of falling gripped her. "Don't let me go," Meri whimpered.

"Never!" he answered, his mouth caressing up her body.

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Suddenly Aline heard another voice intrude.

"Aline, are you okay?"

She swallowed. "Yes. Oh, my gods, that was so real."

"Real? Tell me." Mahora's voice filled with some emotion that Aline couldn't quite determine.

"I wasn't just watching that lovemaking. I was there. Felt it. My body is trembling from what he did to me." Her voice cracked slightly as she shifted in her seat.

"It's okay. It happens when the love is soul deep. Can you walk past that room?"

"Yes." Aline maneuvered past the bedroom and the sunshine made her cover her eyes. "I'm outside now. There are people working in the distance, and I'm in a litter of some kind. It's still a little dark out, but you can tell the full sunrise is soon."

As she watched herself being carried, Aline walked alongside them. Realization hit her; they were near Giza. Squinting, she made out the shining objects in the distance that were two of the three finished pyramids. The litter made its way to where the Sphinx sat guarding the pyramid complexes.

Once at the entrance of the temple area, Meri alighted from the litter while Aline walked alongside. She looked at the Sphinx and gasped. Instead of the uncoloured monument, it was painted in blues, golds and other vibrant colours that brought it to life. Even the temple was coloured and beautiful. As she watched herself walk forward, the man from the bedroom appeared, clothed in linen skirting wrapped

low on his hips. She smiled at him and bowed. Aline grinned, and suddenly she was pulled into her past life once again.

"Greetings, Anskhepre."

"Blessings upon you, Merinefrot. What brings you here?"

"I come to thank Horakty for his continued blessings and on the behest of our Pharaoh Menekaure."

The high priest nodded and gestured for her to follow him. He led into a sunlit area where he had begun giving offerings. "What news comes from our Living Horus?"

"He has sent me to do my offerings as I asked, and to tell you to come to him today. He has approved your request, but wishes to see for himself before handing me to your side as your wife."

"He wants to make sure that you're not going to a mad priest."

"Or to make sure that I'll be properly loved."

Wordlessly, they offered small animal offerings to Horakty Akhet, the Horus of the Horizon, that which the Sphinx has been called for ages past. As they finished the first part of the offering, Meri sang an ancient song with the chantresses accompanying her with voice and rattles. As they encouraged the sun's rays to lift above the horizon, both Meri and Pre shared a smile, their hands intertwining. A sudden noise caught their attention, causing them both to turn around.

There stood Menekaure with his chief wife. He looked from Meri to Anskhepre with darkened eyes. "You have told him, Merinefrot? Could you not send a runner?"

She bowed her head and prostrated herself on the ground before Menkaure. "I did not trust a runner to deliver this

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message. Also, you know that I come here five mornings a week to thank Horakty for allowing me to be part of your life, Pharaoh."

"Always you've been helpful to me and my Great Wife," Menkaure said, motioning for Meri to rise. Once she was seated before him, he continued. "My wife would see you married, even though she appreciates your company within the harim. I too wish you happiness, but I don't wish you to leave and take your happy countenance with you."

"I'd never deprive you or the Great Wife of your deepest pleasures, Pharaoh." She bowed her head. "How can this be resolved to bring satisfaction for all?"

The beautiful woman beside him stepped forward and knelt on one knee before Meri. "Look at me, Merinefrot. I know what you are thinking. You know that visiting another's house is frowned upon, and we would not have that happen here." Meri's eyes locked with the dark-chocolate ones of Khamerernebtly II. "What we wish is that you still be part of the royal court, though you shall be wife to the high priest of Ra. Thus your family shall benefit from both positions."

Anskhepre spoke. "But that is normally frowned upon by the priestly class."

"But do not the royals send their children to spend time among the various priests' cults?" Khamerernebtly asked coldly.

"Yes, but it's not –"

"I am pharaoh; Ma'at demands that I do what is right within the land. This is right. If you wish to wed Meri, you will allow her to spend part of her days at the royal palace. None shall touch nor harm her, on this I give my word."

Pre gripped Meri's hand as he knelt on one knee before

the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. "I shall keep you to your word, Pharaoh Menkaure. My heart is joined to Meri's, as is my life. Shall we be given rooms at the palace or will a place nearby be sufficient?"

"Your choice, but my Wife and I are happy that you acquiesce to this." Menkaure smiled at them both. "May the blessings of Ra, Horus, and Isis be upon you both. Be happy together."

With that, Menkaure and Khamerernebtj turned and left the Sphinx temple to the chantresses and the couple.

Meri cupped Pre's chin. "You are still upset, aren't you?"

His eyes wouldn't meet hers. "You don't understand. He tries to bring the cult of Ra under his control. That is unacceptable."

"Pre, you don't understand. It's not you or the cult he wants. It's me." Her voice was soft. She bent down so she could see his expression. "I am one of his favourites. I make no excuses. Khame enjoys my company because I know how to keep peace. Do you not think that after the time of Khufu and the hardships endured that the throne of Horus needs some peace and happiness? It is my duty."

"I am your duty. I am your husband."

"Yes, and the keeping of Ma'at is the duty of the king. He says this will help. We cannot go against the balance of the world. Can you face the gods in the afterlife and tell them it was wrong for the divine god-king to ask such a thing of us?"

"It's wrong, even if he is divine, Meri. I shall allow it for as long as we can keep it up, but my duties do require me to go to Heliopolis and other areas."

"I know, and I wouldn't ask you to stop."

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"As my wife, you shall accompany me on this trip." His voice was hard.

"But – "

"You are my wife. When I travel, you shall come with me. This is not an option. Traveling to other places is part of my duty, Merinefrot. You know this. Do not disobey me on it." He pulled from her and left the temple.

Meri sat there, her eyes welling with tears. This wasn't what she thought would happen. How can she choose between duty and love? How could she, a young royal lady, a former concubine of the Pharaoh, handle this when it put her at odds with her king and her new husband?

Aline pulled back, gasping as tears ran down her face. "I remember, Mahora. We fought over this. When I had to go to Heliopolis, the Pharaoh had gotten sick. Oh, gods, I should've been there."

"Shh...it's okay, Aline. I want you to find the doorway and come back into the hallway."

Nodding, Aline looked back at her crying self and sighed before heading towards the door that stood ahead of her. She wiped the tears from her own eyes and tried to concentrate on remembering what happened to Menkaure. Once she was at the door, she hesitated for a moment, looking over her shoulder.

There stood Paul, both as Pre and as himself. The souls overlapped, and both seemed sad and alone. Aline resisted the urge to run into his arms. She had her memories back of that life, and some things still hurt even after all that had passed by. Time, she needed time to be able to work through it all.

Opening the door, she stepped through and closed

it, her eyes straight ahead. "Okay, I'm in the hallway."

"Good, now slowly make your way back toward my voice."

Mahora guided her slowly past the other doors, some of which Aline began to recall, others that were a complete blank. But her time as an Egyptian was clear in her mind. All of it was coming back, slowly, just as she was sure it had been for Paul. Her eyes closed briefly as her heart clenched. She wanted him so badly, had been without him for so long. Her love had lasted beyond many lifetimes, but only now had they learned the lessons and the truth on things. Now, only now could they have a chance. With her memories came another question. Could she trust him to tell her the truth on what he had done that one night with the spells written on that papyrus? Only time would tell. She'd have to face him and ask him for the truth.

Mahora's words helped her to concentrate on her breathing, letting go the pain and the emotions of the past. Slowly, her consciousness rose as she came out of the trance. Blinking in the dim light, Aline sighed as she leaned her head back against the chair. "Wow."

"Wow indeed, Merinefrot. My pleasure is to serve you once again after all of these years," Mahora replied, her head bowing in respect.

"Thank you for helping me, Tetisetamun. I never would've recognized you if you hadn't helped me regain these memories." Aline smiled at the woman, seeing the old life as an overlay on the new body.

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“Without you, I’d not remember that life or my place within it. Things make more sense now.”

“That’s good, Aline. But what will you do about Pre?”

Aline gasped. “You remember him?”

“Yes, I do. In fact, we’re cousins in this life, just as in the past. I know he’s waited a long time for forgiveness, Meri. Will you ever forgive him for taking you away when Menkaure took ill?”

Aline looked at the lamp that was lit in the corner. That was the question. Could she forgive Pre? Would she forgive him? What did he know that she didn’t? She had been special among the harim even after she was married. There were things she had known that he hadn’t. But now, things were different. That was part of her past, a distant past and this was the present.

“I need to reach Paul.”

“Let me call him to escort you back to the hotel, Meri.”

“Thanks. Can I have something to drink?”

Mahora rose. “Yes. I’ll get you something cool and refreshing. Things like past life regression can take a lot out of you. Rest, Lady Meri.”

Closing her eyes, Aline concentrated on her breathing, allowing her past memories to take their place and to gain distance and perspective upon them. Paul’s words rang in her ears. She did want to jump at the memories and believe that he killed the pharaoh with magick, but her life, her world now, told her that she didn’t have any evidence beyond a

glimpse of what he was doing that long ago night to base her suspicions upon.

Hearing noises in the other room, Aline rose from the chair. Before she could move any further, Paul and Mahora entered the office area. She could tell they were both nervous and on edge, just like she was.

“Aline?”

She sat back down and gestured for them both to sit. “Paul, we need to talk. Mahora, please stay.” Gratefully, she took the glass of juice and sipped at it. The sweet-sour taste soothed her throat and stomach, helping her to settle back into herself more. She waited until they were settled in nearby chairs.

“What can I tell you, Meri?” Paul asked as he kept clasping and unclasping his hands.

The hint of citrus and spice wafted past her nostrils, bringing back memories of that one night of intense passion with him. She couldn’t let passion sway her this time. “Tell me if you were the one who wrote or performed the spell to kill Menekaure.”



CHAPTER FOUR

The cousins shared a look before Paul leaned forward, catching Aline's hand. "I knew of the spell being done."

She tried to pull away, but he wouldn't release her hand. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, she stopped resisting. There was too much she needed to know, and he was her only source. "And you didn't stop it."

"No, I didn't. Instead I adjusted the story in which they were using and changed the spell itself in the hope that the priest who was casting it wouldn't realize that the spell was to only make Menkaure sick if he was guilty of hurting his people."

"Because of the pyramid? Or because of rumours started by the other cults?" Aline asked, her voice filling with anger. "People thought us women were ignorant and unable to comprehend what was happening. I knew as did the others that there were those who were upset with Menekaure's decision."

"He took the name of Ra, yes. But he was also exacting just as much work as his father and

grandfather. The rulers between didn't ask for such."

"It was a joy to work for the pharaoh. Don't try to bullshit me, Paul. I know my history and I've studied the texts. We both know that the only people who were pissed were the priests of the other cults because they felt they were being slighted."

Mahora interjected. "They were slighted, Aline. Don't try to lie about it."

"I'm not, but it wasn't the commoners who killed the king. It was priests...priests who served the Ennead, who served Ma'at. What they did was a violation of Ma'at, and there is no justification that makes it right!" Aline stood up, glaring at them both. "What part of accessory to murder did you not understand?"

Mahora slid from her chair and stood facing her. "Look, Aline, no one said it was right, but stopping it wasn't an option. Don't you think those who were against it didn't try? Do you think your own husband just stepped back and let them do it without protesting?"

Aline stepped back. "I don't know what to believe anymore, but he did have it. He could've destroyed it."

"Then they would've killed him and you."

"But they had me killed *anyway!*" she screamed. "You forget, I remember it all!"

Rushing past them, Aline headed for the front door. She wasn't sure how she was going to get away from them both, but she needed time away. Time to work this through. Her past, the dreams she had for

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many years were true and now she had to have distance to work it all out. To figure out why on earth the man she loved allowed her to die.

* * * *

Aline wasn't certain how she got back safely to her hotel room, yet she was there. Stripping off her clothes, she let loose the tears that had been wanting out for the past two hours. As she climbed into the shower where the hot water pounded her skin, Aline allowed herself to mourn for the first time in over three thousand years. Nothing could stop the pain of knowing she died because of her questioning Menkaure's death. That in the end, her husband hadn't protected her when she needed him most. Could she forgive him? Should she?

Feeling even more drained emotionally and physically, Aline climbed into her bed after drying off to sleep. Praying that she wouldn't dream, she shut her eyes.

* * * *

The journey to Saqqara was hard on Aline. She craved to return to the pyramids of Giza. Yet, she knew if she didn't see the pyramids at Saqqara, she'd be neglecting the real reason she came to Egypt—exploring all of its ancient legacies. Wiping the sweat from the back of her neck, she walked towards the Step Pyramid.

She looked around the sandy area, taking in not only the pyramid, but the entire necropolis. To her, it didn't look as clean or as elegant as the Gizamids, which she called the entire pyramid area of Giza. Looking around, she realized what she didn't see. Heading towards the western area of the Step Pyramid, she looked out at the sand covering many miles of land. "One day, grandfather, they shall find your burial place. May the sacred name of Imhotep live forever," she whispered. Kneeling down, she dug her fingers in the hot granules, letting her words take the form of a spell. "You are eternal, both man and god. You created medicine to help us and gave us the symbol of eternity. Thank you, Imhotep, for all you've done. I never knew you, but our line lives through me and my family."

Brushing the sand from her pants, Aline turned back to the Step Pyramid. She should go closer, but part of her was still upset over the confrontation she had two nights before with Paul and Mahora. Right now, the whole Saqqara issue from that time just irritated her. But following the crowd, she partially listened to the tour guide as he explained about the necropolis, mentally correcting things, since she came back to her full memory of the past life.

As she started to follow them into the complex, a hand grabbed her shoulder, tugging her back. Before she could scream, the person turned her to face him. It was Paul. "We need to talk, Aline."

"What is there to talk about, Paul? You knew they were going to try to kill him by magickal means, and

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you let them. Even if you changed the spell, you knew you put me at risk, too." She felt the tears welling up in her eyes. She wouldn't cry, not in front of him. Not here, not now.

"I know you hate me for that, but you don't know the full story. Again, Merinefrot, you choose to see only what you want to, not what truly was. Do you think I would allow harm to come to you?"

Wiping away the tears, she sniffled, "I'm not sure anymore. I thought you'd love and protect me forever. Then I saw what you did. Yes, I know you were trying to minimize the problem, but you knew of my loyalty to the Pharaoh. If you could allow hurt to the divine Horus among us, should I believe you'd protect a lowly mortal, even if she was your wife?"

He tugged on her arm and pulled her over to where they could have a semblance of privacy. Wiping away her tears, he tugged her closer against him. "If I had known that they'd have gone after anyone who questioned them... I didn't want to go back to Thebes without you. But you also insisted on staying even when I asked you to accompany me, remember? I'm not all at fault for putting your life in danger. You bear guilt too."

Her chin lifted as she tried to look past his shoulder. "I know I bear guilt. Much guilt. I should've destroyed the spell instead of creeping back to bed, knowing something was wrong. And I had to stay for the Queen; there were issues that had to be taken care of, Paul. She needed people she could rely on."

"I know, but you knew I had to leave. That with his

passing, I had to go back to the fair city and find out what all could be done to take the guilty people into custody, as well as wait for the crowning of the next Pharaoh. I warned you that people might retaliate if you kept pushing for answers and I couldn't be there to protect you, but you chose to dismiss me and my concerns. Don't think I can't recall our last argument, Aline!"

"So we're at an impasse."

"Are we? Or are you holding onto preconceived ideas because admitting your error means that you must forgive the man who stayed by your side for the seventy days, who made sure you were buried with honour, who died of a broken heart shortly after you were entombed?"

Her eyes strayed to his. A single tear fell down his cheek. "I paid for my leaving ten times over. Coming home to you, dying from poison, was more than I could handle. Those who were guilty were executed. I gave up my position as high priest in order to make sure that no one harmed your mummified form. My heart broke knowing you were dead because I hadn't done enough."

"Truly?"

"Yes. Then I made the deal with the Ennead. To find a way to give us a chance to make amends, to love each other fully." Paul cupped her chin as his lips touched hers. "Give me that chance to make up my folly."

"The great Nine Gods allowed this?" she whispered as he kissed her lips softly, gently.

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“Yes. But this would be my last time to be allowed to find you. After this, I’d have been lost forever. Forsaken and my heart given to Ammit, the soul devourer.”

Aline swallowed, trying to bring moisture to her dry mouth. “No, please not that.” Her hands slid up to his shoulders as her fingers toyed with his white cotton shirt. “Where do we go from here?”

“Come with me. Let me take you back to Cairo. Spend the day with me. Let me make love with you. Let’s try again, please?” His voice was husky with emotion. Even his eyes showed the depth of his passion, his dedication to making amends.

She couldn’t speak, but nodded her acquiescence. Inside she knew that she’d forgiven him when she slept that night, but she had to hear him admit that he’d been wrong, just as she had. “I’m sorry. I should’ve listened back then,” she whispered tearfully.

“We both should have done things differently, Aline. But what matters now is that we rectify the past mistakes and learn from them. I’m willing to do that. I’m willing to take whatever you want to toss at me, but what are you willing to do?”

She snuffled back her tears and looked deeply into his dark brown eyes. “Take me to your home, Paul. It’s time we forgave each other and tried to love each other like we did before.”

“Are you sure? Is that what you really want?”

“Yes. I want you. I needed you the other night, but I ran. I apologize for not talking it out further.”

He kissed her forehead and curled her body around his. "It's okay, my *hobb kureen*."

"Soulmate love," she whispered. "How long I've missed hearing those words."

"Then let me pour them over you." His arms around her, Paul escorted her to his car. "Let me lavish you with the attention and care for as you deserve, my soulmate. *Oreedohi*, I want you."

"*Oreedok*. And I want you as well, Paul."

* * * *

Once settled in the car for the trip back to Cairo, they talked. Not just on the present, but also regarding the past. Many times Paul asked her if she understood now in context what was happening, especially since time and an outside perspective were now on both their sides.

"Are you sure I'm worth waiting for?" Aline asked in all seriousness.

"Definitely. We were soulmates then and now. Why would I want any other woman?" Paul grinned. "We've shared dreams at times, Aline. Don't tell me that you're not curious to see if the dreams match to reality."

She blushed. "Well, yeah, but dammit, Paul, it's a bit unnerving knowing what you did to me back in ancient Egypt."

"That's nothing to what I'm going to do to you now."

"That's what I'm concerned about. What good am I

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going to be if I'm a puddle of goo in the middle of the bed afterwards?"

His chuckle rang in her ears. "I don't think that's going to be a problem, my dearest."

"If you say so."

* * * *

She wasn't sure exactly how they got into his modest flat in Cairo, but within minutes, Paul kissed her breathless and his hands roamed the length of her back, pulling her flush against him. "Oh, Paul, please."

"Bedroom. Now." Walking her backwards, he guided her towards the darkened room, as he peeled off her shirt and bra. "Your skin is so beautiful, so delectable." His mouth kissed the tip of one breast, then the other.

Gasping as intense need drew deep inside, she began unbuttoning his shirt. He helped by pulling it over his head, exposing his tanned skin to her gaze. He was completely unblemished and beautiful, so damned beautiful. His chest was bare, the muscles lightly outlined. Reaching out, she drew a finger across his chest, following the long lean lines. "You are so beautiful. Your body is wonderful."

"No more than yours," he said while shedding the last of his clothes. He was like a demigod, extraordinary in looks, in the pureness of line. Yet he was aroused for her.

Her right hand drew down further, softly caressing

his cock before going further, cupping his balls. "Oh, gods, so soft, so hard. I'd forgotten what it was like," she whispered as she knelt before him.

Paul stopped her. "You don't have —"

"I want to." Her mouth closed over the head of his arousal. Slowly, she slid her wet mouth down as her other hand stroked the rest of his length. His moans made her smile as her feminine power raised its head. Here she could show him how much he meant to her then, and suddenly now. Here he would see just what he did to her.

As her mouth took him in further, she felt his fingers fist her hair, urging her to take him faster. She hummed her approval as her own desire rose, pleasuring this man who waited millennia for her. Taking him fully, she then—agonizingly slow—pulled back, keeping her lips tight against his throbbing cock. Her other hand gently squeezed his balls until only the head remained in her mouth.

"Come here, now!" Paul pulled at her, forcing her to let go of his salty cock. "I need to be in you, Aline. Now."

Without fanfare, he ripped off her pants, panties going with them, as she kicked off her shoes. Pushing her back on the bed, he slid between her thighs. "I'm sorry, but I have waited so long, I can't wait anymore."

Aline smiled as she opened up her legs further, allowing him full access to her warm and willing pussy. "I want you."

Paul thrust hard, sliding his cock deep into her.

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They both groaned as he slid to the hilt. "I love you, Aline. Then, now, forever, I love you."

"I don't know if it's the past or now, but I do love you, Paul."

With each thrust, he spoke of his love, his desire for her. She met him stroke for stroke. Her fingernails raked his back as she urged him deeper within her. Sensing they were both close, Paul slid her legs high upon his shoulders, allowing him to have a deeper penetration. Pulling back until he was almost fully withdrawn, Paul surged forward until their bodies slammed together.

"Paul!" she screamed as her body shuddered in climax. "I love you!"

"My Aline," he cried out as his body released into hers. "My love, my life."

Their breathing filled the room as they slowly came down from the high that built between them. Paul slid to the side, moving Aline so she rested on top of him. Brushing the hair from her face, he kissed her cheeks, her nose, then her lips. "Are you okay?"

"I'm beyond okay. That was so wonderful. It was better than we had before, wasn't it?"

"Yes. I think we've both healed and come to terms with things. I do love you, Aline. Don't think I said it just out of passion."

"I know. I can feel it. I love you, Paul. It's quick, it's sudden, but in a way, I've always stayed in love with you over the millennia. It's going to take me some time to be able to flow more with this, but don't give up on me."

"I won't let you go this time. I'm staying by your side."

"Even when I go home and see my parents?"

"Definitely then. I want them to know I love you and I want to marry you."

Aline looked up from his chest. "You do?"

"Yes, but when you're ready." While kissing her palm, Paul moved his hips, proving how ready he was for another round of lovemaking. "You set the pace."

Aline nodded as she arched against his hips, driving his now hardening cock deep within her. "Like now, too?"

"If you'd like."

"Yes, I'd like." Leaning over, Aline kissed Paul deeply on the lips. "This is our new beginning. Fresh with love, no more past to hold us back."

"A new love eternal."

"Just like a pyramid," she smiled.

"Love is like a pyramid. A symbol of eternity," he whispered as his hands guided her against him. "Our eternity of patient love."

"Yesss," she hissed as pleasure filled her body, heart and soul. She'd come home and found love.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in the Windy City, even her mother knew something was wrong when Cyn began to read at age four. Since then, she's landed in Florida and no one remembers what it's like to have a quiet night.

Writing for her whole life, she finally got serious at the tender age of thirty-two and started submitting her writing. Now, she plays at being an operator, and listens to accents like they're going out of style.

Cynnara loves many things in life, and praise is one of them. Please feel free to rant, rave and giggle to her at any time. She'll be glad to gab with another person.