



InSeld

THE CAPTIVE ONE

TALES OF THE MAGICIAN, BOOK ONE

MELINDA BARRON

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BOOK ONE:
THE CAPTIVE ONE

Melinda Barron

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This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable (voyeurism, ménage, and homoerotic interaction).

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The Captive One**

Melinda Barron

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Dedication

Special thanks to Loose ID for giving my writing a chance. And thanks to my family and friends for their support and encouragement. Special thanks to Maryam, Cathy, David and Anne, Bridget, Jamie, Shannon, Tea and especially my Mother, who pushed my love of books, and always encouraged me to write.

Author's Note

Readers who know Egypt will realize that I used poetic license with the timeline for Ramesses III's mighty career. There was indeed a harem revolt during his time as Pharaoh, but it was not at the beginning of his reign. The Harem Conspiracy implicated more than forty people, who sought to assassinate the last great king of the New Kingdom so that the son of a lesser wife could take the throne. The revolt failed and Ramesses III, who reigned for approximately thirty years, was succeeded by Ramesses IV, the son of his main wife, Isis.

Chapter One

Outside Saqqara, Egypt

“This is an auspicious moment, everyone. When you list this site on a job application people will be jumping to hire you.”

“Yeah, if we don’t die of heatstroke today,” a heckler yelled. “Let’s go exploring already!”

Julia Rafferty joined in the group’s laughter. Everyone was itching to go inside. Archeological fever had gripped the workers five months before, when Noble Walters literally stumbled over the edge of a building buried in the Egyptian sand. Further digging had revealed a roof. When they’d uncovered the roof, they found walls.

Now the structure was totally uncovered and the archeologists and students gathered near were chomping at the bit to see what was hidden inside the walls.

“Hold on, hold on,” Nob said, raising his hands to quiet the crowd. “I know that you’ll want to see what’s what. But we have to do this logically and safely. The first thing we’re going to do is take measurements so we can cut beams to shore up the ceiling. Once that’s done, we will go inside in groups of five to explore.”

The crowd broke out in grumbles and Nob quieted them once again. Julia grinned. If there was one thing Nob was good at, it was charming a crowd. Too bad that didn't extend to his personal life. At least not where she was concerned. She shook her head and furrowed her brows in a frown as Noble laughed.

"Everyone will get to go inside today, or early tomorrow at the latest. I don't need to remind you that this place has been buried in the sand for more than two thousand years. We need to make sure it's safe before we start our excavation and cataloguing. Remember, we're archeologists, not treasure hunters. The most important thing is preserving history."

A round of applause greeted the words and Julia watched Nob jump down from his makeshift dais. He nodded to the two university representatives and Maggie, the photographer, and then pointed to Carin Oakes.

The group made their way down the ramp to the still partially buried structure, and Julia sighed. *Well, shit. I'm more senior than Carin. Of course, I'm not a perfect size two, so I guess I have to wait until tomorrow to see the interior.*

"Sucks, don't it? Guess we know where we stand in the grand scheme of things." Julia grinned as Chris McGee and Joe Murray joined her. They watched the quintet disappear inside the building.

"I can understand him taking the university guys and Maggie," Chris continued. "But Carin Oakes? Crap, the only thing she works hard at is trying to find someone to do her job. Why does she get to go first?"

"Because her daddy's on the university board and provided all the money for the excavation," Joe answered.

"True. He even suggested the cemetery site," Chris said. "But I think Nob's gonna try and find a quiet place to boink her while they're down there. Everybody knows they're screwing."

Julia winced at Chris's words. It was common knowledge that Nob and Carin were sleeping together, but she didn't want to hear it. That fact only reminded Julia that Nob had rejected her.

"You still pining for him?" Joe's voice was soft. "Get over it, sweetie. He stood you up. You can find better."

Julia laughed. "Better? I hate it when people who are in love say that. You two have each other, so don't give me that 'you can find better' crap."

"True, Jules, true," Chris said. "But if I were straight, I would run for you in a heartbeat."

"I'll keep that in mind," Julia answered with a grin. "There's no telling how long they'll be down there, so let's go see what's on the menu for lunch."

The ten Cameron University students being used as free labor for a grade were milling about the food cart with several of the local workers that Nob had hired. The professional staff included herself, Nob, Chris, Joe, and Maggie. The university representatives had shown up when it was clear Nob's group was near to entering the structure. Carin was only along because she wanted Nob. And because her daddy was paying the bills.

Julia harrumphed to herself as she took her feast of a sandwich, chips, apple and bottled water to a table where she could watch the entrance. He should have taken the whole staff inside first thing. Professional courtesy dictated that. Instead, he'd taken his new lay along. Further proof that Nob was an asshole.

She tuned out Chris and Joe's conversation and stared at the building. The find was incredible, and it *was* Nob who had made it. He'd taken a walk one day while they were working on excavating mastaba tombs at the Saqqara cemetery and tripped over a find that would bring any archeologist to his knees.

And the find had sent Nob into a tailspin. Giddy with excitement, he'd kissed Julia soundly and then invited her to dinner in Cairo for the next night.

Then he'd stood her up. Two days later, she'd seen him kissing the perfect little Carin. And the bastard hadn't apologized or mentioned the incident since then.

Julia had only worked with Noble for a few weeks prior to his leaving for Egypt last year. She'd joined the university archeology department and fallen head over heels for the handsome man. Not that she let him know. She kept those feelings bottled inside. Bottled until her transfer to Egypt three months before Nob's find. Then she thought she'd seen a ripple of interest on his part. Until the night of the big stand-up.

Julia took a bite of her sandwich and sighed. She wasn't ugly by any stretch of the imagination. But her size-16 body couldn't compete with Carin's perky little boobs and flat stomach. She'd given Nob more credit than being a man who only looked at body size. She'd been wrong.

"Here he comes," Chris yelled, almost knocking over the table as he stood.

Julia had been so lost in thought that she hadn't seen Nob come up from the building.

She smiled as he walked up. He looked just like a little kid at Christmas, a huge grin plastered on his striking face.

"It's incredible," Nob said. "It's someone's house. Perfectly preserved. Furniture and all. I've never seen anything like it."

"Neither have we," Julia said with a smirk.

Nob frowned at her and she lowered her gaze. Then she looked up again and frowned at him. Screw his feelings. She was pissed and he needed to know it.

"Do we get to go down today? Perhaps you want to take the media first."

Nob's frown turned into a deep scowl. "Let me give the measurements for the shoring beams to the workers and then I'll go down with you."

He walked off toward the local employees and Joe turned to Julia.

"Meow." He raked imaginary claws in the air and she grinned.

"He's a prick, and I don't care if he knows that I feel that way."

“He may be a prick, but we all know that you want him,” Chris answered with a laugh. “Play your cards right and you could help him break in the dig, the old-fashioned way.”

Noble returned before Julia could answer.

“Let’s go,” he said, motioning them toward the structure.

The trio fell into step behind him and Julia tried not to stare at his ass. But it was hard not to. He had a nice ass. It went along with his broad shoulders and chest. And the rest of him wasn’t bad, either. Nob had classic good looks, a full nose and square jaw. He had large, deep-set hazel eyes that flashed dark brown when he was angry. And all this was framed by curly dark hair that fell around his shoulders, since he hadn’t bothered to get a haircut after making the find. He’d started pulling his hair back into a ponytail. It gave him a roguish look that Julia loved.

When Nob stopped at the entrance, Julia almost ran into him. She’d been thinking about that ass and wasn’t paying attention. She blushed when Chris gave her a knowing grin.

“Flashlights,” Nob said, handing one to each of them. “And watch your step. We found a scorpion in one of the rooms and there is sand inside that needs to be cleared out, so there are probably more unwanted guests around. Don’t want anyone to get stung, so be careful.”

They took a few steps down the ramp and then Carin’s voice rang out. “Wait for me.”

“You’ve already been down,” Nob said.

“In more ways than one, I’m sure,” Chris whispered and Joe and Julia laughed.

“I want to go again.” Carin pouted.

“Later,” Nob said. “I don’t want too many people down there at once.”

Julia smiled when he left without waiting for an answer from Carin, whose pout turned into a scowl of anger.

The perky little blond shot Julia a go-to-hell look and then flounced away.

They made their way down the entry ramp and then walked down a short flight of stairs that had been uncovered.

“We need to fit this place with a door,” Nob said as they stepped inside. “And once the workers clear the sand near the windows I want plastic put up on the window openings to keep out the sand and other creepy crawlers.”

Julia felt her breath catch in her throat as she shone her light around the room. It was huge. And it was beautiful. The stone walls looked as if they’d just been put in place yesterday. The furniture was made of stone and wood, and the pillows and coverings that decorated them showed the ravages of two thousand years.

“Someone very rich lived here,” she said softly. “How can it be that it’s so perfectly preserved, as if the owners just walked out the door yesterday to go and get milk?”

“Good question,” Nob said. “Something I hope we can find out.”

“How many rooms are there?” Joe asked.

“Seven. The main room here and six other smaller chambers. One that could have been used for eating, three sleeping rooms and two that are right up Jules’s alley.”

Julia looked at Nob, who was grinning from ear to ear.

“Up my alley how?”

“The walls are covered in hieroglyphs.”

Julia’s area of expertise was Egyptian languages, including hieroglyphs and hieratic. Finding a wall of hieroglyphs in a residence was unheard of.

“Hieroglyphs? In someone’s house? Show me.”

* * * * *

“Watch your step,” Nob said as he led Julia down the hall. He’d loved seeing the smile on her face when he’d mentioned the hieroglyphs. The minute he’d set eyes on the rooms he’d wanted to bring her down here, wanted to watch her face light up as she examined the walls. Wanted to watch her trace her hands along the walls. And if he could talk her into running those hands along his body, so much the better. His cock twitched at the thought.

He motioned her inside the chamber and then stood back to watch her reaction. He wasn't disappointed.

She ran to the wall and pushed her hat off her head, exposing the bun of long brown hair that had been hidden underneath. She placed her hands on her curvy hips and let her gaze roam over the walls. Then she put her fingers on the carvings and turned to Nob and laughed.

The smile on her beautiful face could light up the entire room. Nob felt himself harden further. Damn, she was beautiful. Not classically so, but Nob couldn't wait to get her in his arms. He wanted to see her green eyes flashing desire as he pumped into her. Wanted to see her full lips pursed as she moaned his name. He knew that she was uneasy about the fact that she wasn't rail thin, as society demanded these days, but Nob didn't care. She was curvy in all the right places and that was fine with him.

Nob grinned as she traced the glyphs with her fingers. God, how he wanted her to use those fingers on him. His now fully hard cock jumped as if to scream for her to stroke him. He would stroke her right back and then let his hands drop down to those luscious, full breasts. Her nipples would be rock hard and he would ... Nob shook his head. He'd screwed up once, one time, and she hadn't forgiven him. And it wasn't as if he hadn't left her a message canceling the date and asking her to join him with the university reps that had come into town unexpectedly. But she hadn't bothered to show up. She'd just gotten pissed. And she was still pissed.

Every time she focused those beautiful eyes on him, he saw nothing but anger. If he could turn that anger back into the lust he used to see, things would be great. Maybe working in these rooms would be the first step.

"This room is as big as the main chamber," Nob said in an effort to refocus his thoughts. "The other room with glyphs is smaller. Both rooms have this table in the middle."

Jules was still running her fingers from side to side, reading the glyphs. A frown appeared on her face.

"I think that table may be an altar," she said, pulling her hand back and giving Nob a frightened look.

"Why do you think that?" He took a step toward her and prayed that in the darkness she wouldn't notice his hard cock begging to be released, begging to be inside her pussy.

"Because these glyphs were used to write out spells," she whispered as she shone her light around the walls. "Enchantments of dark magic. At least this one is. Its title is *How to Kill the One You Hate*. And if one is a curse, I'm sure they all are."

"Spells?" Nob walked to her and ran his fingers along the lines of markings. It was times like this he wished he'd paid more attention in language classes. "Are you sure?"

"I'm sure. I think this may be a magician's house."

* * * * *

"Is there a hex over the doorway?" Julia's voice trembled as she looked at Nob.

She tried to calm her nerves as he walked out under the portal and flashed his light to the top of the frame. Her nerves lessened somewhat when he shook his head.

"It could be just graffiti, maybe?"

Julia laughed, her voice still edged with nerves. "This isn't tagging done by some teenager. These are spells. Real-life, honest-to-God, curse-your-neighbor spells. And if there's one thing you don't want to mess with, it's black magic, Egyptian style."

"Surely you don't believe all the hocus-pocus crap," Nob said with a laugh. "Are you a twenty-first-century woman or not?"

Julia's hackles rose. "Of course I'm a modern woman. But the ancient Egyptians believed in this stuff. You know as well as I do that it played a big part in their lives, so there has to be some truth to it."

“They were a superstitious people, Jules. It’s true that each village had someone who could practice magic to help the village. This could be a magician’s house, yes. And he could have practiced black magic. But that doesn’t mean that if I mutter this spell my neighbor’s dick’s going to fall off. Priests and magicians had the common folk hoodwinked. You’re a scholar. You know it, as well as I do.”

Julia shivered and then gasped softly when Nob crossed the floor and pulled her close to him. Her breasts were pressed against his chest and she felt her nipples pull into tight buds. How long had she waited for this moment? Then she looked down and smiled. He had a hard-on. And a rather impressive one. But Julia knew that hard-on wasn’t caused by her. Nob didn’t want passion from her. It was just from the giddiness of discovery.

“Don’t worry; I won’t let the big bad magician hurt you.” His voice was as soft as a caress and Julia sighed. One little movement from her hand and she could feel him, stroke him. She could already tell he was hard. *Focus, Jules, focus.* This is work, not pleasure.

“Promise?”

“Cross my heart.”

“How can I believe you?” Julia’s heart felt as if it would fly out of her chest.

“Have I lied to you before?” Nob gently rubbed his hands up and down her arms and Julia shivered. Maybe it was passion he wanted. If it was, then why had he stood her up for Carin? The shivering increased when he ran his lips over her forehead. OK, definitely passion. Julia shook her head to clear her muddled brain. *Get a grip, Julia.*

“Yes, you’ve lied to me.”

He pulled back as if she’d slapped him.

“WHEN?”

“How about when you told me you’d take me to dinner and then stood me up to go out with Carin? I think that constitutes a lie.”

“I didn’t! You never showed ...”

“Hey, guys, come look at this!”

Ignoring the look of anger mixed with hurt on Nob’s face, Julia pushed her way past him and moved toward Joe’s voice. She found him and Chris in one of the smaller chambers.

“What is it?” Nob asked from behind her.

“Scrolls,” Chris said, laughing as he reached out and then pulled his hand back from a chest full of papyrus. “I want to touch them so bad. Gloves. We need gloves.”

He started to run from the room and Nob stopped him.

“We need to do this by the book. Beams first. Then photographs and cataloguing. Nothing gets moved until it’s recorded. And I mean nothing. Not even a pebble from the floor.”

“What about scorpions? Or cobras?” Julia raised her eyebrows at Nob and he shook his head.

“You two go and check on the beams,” he said, jerking his thumb toward the outer door. “And tell the workers we want a door.”

Chris and Joe ran for the entrance, laughing like schoolboys.

“And you,” Nob said, grabbing Julia as she made to follow them. “We’re not done with our conversation. I want to talk to you tonight after things have calmed down, around ten or so.”

“I won’t hold my breath,” Julia said, her voice full of sarcasm. His lips were close. So close. All it would take was one quick move. She looked down. Yup, he was still hard.

“Then hold it for this.” He wrapped his arms around her waist and lifted her up until they were face to face, and then he kissed her, pushing his lips against hers until her mouth opened so he could explore with his tongue. She could feel his erection pressing against her stomach.

Julia moaned softly and then pushed against him. When their lips broke she whispered, “Let me go. Please.”

“For now,” Nob answered, his voice low and husky with desire. He lowered his arms until her feet hit the ground. He walked toward the doorway and then looked back. “Ten o’clock at the house.”

“Screw you!”

“We can talk about that later,” Nob screamed back as he walked up the stairs.

“Asshole,” Julia yelled, her voice reverberating in the small room.

Who did he think he was? He couldn’t do this to her. How dare he? Stand her up, ignore her for six months and then kiss her silly. Screw him. Julia had no intentions of meeting with him at the house tonight. And let Carin take care of his hard-on. Julia was sure it wouldn’t be the first time.

* * * * *

At 8:30 that evening, Julia climbed behind the wheel of one of the university vehicles and drove the fifteen miles from the group’s house to the excavation site.

In an effort to save money, the university had rented a house in Giza, outside Cairo, for the entire crew. The students referred to their living quarters as the commune, but Julia had come to think of it as hell. There were only four females on the staff: Julia, Maggie, Carin, and Sissy, who was a student. The four were forced to share one large room. That meant Julia had to see Carin too many times for her liking.

She parked the car near the cemetery and gathered her backpack full of paper, pens, water and some snacks. Then she took three large oil lamps out of the back. A big smile lit her face as she walked toward the house. Nob would be pissed when he found out she was gone. Then his anger would turn to fury when he discovered she’d gone to the house to transcribe some of the hieroglyphs.

If he was expecting sex, he could just make a visit with rosy palm and her five sisters. Or Carin. Julia frowned at the thought. *Quit it, Julia. You’re here to work, so get busy.*

The male student standing guard at the door smiled at her when she reached the entrance.

"Twenty-four-hour guard duty?" she asked with a laugh as she put the lamps on the table.

"Two hour shifts," Kevin answered with a grin. "The other guys are eating. Nob said nobody goes down. But I guess that doesn't include you. He knows you're here, right?"

"Of course he does," Julia answered with a smile even as she inwardly winced at the lie. "He's looking through books, but I couldn't calm down. I'm anxious to get a crack at those carvings."

The last part was true. She'd been eager to try and decipher the spells all day long. But the boss man had nixed the idea until all safety measures were in place and everything was catalogued. Just let him try and stop her now.

"Will you help me downstairs with the lamps?"

Eager to please, Kevin helped her light the lamps and carry them down the stairs. He pushed open the newly installed and still lockless door and led her into the interior of the house.

In the dead of night, the entrance room was eerie and Julia felt a tingle go up her spine. Their shadows danced in the glare from the oil lamp and Julia could swear she heard someone whisper. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Then she shook her head and frowned as Nob's words from that afternoon echoed in her brain. *Are you a twenty-first-century woman or not?*

It was just a house, buried for centuries. She was a scholar, a trained archeologist. She believed in science, not magic. She'd been thrown for a loop that afternoon after reading the spell, but she was better now. She knew what she was doing and she wasn't afraid of evil spirits.

“You want these in the big magic room?” Kevin’s voice was loud in the open space and Julia jumped.

“Sorry, Jules. Big magic room?” He laughed and held up the lamps.

“Yes, the big room. But why do you call it a magic room?”

“Drew told me he’d heard you said the carvings were spells, hence the magic room.”

Julia laughed. Gossip between the students spread fast.

Kevin left her with a lamp and moved toward the back of the structure. He was back a few minutes later, his flashlight illuminating the hallway as he walked toward her.

“Yell if you need something,” he said with a smile as he headed out the door.

When he was gone Julia looked around the room and sighed. Then she picked up her backpack and lamp and moved toward the back part of the house.

She stood in the doorway of the larger room and stared at the walls. The oil lamps were powerful and illuminated the stone perfectly. Four beams had been placed in the center of the room. The altar looked bare and benign and Julia grinned. *It’s just a room. It’s just a room. It’s just a room.* She repeated the phrase over and over as she deposited her backpack on the altar and looked around the space.

The walls were completely covered so it was hard to tell where to start.

She walked to the doorway and ran her fingers across the middle line of carvings to the right of the door. The figures were facing left so that meant the text would be read from left to right. At least that much was clear. She set the oil lamp on the floor and went to the backpack to retrieve a pen and paper.

She smiled as she began to translate the symbols. She hoped that Nob was at the house, furious at being stood up. Of course, there hadn’t been a formal date, so she couldn’t have stood him up like he’d stood her up. But he’d still be pissed that she wasn’t there. She hoped steam was coming out of his ears. This was the best way for him to figure out he couldn’t boss her around when it came to their personal lives.

Personal lives. Julia's stomach clenched as she remembered his hard cock pressed against her stomach. Remembered the desire that had flashed in his eyes.

Damn him! He was just being an asshole. Stringing her along again until he could pull the rug out from under her, just like last time. Men had always done that to her. Then she shook her head. Who was she kidding, men? There had only been two in her life, and they'd both screwed her over. One of them even telling her she was too fat to keep around. Men liked curves he'd said, not fat.

She ran her hands over her figure. She was curvy. But her hourglass figure was set for forty-eight hours, not for twenty-four.

She moaned softly as she thought of Nob's hard cock from that afternoon. Even with his hardness buried under jeans, Julia could tell he was impressive. Maybe just a little playtime with him. Maybe this time would be different.

No, no, no! You're here to work, not to play. He'd had his chance and he'd blown it. And as far as Julia was concerned, it was one strike and you're out.

* * * * *

"How long ago?" Nob stared at Sissy, who shrugged her shoulders and took a drink of her tea.

"An hour, maybe two? I'm not her keeper, you know. I'm a student and she's one of the bosses. I don't ask her questions when she leaves."

"Son of a bitch!" Nob frowned as Sissy backed up and stared at him. "Sorry. Did she say where she was going?"

Sissy shook her head and backed up further. "I saw her take keys to a car, though."

Nob stormed from the room and headed for a car. Jules taking keys to a vehicle could only mean one thing. Even though he'd expressly forbidden anyone to go back inside the house unless he was there, she'd gone to the site. And she'd done it just to piss him off.

Damn her! Messing with shit that she knew nothing about. She'd been right, according to his friend Derrick, who was an expert in Egyptian magic. The walls did contain spells. Evil spells.

Instant messaging was a wonderful thing. Nob had e-mailed Derrick digital photographs from the room. Almost instantly the IM button had binged and Derrick's response had set Nob's hackles on edge.

"HOLY SHIT! Find of a LIFETIME. But don't go back inside. REPEAT. Don't go back inside. Be there in a few days."

Nob had answered that they'd stay out of the magic rooms, but Derrick's reply was adamant.

"Don't go inside. PERIOD. This is some serious shit, Nob. TRUST ME. You may not believe this stuff, but it's real. Lock the place up and I'll be there ASAP."

Now Jules was back inside. And she was there just to piss him off. She was too obstinate for her own good. He smiled at the thought and then he shook his head. According to Sissy she'd been gone for a few hours. He swore again and pushed his foot down on the gas.

* * * * *

Julia giggled as she read from her translations. The first carving was a spell casting a protective bubble over the house of Peneb-Ra, great magician in the court of Ramesses III.

Julia had laughed out loud when she'd read the cartouche featuring Ramesses III's name. Nob would be giddy with happiness. But the happiness would edge off a little when he saw the magician had put his name in a cartouche, something usually reserved for royalty. Peneb-Ra thought a great deal of himself as a magician.

"Hocus-pocus," Julia said softly. It's nothing to be afraid of. It's not real. Just hocus-pocus. She put the finishing touches on her translation of the first spell and then stretched

and looked at her watch. It was after eleven. The oil in the lamps wouldn't last more than another hour. Then she had to go back to Giza and face the wrath of Noble Walters.

She moved to the second spell and ran her fingers over the top line of glyphs. A humming noise filled her ears and she shook her head. She traced the title and took a few minutes to translate the glyphs. The Tale of Nefer-Aneksi.

Julia copied the translation of the first line down on her paper, walked to the altar and took a drink of water. Damn. She wished she'd brought a dictionary with her. Nefer meant beautiful. That much she did know. But what was the second word? She racked her brain and then snapped her finger. Captive. So it was beautiful captive. She frowned and then lifted the paper again. She'd been wrong when she'd told Nob these were all spells. This one was a story titled The Tale of the Beautiful Captive.

"Nefer-Aneksi." The sound reverberated against the walls and the light on the lamps flickered. Then a soft moan filled the room.

Julia knocked over her bottle of water as she jerked her arms around. The room was empty and silent again.

"Nob? Is that you? I know you're pissed but this isn't funny."

When no one answered Julia stepped back to the altar. She picked up the paper and darted another look at the empty space.

"Nefer-Aneksi," she said. The moan returned, stronger this time. It lingered long enough for Julia to know it wasn't coming from the magic room.

She stepped into the hallway and listened. "Nob? Kevin?"

The moan had stopped and Julia took a deep breath. Her hands were shaking but she straightened her shoulders. It was just a creepy house. She'd say it one more time. Just as an experiment.

"Nefer-Aneksi."

This time the moan sounded like a word. Why? My? Tie?

Julia returned to the magic room to get a lamp. Don't do it; don't do it, her brain screamed. She took a step down the hallway.

"Nefer-Aneksi."

The moan came again but this time Julia could make out a word. Djet. She searched her mental dictionary. What did it mean? Forever. That's what it meant. Forever. The voice had come from the larger sleeping chamber. Julia took a tentative step across the doorway and repeated the word that triggered the moan.

This time the moan changed. The word *heri* floated on the air. Julia knew that word. It meant master, and it had come out as if it were a question.

The sound came from a tall cupboard that stood against the far wall. Before she could change her mind, Julia walked to it, set down the lamp, and pulled the doors open. Dust flew out and she waved her arms around to clear the air.

Different pieces of material filled the upper shelves. On the middle shelves several canopic-style jars sat on the wooden sills. The jars surrounded a box carved out of black marble and decorated with lapis lazuli.

The box was so very beautiful. It wasn't large, about seven inches by four inches. It was covered in dust that Julia cleared with a breath of air.

She reached out her hand and then pulled it back. Nob's words from earlier that day ran through her mind. "Nothing gets moved. Nothing gets moved."

The moan returned. This time it was almost a sob, a sound of anguish and pain so intense that Julia thought her heart would rip in two. She reached out and rubbed the lid clean and stared at the glyphs. She started to run her fingers over the writings.

Several words of ancient Egyptian filled the room and Julia fought to keep up. She recognized a few: *Peneb-Ra*; *senedjet*, the word for terror; and a word that tore at Julia's heart. *Ahdj. Help me. Shelter me.* Light sobs filled the air.

Julia reached out, and then pulled her hand back. When the sobbing continued, she took a deep breath and picked up the box. She could feel heat radiating from it, and the sobbing stopped almost immediately.

The box glowed and the voice sighed in relief. Julia held it close to her chest. She couldn't do this ... she shouldn't do this. It went against all archeological rules. But then again she'd never had a course in artifacts that cried out for help, or sobbed when you touched them.

She stroked the box gently. "What are you?"

"Aneksi Peneb-Ra." The words sent a chill up Julia's spine. Captive of Peneb-Ra. And the next thing she heard sent her heart racing.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Nob's voice was full of anger.

Julia clutched the box to her chest, and then she ran it down her stomach until she reached her cargo pants and she could drop it into her pocket of her cargo pants. She moved the jars around to stir up the dust and clear signs of the box's outline. When she was done, she turned to Nob.

"Why, Nob, fancy meeting you here." She gave him an innocent smile even though her heart was beating a mile a minute. Was it the box that was causing that, or being close to Nob? She inclined her head toward him.

"I asked you a question."

"I heard. I'm exploring. I did some translations and then I wanted to look around in here."

"Did I give permission?"

"Did I ask? I'm on the staff, too, you know. I'm not a kid you can boss around."

Nob ran his fingers through his hair. "Look, Jules, you were right about the spells. I instant messaged Derrick Matthews, one of my best friends, and he said this house could be dangerous. We need to go. Now."

Julia ran her fingers along the outline of the box. The words *master* and *forever* echoed in her ear. Shelter me. Help me.

“So on this Derrick’s word, we’re just going to abandon it? Are you nuts?”

Nob shook his head in obvious frustration.

“I didn’t say we were going to abandon it. Derrick will be here in a few days. His thesis was on Egyptian magic. When he gets here, we’ll come back inside. Until then, I don’t want us messing with anything. Now let’s go.”

Julia fought down the urge to argue with him. She wanted to stay, see if she heard the voice again. But she had the box with her. She knew it was wrong to take the artifact from the house, but she couldn’t ignore the plaintive wail. At the house she could decipher the glyphs on it and try to decide why the box was speaking.

Ha! Speaking. She was losing it.

Help me, please help me! The voice sounded in her mind again and she took several deep breaths. Her palms were sweating. She should turn around and put the box right back where she’d found it. She picked up the lamp and moved across the room.

“Thanks for standing me up,” Nob whispered when she tried to push her way past him in the doorway. He put out his arm to block her way.

She lifted her head and smirked at him. “Feels like crap, huh?”

“I didn’t stand you up that night, Jules,” he said, his voice soft. He ran his hands along her hair and sent dust flying.

Julia moved back into the room. She could see desire in his eyes. Isn’t that what she wanted? What she’d craved? The great Nob Walters wanted to fuck her.

She shook her head to clear her thoughts. “Really? What would you call it?”

“I left you a note saying the university guys came in unexpectedly to examine the site. I asked you to join us at the restaurant, but you never showed up. You tell me what you think happened that night.”

“I think that when I didn’t find you at the house, I went to the restaurant and saw you sitting with Carin. Cozily sitting with her, I might add. Two days later I saw you kissing her. I found no note.”

“Yeah, her dad was one of the guys that came in. And I didn’t kiss her. She kissed me. There’s a difference. And I did leave a note.” Nob took a step toward Julia. When she didn’t retreat, he took another step.

He bracketed her face with his hands and raised it to his own. Julia felt her breath catch in her throat. The box in her pocket hummed and warm vibrations flooded her nether region.

When he lowered his lips, she closed her eyes and moaned. His tongue pushed inside and she leaned further into him. God, it felt good. So good.

“Nob? I, um ...” She put her hand in her pocket and grabbed the box. It was warm to the touch. She pulled it toward the top of her pocket.

“Yes, Jules?” His tongue traced her lips. “You know, if you weren’t so stubborn, we could have done this months ago. You just need to learn to listen to me.”

She dropped the box back in her pocket and pushed herself away from him.

“You self-centered asshole.”

“Damn, I bet you’re a devil in bed. Like to be on top? I can handle that. I’ll let you do all the work. We can try some kinky stuff too. I like kinky stuff, spice things up a little. Want me to tie you up?”

“You wish.” She stormed past him and went into the magic room, where she picked up the lamps. His laughter echoed through the walls.

“You loved it. You know you did. And you want more. I won’t leave any marks on your wrists. Promise.” He held up three fingers in a salute and laughed.

She whirled toward him. “Stick your tongue in my mouth again, and I’ll bite it off.”

As the words left her, the box inside her pocket vibrated again. The warmth flooding her pussy increased and Julia knew that she wanted more than Noble's tongue inside her.

She shook her head and blew out one of the lamps and patted the box.

Tell him. Tell him! Her inner voice was screaming warnings inside her head.

Julia straightened her shoulders. "I'm going home now. And once I get there I don't want you following me to my room. Understand?"

"Yeah, we should use mine. I don't have roomies." He was leaning against the doorway looking devilishly dark and handsome. Then he rubbed his cock, slowly running his hand up and down. She could see his erection straining his jeans.

"I'm hard for you, Jules. Come here, baby." His voice was soft and low as his hand continued to stroke his hardness. "My cock wants you, baby. I want you. I get hard every time I see you."

Julia took a quick intake of breath. Oh, lord. All she had to do was move toward him and he'd fuck her. He'd take that hard cock out of his pants and let her see it, play with it, suck it, take it deep inside her pussy. Right here and now. She could feel wetness seeping through her panties and her clit was throbbing. Then she remembered her anger at seeing Nob with Carin in the restaurant. There had been no university reps. It had just been the two of them.

"I'm serious, Nob. I'm not interested." Her voice was shaky and the words were unconvincing even to herself. She stiffened when Noble laughed.

"Tell yourself that again, Jules. If you say it enough, you might actually believe it. 'Cause I know I never will, though."

Without waiting for her, he picked up two of the lamps and went up the stairs, leaving Julia to trail behind him.

Chapter Two

Julia sat bolt upright in bed and stared at the sunlight streaming in through the windows. Her breath came in shallow gasps. Carin and Sissy still slept and Maggie was gone. Julia let out a sigh of relief. Hopefully she hadn't been moaning in her sleep.

She felt as if her body was on fire. She ran her fingers between her legs. Her pussy was flooded. When she'd gone to bed, she hadn't wanted to leave the box lying around where just anyone could find it. So she'd put it under her pillow.

And she'd dreamt. Wild, erotic dreams featuring none other than Noble Walters. His hands had wandered over her breasts and pussy until she'd screamed in ecstasy. And then the real fun had started.

He'd taken her over and over. They'd sucked and fucked until they were both exhausted. Then they'd done it again. And in the background a woman had been giggling. The disembodied voice was complimenting Nob on the size of his "staff," encouraging him to lick here or stroke there.

"Make her explode with passion," the voice said. "She wants it. She wants you. She loves it. Bury yourself deep inside her."

And the woman's words had all been in ancient Egyptian.

Julia laid her head back on the pillow. It was warm to the touch. She moved it aside and stared at the box. The black marble seemed to be glowing, as it had the night before in the magician's house.

She picked it up and felt it hum in her hand. *Oh, lord, what have I done? What is this thing? Is some sort of evil spirit encased inside? Or a sexual nymph that caused me to be horny all the time?*

She went to the girls' bathroom and closed the door behind her. The room was tiny, with barely enough space for the toilet, sink and shower.

With the box resting on the edge of the sink, she splashed her face with water. Lord, she wanted Nob. Needed him. If she snuck into his room, would he push back the covers and welcome her? Of course he would. He'd made that perfectly clear last night. But could she do that? She'd just end up getting hurt. And she'd promised to bite his tongue off.

But I don't want his tongue between my lips, at least not the ones on my face. Damn those dreams! It had something to do with the frigging box. The object in question hummed again and Julia picked it up just as the bathroom door opened.

"Do you *mind*?" she said as she examined her find. It was heating up again. "A closed door means occupied."

"I've got something to occupy you," Nob said, his voice tickling her neck. He pressed his hard cock against her barely clothed ass, and Julia moaned softly. Oh, shit. She was in major trouble.

"Nob, stop it, get out. *Please.*" Was that a *please get out*, or a *please don't stop*? Julia moaned as he began to stroke her body.

"I had the most erotic dreams about you last night. You're a tiger, you know that? I loved the way you sucked my cock. And your pussy was so warm and inviting."

His lips were trailing up and down her neck and Julia stared at him. Had they had the same dreams? How could that be?

“Nob. Stop. I think something strange is happening.” Julia moaned as his hands cupped her breasts, his fingers kneading her nipples through the thin nightshirt.

“Strange?” He nibbled on her ear, her jaw, her neck. “How about extraordinary? Stupendous? Shout-out-loud fucking fantastic? I like those words better. If you want me to stop tell me now. Right now.”

Julia shook her head and moaned. There was no way she could stop. Her pussy was twitching, aching with need. Nob turned her head and kissed her, his lips pressing into hers with such force that Julia felt he might swallow her whole.

When his tongue entered her mouth, she giggled.

He pulled back and smiled.

“Better not,” he warned against her previous threat. He captured her mouth again as his fingers dipped inside her panties. She pulled her lips away. They were both panting.

“No, Nob, no, wait. I need to tell you something.” The box hummed. Julia set it down and stared at it as the glow surrounding the marble increased. She pulled a towel over it to hide it from Nob, who was nibbling on her neck. *No, don't hide it, tell him! Tell him!*

“You’re forgiven,” he said as he pushed his fingers inside her wetness. “You’re forgiven and I’m forgiven. Clean slate. Now, let’s seal it with an orgasm. Come for me, Julia. I want to feel you quiver in my arms.”

He rubbed her clit, his fingers expertly pinching and rolling the little nub until Julia was moaning with pleasure. *No, Julia, no. He's a dick. Make him stop. Oh, yes. That felt so good.*

“More, more,” she whispered as she bucked against him. She planted her hands on the wall and pressed herself back into him. “Fuck me. Please, Nob, please.”

“Not here, not now,” Nob replied. “Just come.” He used his free hand to raise her face up, and he locked eyes with her in the mirror.

“Come.” His eyes bore into hers and Julia felt herself open up to him. Lord, he was gorgeous. And his hands, those fantastic hands.

Julia moved against his fingers, her ass bumping against his hard cock each time she swayed.

“I’m gonna make you beg for mercy,” he whispered.

“Arrogant bastard.”

He laughed softly. “Not arrogant. Just being truthful.” Then he pinched her clit and Julia came. She screamed and Nob covered her mouth with his hand to capture a second scream.

“Only the beginning,” he whispered in her ear. “You and me tonight. My room’s private and no one will hear you shout in ecstasy. Or maybe I’ll just have to bind and gag you before I have my wicked way with you.”

Julia tried to get her breathing back under control. She stared at him in the mirror as he licked his fingers.

“You’re delicious, baby. I knew you would be sweet, just like honey.”

Air whooshed out of Julia’s lungs as his tongue snaked out to take another taste, and then he sucked his finger inside his mouth and groaned. His eyes rolled back in bliss.

When he was done, he kissed her again and strode out the door.

Julia moved the towel. The box was glowing brighter than it ever had and Julia swore to herself. She should have told him about her find. How she had stolen it from the house. Was the box causing her horniness? Or was Nob?

That was easy; it was Nob. She thought about his wonderful fingers and the pleasure they’d brought her. And that cock. She wanted him inside her now. She wanted to run after him, slam him into the floor and ride him until they were both screaming for mercy. Of course, she knew she never would. She couldn’t believe she’d let him get her off just now.

Breathe deep, Julia. Relax. Relax. She splashed more water on her face and sighed.

The glow on the box dissipated. Was it some sort of charm for sexual urges? She ran her hands along the glyphs. She needed to decipher them today. She'd take a dictionary to the dig site and find someplace quiet. She had a lot of work to do, and a lot to look forward to. If this morning was any indication, she would be well and truly fucked tonight. And she could hardly wait. Nob had earned himself one more chance. Julia just prayed she didn't end up hurting too much at the end of it all.

* * * * *

"Fuck a duck," Nob muttered under his breath as he watched three representatives from the Department of Antiquities head toward him. He knew they would come. He'd just hoped they wouldn't be here so quickly.

Nob made a hand motion to gather the professional staff and his mind wandered as Julia moved toward them. He grinned as he remembered their little encounter. He'd loved feeling her shake in his arms as she'd come. And the look in her eyes. Damn. The morning quickie would turn into a full-fledged fuck tonight and he could hardly wait. His damn cock had been hard all morning. And watching Julia work hadn't helped. Every time she bent to pick up something he imagined himself behind her, pumping into her pussy. *Concentrate, Nob. Think with your big head, not your little one.*

After the staff gathered, Ahmed Nubi, a high official with the Department of Antiquities, smiled.

"I understand you've finished uncovering your find," he said genially. "We would like to see it first hand."

Nob tried to hide his frown. He wasn't ready for them to go inside yet. He looked at Julia, who shrugged her shoulders. Technically everything that was uncovered in Egypt belonged to the government. The Department of Antiquities would get first crack at all objects from the house. The university would get antiquities, but only what the Egyptian

officials said they could have. Which was only fair, Nob knew. But still, he wanted more time to look everything over.

There was no way out of it. If he refused, they would take over the excavation and he'd never see the inside of the house again.

"Of course," Nob said. "Julia, Chris, Joe, come with me. Maggie, please continue with the photographs of the mastabas."

He led them to the house, handed out flashlights and clicked open the lock that had been installed that morning. "Nothing's been taken from the house."

Noble raised his eyebrows at the guilty look that crossed Julia's face. He turned and opened the door. A huge whoosh of hot air blew out and everyone stepped back.

"What the hell?" Nob pushed the door open further.

"Air lock," Chris said. "The house was opened for the first time in thousands of years yesterday. When we closed it up, hot air was trapped inside. That's all it was. An air lock."

Noble nodded and led the way into the house.

* * * * *

"Air lock, my ass," Julia whispered. "Holy shit, what have I done?"

The box was vibrating now, spreading feelings of pure, unmitigated fear through Julia's stomach. She'd never experienced anything like it before. She felt as if she would pass out on the spot.

She stopped on the steps, her heart beating rapidly, her head spinning.

"Jules?" Joe's voice was soft. "You OK?"

"Fine, fine," Julia replied. "I'm not going in. You guys can give the tour."

Joe shrugged his shoulders and Julia turned and ran back to the cemetery. The further away from the house she ran, the better she felt. And the less the box vibrated.

She ran into one of the empty tents and collapsed in a chair.

“What are you? Who are you?”

“Nefer-Aneksi,” the voice whispered. Were those words spoken aloud or in her head?

“I get that, beautiful captive, but *what* are you?”

“Abata,” the voice whispered. “Peneb-Ra.”

“Slave of Peneb-Ra?”

A soft sob echoed in the tent, and then the woman’s voice rang out, strong and clear. The ancient Egyptian words were coming fast and Julia could not keep up.

“I guess a day out of the house was good for you, huh?” Julia tried to laugh at her joke but couldn’t. “Damn, I wish you would slow down. My ancient Egyptian is good, but not that good. I don’t understand all that you’re saying.”

Holy shit. She was losing it. Talking to the box again. Maybe if she asked nicely, Nob would take her to the local loony bin.

The voice rattled off melodic words and Julia smiled. At least she was having fun while she was going crazy. No one in modern times spoke ancient Egyptian so well. Then she jumped back as the same voice spoke, but in English.

“What is a loony bin?”

Julia fell off the chair and crawled to the back of the tent. She cradled her head in her hands and rocked herself. “Not real. Not real. It’s not real.”

“Of course I’m real,” the voice said.

Julia looked up. No one was there.

“In the kane, the sacred box,” the woman said. “My ka rests in the box.”

Ka, Julia thought, or life-force. Ancient Egyptians believed their ka lived on when they died. That’s why pharaohs were buried with all their loot, so they could use it in the afterlife.

“Exactly.” The voice giggled. “My name is Nebetta. And you are Julia? Or Jules? I don’t quite understand.”

“That makes two of us, sister,” Julia replied. “And stop reading my mind. I don’t understand any of this, and I’m in way over my head. Tell me, slowly, exactly who you are. And how is it that I can understand you now?”

Julia took a deep breath. She really was going crazy.

“A spell,” Nebetta answered. “Peneb-Ra taught me a great deal about his magic. I used a spell for understanding.”

Julia nodded. Of course. Shit, where was Nob when she needed him? Showing around the big wigs, that’s where.

“He is wonderful, your Noble,” Nebetta said with another giggle. “A masterful lover, certainly. The pleasure he brought you this morning was magnificent.”

“OK, OK, let’s back up here. You haven’t answered my question. And I don’t think I like you watching me have sex.”

Nebetta giggled again. “As you wish. I am Nebetta, concubine to the great Pharaoh Ramesses III. He is also masterful. His cock, as you call it, provides hours of pleasure.”

“Nice to know. I think Nob should take me home before he finds an asylum for me. Better to be in the States for that.”

“Asylum? States? I do not understand these terms.”

“Sorry, don’t listen to me. Continue, please.” She was asking a disembodied voice to continue.

“Very well. I was Pharaoh’s favorite. He sent for me nightly. When he thought his time to die was near, he called Peneb-Ra forth to bind my ka to a paddle doll that rests inside the box, so that Pharaoh might take me to his tomb and call me forth so that we might enjoy each other in the other land.”

“Paddle doll?” Julia replied, racking her brain for what she knew about paddle dolls.

“When someone passes to the land of the dead, they use a paddle doll as their sexual mate,” Nebetta said. “But Peneb-Ra tricked Pharaoh. While working on the spell, the

magician made me serve him in his bed. Then he decided to keep me for himself. He bound my ka to the doll and told me I was now his slave. Then he gave Pharaoh a fake doll to place in his tomb.”

Shit, this is real! What the hell have I done?

“You must be a powerful sorceress,” Nebetta said. “You have defeated Peneb-Ra and now I belong to you. You can free me from the box and I can be with Pharaoh once again.”

“Um, Nebetta, I don’t quite know how to tell you this ...” Julia stopped as she searched for words.

“Oh, I can see that things have changed. The strange chariots on four wheels. Water flows without a fountain. And your manner of dress is unusual.”

“That’s not all,” Julia said softly. “Quite a bit of time has passed since you were, uh, captured.”

“How much time?” Nebetta sounded frightened.

“More than two thousand years.” Julia pursed her lips and waited for an answer. When one didn’t come, she said the woman’s name softly.

“And Pharaoh?”

“Dead for centuries.”

A cry rang out and Nebetta began sobbing.

“I’m sorry,” Julia whispered.

“You’re damn right, you’re sorry!” Nob’s voice was angry. “Where the hell did you go? And who the hell are you talking to? I could have used some help, you know. Ahmed’s outside and he wants to talk to you about the spell you deciphered.”

Nob’s eyes dropped to the box. The glow was unmistakable.

“What the hell is that?”

“Nothing,” Julia said, putting the box in her pocket.

“Bullshit. Tell me what it is. Now.”

“Don’t order me around, Nob,” Julia replied as she stood and headed for the tent entrance.

She pushed past him before he could say anything else. Outside, Ahmed was fanning himself with his hat.

“Ah, Julia, good afternoon.” His heavy Egyptian accent always brought a smile to Julia’s face. “I would like to hear about the spell you read. What was it for?”

“Protection,” Julia whispered.

“And it gave the name of this so-called magician?”

Nob came up behind her and Julia forced herself not to look in his direction.

“Yes, Peneb-Ra.” Her voice was shaky. What if Nebetta decided to speak? How would she explain to Ahmed that she’d taken an artifact from the house? Dealing with Nob was going to be hard enough, but telling Ahmed would be professional suicide.

To Julia’s relief, the woman remained silent.

“You only read the one?” It was hard to tell if Ahmed was angry or wary.

“Yes.”

“Dangerous things to be reading, spells,” Ahmed said. “It could prove problematic.”

You’re telling me.

“Lucky for us it was only for protection.”

Julia cringed as Ahmed studied her face. He knew something; she could tell.

Ahmed lowered his voice. “There is nothing else you wish to tell me?”

“No,” Julia said. “I was starting on the second spell on the wall when Nob stopped me.”

Julia could feel the anger radiating from Nob’s body.

“Good for you,” Ahmed said. “Nob says an expert is coming in. We have one of our own of course, but I am willing to let your friend take charge. For now.”

Ahmed nodded his head and left.

"You," Nob pointed at Julia, "inside the tent. Everyone else back to work."

The students drifted off and Julia sighed. So much for "well and truly fucked" -- because after what she had to say, Nob was going to kill her.

* * * * *

The tent flap had barely closed when Nob stuck out his hand.

"Give it to me, now."

Julia crossed her arms across her chest. "Give you what?"

"Don't play dumb with me, Julia. I want to see what you took from the house last night."

Julia bit her lip. Then she sighed and dipped her hand into her pocket. She laid the box on the table and stared into Nob's eyes.

"Have you lost your ever-loving mind? If Ahmed finds out about this, you'll be working at some podunk museum back home in Kansas. What were you thinking?"

"It's not just a box, Nob." Julia bit her lip again and finally smiled when Nob shook his head.

"What, did it call to you? Julia, Julia, take me home." He laughed sarcastically.

"It's not funny. And yes, it did, in a way. Nob, sit down." Julia pushed a tent stool toward him. "Please?"

"Why do I have the feeling I'm not going to like this?"

"Just sit down, and don't interrupt me, OK?"

* * * * *

"How come *I* can't hear her?" Nob turned the box over and over in his hands.

"I don't know," Julia answered. "Maybe she'd connected only to me. Or maybe she's upset."

"Upset because her lover's been dead for two thousand years?" Nob shook his head. "Yeah, I guess that would upset someone pretty bad."

"You know, you don't have to be shitty about this."

"Shitty? You think I'm being shitty? You haven't seen anything yet. You lied to me, Julia." Anger was written all over Nob's face. "Last night, when I asked what you were doing, you didn't tell me about this box. You just said you were looking around. This little stunt could ruin both of our careers. We have to put it back. NOW."

"We have to help her." Julia kept her voice low.

"There is no HER! You're imagining things. That house is creepy, atmospheric. You know it belonged to someone who practiced magic so you've imagined this woman in a box. Think about it. A woman in a box? It's crazy."

"I'm not really in the box. My ka is in the paddle doll inside the box." Nebetta's voice was soft and full of sorrow.

"Oh, holy fuck!" Nob dropped the box on the table and backed up.

"Told you," Julia replied. "Maybe your friend Derrick can help us with this."

Nob ducked outside the tent flap. Julia followed him and watched as he circled the tent. When he was done, he grabbed her arm and pulled her back inside.

"What are you doing?" Julia jerked her arm away from him.

"Seeing who was outside helping you with your little joke." He laughed as he reached out to pat Julia down. "Are you using a digital recorder?"

"If you don't believe me ... fine. I'll see if Derrick will help. But we can't just abandon her."

Nob reached out and stroked Julia's hair. "Why do I have to fall for the crazy ones?"

He pulled her close and kissed her, gently nibbling her lower lip.

"I'm not crazy," she whispered, even as she tried to fight the desire building in her stomach, and the idea that Nob was right. She was crazy. "You do believe me, right?"

Nob continued his kissing, moving his lips over Julia's cheeks and forehead.

"One more thing," Julia said. She was working hard to keep her voice steady. Nob's kisses were sending her senses into overdrive.

"What?"

"I think she was responsible for our dreams last night."

"You mean the one where you sucked me halfway down your throat? You had that dream, too? Damn, I think I like this woman."

Julia sniggered. "I've never taken a man that far, so I think you're barking up the wrong tree."

"It's worth a shot." He took her hand and pressed it against his bulge. "You make me hard."

Julia felt her breath leave her lungs as Nob began to unbutton his jeans. "I can't ... I've never ... Nob ..."

"Use your tongue well, Julia," the disembodied voice said. "Pharaoh liked lots of tongue on his staff. And don't forget the sac for his seed. Oh, Amun-Ra, it's been so long, but I can still taste the saltiness of his skin."

"Oh, shit," Julia laughed. "I can't. I'm not as experienced as you are. I ..."

Nob stroked her hair and smiled. Then he re-buttoned his jeans and put his hands on his hips.

"You're not going to tell me you're a virgin, are you? Because if you are, I need to redo my whole seduction technique."

“No,” Julia whispered. “But I’m not very experienced, either. I’ve never given a blowjob where someone could just walk in on me. I think maybe we should ...”

“Leave it to me,” Nob said, kissing her lightly. “It’ll be fine, baby. Do you remember trembling in my arms this morning?”

Julia nodded and blushed as Nob stroked her arms and then cupped her breasts, his thumbs searching for her nipples. Her breath caught in her throat as he found the nubs and began to rub them gently.

“That’s because you let yourself go. Just relax and things will be fine.”

He kissed her and strode from the tent. Then he stuck his head back inside. “And before we play, we’ll do some research and see if we can find anything out about your box.”

“You mean my box,” Nebetta said softly. “It’s mine until you can free me.”

Chapter Three

“I know everyone worked all day in the hot sun, but bookwork is also part of archeology, folks.”

Julia smiled as Nob wrote the names Peneb-Ra, Ramesses III and Nebetta on the blackboard of the workroom. Numerous books on Egypt and archeology were stacked on the tables and floors.

Damn, he looked delicious, his shower-wet hair hanging down around his shoulders. She shivered at the memory of his hard cock against her hand earlier in the day. She felt the warmth of Nebetta’s box against her leg and stifled a laugh. If she didn’t get her mind back on research, she’d throw Nob down right there. Nebetta had taught her a lot that afternoon.

The Egyptian woman had talked about her love for Ramesses and their lovemaking, which included other people, more often than not. Ramesses loved to fuck, but he loved for Nebetta to suck him also. And he loved to watch Nebetta with other women, and occasionally other men.

The idea had shocked Julia, and Nebetta had laughed. “It is so wonderful, trust me.”

“Having someone watch you make love can be pleasurable. I think your Nob will enjoy it. Once I’m free, I will show you my gratitude. I will show both of you.”

Julia had shaken her head. "Sorry. I don't think that's something I could do."

Nebetta had laughed. "You can. Just let me guide you."

Julia shook her head and tried to focus on what Nob was saying. She needed to pay attention.

"Divide up the books. Search for these names. We believe the house belonged to Peneb-Ra and he lived during the time of Ramesses III," Julia said, earning a frown from Nob. He sure liked to be in control. She smirked at him and he raised his eyebrows in a mock threat.

"Who is Nebetta?" Sissy said, asking what everyone was thinking.

"We're not sure," Nob said quickly, before Julia could open her mouth. "The name came up in the house."

"In the hieroglyphs?" Sissy looked at Julia.

Julia nodded and patted the box in her pocket. Nebetta remained silent.

"Ah, yes, the hieroglyphs," a deep voice said from the doorway. "Why are you not there right now, deciphering them?"

Julia frowned at the stranger who stood in the door. Then Carin popped her head around him and Julia shook her head. Carin's father. The source of the money.

Julia stared at him. He was a very handsome man in his early fifties. Tall and muscular, he had black hair and dark, deep-set eyes. He was as different from his blond daughter as night and day. He smiled at the group.

"Mr. Oakes," Nob said. "I didn't realize you were back in Egypt."

"I called Daddy and told him we'd gone inside the house," Carin said, crossing the room and grabbing Nob's arm. "He wants to see inside."

"Tonight," Oakes said. As if realizing the word had come out harshly, he smiled at the students, who were staring at him. "Forgive me. I'm Joshua Oakes. It is my money that is funding your little dig."

“Actually it’s university money,” Julia said. She looked at Nob, who was trying to gently pry Carin’s hands off his arm.

“Money that I donated to the university for this specific purpose, Ms. Rafferty,” Oakes said. “I want Noble to take me to the site.”

Julia shivered when he called her by name without an introduction. Then she and Nob exchanged a look and Oakes frowned.

“Is there a problem?”

“Carry on, peons,” Nob said with a laugh. “I’d like to see the professional staff in the other room, please.”

Nob led everyone to the living room. The frown on Oakes’s face deepened and Julia shivered.

“I hope he’s not here to steal our dig site,” Chris said in a low voice.

Julia shook her head in response.

When they were all in the other room, Oakes frowned at Nob.

“Is something wrong? I really do want to see your discovery as soon as possible.”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Oakes, but we’re not able to meet your request at the moment.”

Oakes ran his fingers down his already ramrod straight tie. “May I ask why not?”

“The house has been closed down for now by the Department of Antiquities.”

Other members of the staff grumbled at the news, and Julia pressed her lips together to hide the grin that had sprung up at Nob’s lie. Well, it wasn’t really a lie. Ahmed did say no one should go back inside. Nob was good.

“Have they taken over the site?” Oakes’s face had turned pale. “I’m surprised you called them so quickly.”

“Mr. Oakes, reporting finds is the law, as you well know.” He didn’t add that he wasn’t the one who had called. Someone else had.

Oakes laughed softly, but Julia could hear the nervousness behind it. "Give me the key. They won't ever know. I just want to look."

"I don't have it," Nob lied. "Representatives of the DA have it. Mr. Oakes, I'm sure that tomorrow I can talk Ahmed into letting me take you inside."

"Of course," Oakes said. "But as the money behind this dig, I do expect a tour tomorrow, not excuses."

He smiled at the group before leading Carin from the room.

"Nice man," Joe said. "He gets my vote for Mr. Congeniality."

Everyone laughed at the joke except Nob. Julia noticed the thin lines that had appeared around his eyes and she sighed. If Oakes found out she'd taken the box, then she'd be up the proverbial creek.

"I don't like that man," Nebetta said. "He is not to be trusted."

Julia looked around the room to see who had heard. Nob raised his eyebrows and walked toward her. The other three continued to talk amongst themselves.

"How can it be that no one else heard her?" Julia asked as he pulled her close.

"Don't know. Maybe you have to touch the box." He ran his hand down Julia's blouse, his fingers leaving trails of fire as they danced across the small of her back. Her nipples tightened and she smiled at him.

"You have condoms?" Julia whispered.

"No," Nob answered. "We're both clean. We know that from the physicals we had to take to get here. You're not on the pill?"

"No," Julia answered, a grin splitting her face. "What part of 'I'm not sexually active' did you not understand?"

"Shit. You're going to the clinic. Tomorrow."

"OK, I'll go. But you have to wait to play until they are in effect."

“Oh, no.” Nob pulled her to the front of the room. “If I wait any longer, my dick’s going to fall off. I’ve been hard all day because of you. I’ll find condoms. Be in my room at ten. Don’t be late.”

“Bossy!” Julia yelled as he walked out the door. Then she blushed as she stared at the three people sitting on the couch. All three were staring at her. And all three had huge grins on their faces.

“What is a condom?” Nebetta’s voice was full of wonder.

“Later,” Julia whispered.

“Oh, yeah, later,” Maggie said. “Your fun later is gonna beat my *fun* uploading pics on the computer. It’s just not fair. Everybody’s having sex but me.”

She stormed from the room and Chris shook his finger at Julia.

“Girlfriend, you better be careful; he’s a heartbreaker,” Joe said with a giggle. “And if you need advice, just ask me.”

Julia patted the box in her pocket. She’d already gotten more than enough advice from Nebetta. She had to find a way to silence the ancient spirit while she and Nob were alone together.

* * * * *

Julia pushed open the door to Nob’s room and sighed. It was empty.

“Do you think he’s changed his mind,” she asked Nebetta.

“Doubtful,” Nebetta replied. “He is searching for those condoms. There are other ways to prevent children. Things that don’t interfere with a man’s enjoyment.”

“Condoms don’t do that,” Julia said, walking to the stairs that led to the roof. As top dog at the dig, Nob had rated the best room in the house. It took up almost the entire top floor and had a private staircase that led to the rooftop. He even had his own private bathroom.

Julia set Nebetta's box on the table and walked toward the bed. It looked huge, and inviting. She wondered what it would feel like to lie in it naked, next to Nob. Nebetta interrupted her thoughts.

"I don't see how it cannot interfere. Covering his manhood in, what did you say, latex? It sounds very disturbing."

"It is, but you gotta do what ya gotta do," Nob said from the doorway. Then he grinned at Julia and let a string of condoms fall from his hand, accordion style.

"Optimistic, aren't you?"

Nob laughed. "Mark gave them to me. He said he had more if we needed them."

"Oh, God! Does everybody know?"

"Sweetie, everyone's been rooting for us for months. You're the one who just jumped on the bandwagon."

"Then why did you wait six damn months?" Even as the words left her mouth, Julia winced. She knew now the waiting was her fault, not Nob's. Well, not all her fault.

Nob took a step toward her. "Because I thought you hated me. I don't force myself on someone who hates me."

"I do hate you. You can be a real jerk. Bossy. Arrogant. Self-centered." Julia was grinning as the words spilled out of her mouth. She stood by the bed and stared at Nob as he strode toward her.

Nob threw the condoms on the large bed. "I'm bossy because I'm the boss. And I'm arrogant because I'm the best. And let me show you how self-centered I am."

He pushed her back on the bed, landing on top of her and covering her mouth with his. His kiss was harsh and demanding and Julia giggled into his mouth.

"Wench," he said as he broke the kiss. "Are you laughing at me?"

“Laughing with you,” Julia said, reaching up to nibble his lower lip. She pushed her hand down his body until she cupped his cock. It was hard as it pressed against the seams of his jeans.

Nebetta’s words from that afternoon rang in her ears. “Don’t be shy, Julia. Show him how much you desire him. He will love it.”

Noble gave her a look to show his surprise and she shrugged her shoulders.

“Nebetta gave me lessons today. Can your friend come out and play?”

Nebetta laughed. “You’re bringing friends. Wonderful. Wonderful.”

Noble groaned and collapsed next to Julia on the bed.

“We need to get rid of her,” he whispered in Julia’s ear.

“Hush, Nebetta,” Julia said. Then she straddled Noble’s legs and began unbuttoning his jeans.

“If you’re the best, you shouldn’t mind an audience.” The new feeling of confidence soared through her body. This was fun. Great fun.

She stood and pulled his jeans from his hips. His cock sprang to life and Julia groaned. Then Nob pulled his shirt from his body and Julia froze. He was magnificent. Strong muscles rippled through his abs and chest. An image of her less than perfect body ran through her brain. What the hell was she doing? When she took her clothes off, Nob would run from the room screaming.

“I can see why you’re arrogant,” Julia said softly. She couldn’t do this. She couldn’t take her clothes off in front of him.

He grabbed her T-shirt to lift it over her head and Julia pushed his hands away.

“Nob ...” Julia’s voice was low. She had to find a way out of taking her clothes off. “Let me please you as you did me this morning. Let me suck you. We don’t have to, um ...”

She took a deep breath and leaned over to flick her tongue around the head of his cock. Nob growled deep in his throat as she sucked him in. He threaded his fingers in her hair and gently pulled her up, locking eyes with her, his smile wicked.

“Oh, my God,” Nob whispered. “So much wasted time. I can’t wait much longer. I want to be inside you. We can play later.”

Julia felt her heart catch in her throat. She stood quickly and backed away from the bed.

“Nob, I um, um ...”

“What’s wrong, baby?” He stood and pulled her into his arms. “Did you lie to me? Are you really a virgin?”

The look of concern on his face sent butterflies racing around Julia’s stomach. She took a deep breath and shook her head. She put her hands on his chest and sighed. “I don’t want to disappoint you.”

“How do you think you could disappoint me? Jules, I know you don’t have much experience, but if Nebetta gave you tips, then ...” Nob’s words dropped off as understanding dawned.

Julia bit her lip, looking at him from under lowered lids. Gone was the brazen woman who had just licked his cock.

“Julia, don’t you know you’re beautiful to me? Why else would I want to bury myself inside you?”

“I’m just afraid you won’t feel the same way when I’m, um, naked. Can we turn off the lamp, please?” There. She’d said it.

The room was very silent. Julia half expected Nebetta to speak up, but she didn’t. Nob rubbed her upper arms and smiled.

“No, we can’t. I want to see you. All of you. I’m going to prove to you that I want you. That you’re one of the most beautiful women that I’ve ever known.”

He took hold of her T-shirt and started to lift it off her body.

“Nob, no, I ...”

“Shush, Julia, and lift your arms.”

He kissed her gently and she felt her heart slam against her chest as he lifted her shirt above her head. With one deft movement he unhooked her bra and it fell to the floor.

She wrapped her arms around her stomach. Her hands lay over her breasts and Nob growled softly.

“You’re so gorgeous, Jules,” Nob whispered pushed her hands aside and cupped her breasts, running his lips from her mouth to her neck. He traced his tongue from one large breast to the other. Julia sucked in a breath as he moved her hand aside and captured a nipple between his lips.

Julia moaned and pushed herself into his mouth. She felt as if the room was spinning as Nob continued to gently suck first one nipple and then the other while he ran his fingers lightly up and down her back.

“For months, all I could think about was you,” Nob said softly, trailing kisses down Julia’s stomach. She tried to push him away and he grabbed her arms and pinned them to her sides.

He rained kisses around her waist and Julia felt tears spring up in her eyes.

“Please, Nob. Please.” Her words came out as sobs.

“Please what, Jules?” He let go of her hands long enough to push her shorts and panties to the floor. Then he gathered her arms back against her sides.

“Please, I can’t, don’t ...”

“Don’t what? Don’t tell you that you’re beautiful here?” He kissed first one thigh, then the other and Julia shivered.

“And here.” He kissed her pussy, his tongue darting out to run over her aching clit over and over.

“Nob, oh, lord.” Julia threw her head back. She’d only had two other lovers, and neither of them had touched her so intimately, not only physically, but also mentally. She felt as if she might die if he didn’t take her soon.

“Please, Nob. I want you inside me.”

But Nob ignored her. He continued his marking of her body, kissing her bellybutton, breasts and neck before gently kissing her lips.

“But most of all you’re beautiful here.” He reached out and kissed her forehead, moving his lips from side to side.

“You’re witty, funny, and confident in your work, and most of all smart. I’d think a woman as smart as you would know how beautiful you are, no matter your size.”

He kissed her again, releasing her hands to stroke the wetness between her legs. He pushed her backwards until they were in the center of the bed. Julia wrapped her legs around his waist and pulled him closer.

“Please. I’m aching for you.”

“Tell me you’re beautiful.” Nob kissed her.

She sighed when she heard the rip of the condom package.

“Nob, please. I can’t wait anymore.”

“Tell me. I want to hear you say it.”

“Fuck me!”

“SAY IT!” Nob pushed her back onto the bed, his eyes boring into hers with such passion that Julia felt as if she might catch on fire.

“I’m beautiful.” Julia sobbed.

Nob placed the tip of his cock at her opening. “Say it again.”

“I’m beautiful.” The words came out as moans. Julia wiggled under him, working to take more of him inside.

He pushed in gently and then pulled back out, making Julia groan.

“Again.”

“I’m beautiful.” Tears were flowing down the side of her face, and she shivered when he leaned over and licked them.

“So very beautiful.” He filled her totally then, his cock throbbing as he began moving back and forth. He raised himself and stared into her eyes.

Nebetta’s soft moans of encouragement rocked the room and Julia groaned. She wrapped her legs around his thighs as he thrust further inside her.

“Finger your clit,” he whispered. “I want to watch you come while I’m surrounded by your beautiful pussy.”

He moved enough to allow her access to the swollen nub. She moved it back and forth and shuddered with delight.

“I’ve got delicious plans for you, Jules.” He lowered his gaze to her hand as it worked her clit, laughed and raised his gaze back to her face. He fucked her with slow steady strokes and Julia could tell by the look on his face that he was holding himself back to prolong the pleasure. “Work all day. Fuck all night. Maybe we can take some lessons from Nebetta and learn something new.” He increased his thrusting, slamming himself into her as she rubbed herself.

“I thought you knew everything.” Julia laughed. Warmth spread through her body with each thrust. Never had she felt so wonderful.

“I’m always open to new things,” Nob said as he continued to fill her. He lowered his hand to hers, linking their fingers so that they were rubbing her clit together. Julia shuddered at the increased pressure.

“How I’m doing, Nebetta? Do you think she likes it?” He thrust again and again and Julia could feel the tip of his cock press against her womb.

“How could she not like it, Noble? The two of you look so beautiful together.”

“Come now, Julia; let me feel you shudder, feel your pleasure, feel your release.”

She bucked her hips up so that she could take more of him inside and then she came. She screamed out Noble’s name as she rode a wave of pleasure unlike anything she’d ever felt.

Seconds after coming back to earth she felt Nob swell and thrust harder and harder. He groaned her name as he came and then collapsed on top of her.

Julia looked at Nebetta’s box. It was illuminated by light and Nebetta was laughing softly.

“Just move your stuff in here,” he whispered in her ear, his breathing labored. “It’ll give the students something to gossip about.”

Julia laughed and then she watched him walk to the bathroom and return with a warm, wet towel. He ran it between her thighs and she sighed. Was this really happening to her? Nob had chosen her over Carin?

He lay back down and he gathered her in his arms. She felt warm and wanted, something she’d never felt before in her life.

“What are we going to do about Nebetta?” Julia whispered the words in his ear.

“Derrick will figure something out. Go to sleep now, ‘cause in half-an-hour I’m gonna be hard again.”

He tickled her and Julia laughed.

“Arrogant words for a thirty-four-year-old.”

“Not arrogant, just confident.”

“But not self-centered,” Julia whispered as she rubbed her aching clit.

He linked their fingers and increased the pressure. Julia groaned into his shoulder. Moments later, she shuddered again as he gently teased her aching clit.

“Don’t ever doubt that I want you, Jules; do you understand me? Just remember that I think you’re beautiful, so very beautiful.”

Their gazes locked and she smiled shyly. “Old habits are hard to break,” she murmured.

He kissed her, his teeth gently nipping her lips. “Then I’ll just have to figure out a way to burn it into your brain.”

He gathered her close, and within moments she could hear his even breathing. His words made her spine tingle, as did the memory of his loving.

“He is wonderful, Julia.” Nebetta’s words were soft. “And he’s right. You are so very beautiful. Perhaps when I am whole again, I can show you how beautiful I think you are.”

“I don’t think I’m ready for something like that, Nebetta.”

“I am,” Nob said. “Derrick better get his ass here quick and release her because the idea of watching the two of you together is absolutely fascinating.”

He took Julia’s hand and wrapped it around his cock, which was growing harder by the second.

“It hasn’t been half-an-hour yet.”

“I know. See what you do to me? Wanna show me some of what Nebetta taught you?”

Julia blushed and then lowered her head to his cock, brushing her tongue against his length.

“Lesson number one,” Julia said, “was how to suck cock properly.”

Nob hissed as Julia moved her tongue up and down his length and then sucked him inside her mouth.

“You get my vote for student of the year.” Then he lay back and lost himself in her caresses.

Chapter Four

Knowing grins flashed and whistles flew around the kitchen the next morning when Julia walked to the coffee pot. Her face was burning with embarrassment as she poured herself a cup of coffee, mixed in sweetener and cream, and headed back to Nob's room. Her and Nob's room. The thought brought a big smile to her face.

Nob was still sleeping, his beautiful body spread across the bed. Julia stared at him in wonder. He hadn't been kidding when he'd boasted about his staying power. The man was insatiable.

Julia shivered as she remembered the feel of his hands and mouth on her body. For the first time in her life she felt wanted and needed by a man.

"You are pleased?" Nebetta asked softly.

Julia grabbed the box and headed to the roof. The early morning sun was already blazing and the day promised to be hot, again.

"Yes, I'm pleased, very pleased." She set the box down on the table and took a drink of her coffee. Even though it was a little after 6 a.m., it was already very warm.

"Memphis has grown," Nebetta said, her voice wistful.

"This isn't Memphis. It's Giza. I'm afraid Memphis is no more."

Nebetta heaved a sign. "So much has changed."

"Tell me about your life," Julia said.

A soft laugh filled the air. "My life was wonderful. I became a member of Pharaoh's harem at a young age. But he did not notice me until I was well after twenty years. There had been trouble in the harem and many of the royal women were implicated. The great king took me to his bed after that. I served him well for fifteen years."

Nebetta giggled and Julia smiled. If Nebetta was twenty when Ramesses first bedded her and she served him for fifteen years then she was about thirty-five when she was captured in the doll.

"Did you have children?"

"I gave Pharaoh three strong sons and one beautiful daughter," Nebetta said softly. For the first time since she'd started to talk, Julia recognized sorrow in Nebetta's voice. "Two of my sons, Debi and Ani, were killed in battle. The third, Hui, served his father well at court."

"And your daughter?"

"Bunefer served in the harem of Pharaoh's vizier. Can you tell me what happened to my children?"

Julia smiled. "I can try to find out. There's no real record, though."

When Nebetta didn't answer, Julia decided to change the subject.

"What type of man was Ramesses III? I know about his military prowess and his problems with workers and the harem revolt, but what was he like, personally?"

"Very virile. He was, as you say, a great military man. But in his bed he was gentle and kind. And very inventive."

Nebetta's voice had taken on a wistful tone and Julia stared at the box. It glowed softly.

"Inventive?"

“Very,” Nebetta replied softly. “Sex is a thing of joy and pleasure. Pharaoh’s staff fit well in many places. And there was another harem girl, Keyitia, whom Pharaoh loved very much. Some nights she and I would pleasure each other while he watched. I remember how soft she felt under my tongue. Then he would pleasure both of us with his mighty rod. The other women were jealous that he called for us so often.”

Julia swallowed a gulp. Us. She had problems taking her clothes off in front of Noble. She couldn’t imagine how she could conjure up enough self-esteem to have sex with another woman while Noble watched. But Nebetta had proposed that very thing last night. And Nob had jumped at the idea.

“He will love it and so will you. You must trust me on this.”

“Stop getting into my head,” Julia barked. She took another drink of her coffee.

“Pleasure is nothing to be ashamed of, Julia. You need to learn to let your senses go and enjoy yourself.”

“Good advice.” Nob planted a kiss on the top of her head, and then leaned down to kiss her lips when she turned her face toward him. He dropped his hand inside her shirt and gently caressed her breast.

“Nebetta was just telling me about her life at court,” Julia said, smiling shyly at Nob.

“I’m sorry I missed it.” He moved his hand to run it lightly up her calf and thigh and Julia shivered. “Let’s ask about Pharaoh’s famous sex parties.”

Nebetta’s giggles turned into full-fledged gales of laughter from all three of them.

Nob leaned in to kiss Julia, his hand returning to her breast.

“I wish you’d been in bed with me this morning.”

“We can always go back.”

He moved to nibble on her neck. “We can’t. The first wave has already left for the cemetery and we need to get going too. Want to share a shower in my private bath?”

He raised his eyebrows and smirked at her.

“Nob! Nob!” Chris’s voice echoed in the empty staircase and Nob ran to it, almost slamming into Chris as he bounded onto the rooftop.

“Someone attacked Kevin at the magician’s house last night.” Chris bent over, holding his side as he tried to catch his breath.

“Is he hurt?” Julia ran to the two of them.

“Not too bad,” Chris replied. “But someone ransacked the main sleeping chamber, almost as if they were looking for something.”

A chill ran up Julia’s spine as she turned to stare at Nebetta’s box.

“We’ll be right down,” Nob said, pushing Chris toward the stairs.

Julia ran and picked up the artifact. “How could this be? No one knows about the box but us.”

Nob pulled her close. “Maybe they weren’t looking for the box. Maybe they were just looking for something they thought might hold magical properties.”

“Bullshit!” Julia pushed away from Nob. “Whoever broke into that house did so for a specific reason.”

“It is Peneb-Ra,” Nebetta said, her voice almost a whisper. “He wants me back.”

“Peneb-Ra has been dead for years,” Nob said. “Nebetta, do you know how he died?”

“No. All I know is that one day he was gone. I was very frightened, and yet relieved at the same time. He was a very cruel man. I knew that Pharaoh would come and rescue me, but he did not.”

Julia started down the stairs. “We need to find out what happened to him.”

“And how do you suggest we do that?” Nob ran down the stairs after Julia. “Have a séance? We can’t exactly go down to the local library and look at the microfiche.”

“Let’s go!” Julia danced up and down. “You’re wasting time.”

Noble shook his head. "Let's bathe first. Chris said Kevin is OK. We'll be there in an hour with clean bodies and clearer heads. You are too hopped up right now. You need to calm down. Trust me on this."

"Noble is right, Julia," Nebetta said. "You will need to be calm to deal with the evil that is Peneb-Ra. And it is him, I am sure of it. He is coming for me."

* * * * *

"I'm so sorry, Nob; this is all my fault." Kevin sat back in the tent chair and sighed.

"Nonsense, Kevin," Julia said, placing an icepack on the bump on Kevin's head. "Nob knows that this isn't your fault."

She looked at Nob and raised her eyebrows.

"Right, right," Nob said. "As long as you're OK. You didn't see anyone?"

"No," Kevin said. "I took the last shift at four. One minute I was sitting near the entrance. The next thing I remember Chris and Joe were standing over me."

"Ask him if he felt something, such as an evil spirit," Nebetta said.

Julia repeated the question and Nob frowned at her.

Kevin looked at her as if she'd grown a second head. "Um, no?"

Nob patted him on the shoulder. "Have Chris take you back to the house. Go to the clinic for some x-rays and then take a couple days off."

Kevin nodded and then walked dejectedly out of the tent.

"Don't go planting ideas of evil spirits," Nob said as soon as Kevin was gone. "That goes for you, too, Nebetta."

"But, Noble ..."

"Don't 'but, Noble' me, Nebetta. This black magic stuff is just a load of crap."

"Like a person being trapped inside a box for two thousand years?" Julia's voice was low and Nob shook his head.

“Shit. I know I’m going to regret this.” He stuck his head out the door and yelled at Chris to wait. Then he turned to Julia.

“Take Kevin to the clinic. That way you can see about birth control pills.” He smiled as he pulled Julia close. “I want to be inside you without a condom. I want skin-to-skin contact.”

Julia shivered as he leaned over and kissed her, pulling her close so his tongue could invade her mouth. He broke the kiss, shook his head and sighed.

“Then go to Ahmed. Ask him about Peneb-Ra. See if there are any local legends that he can tell us about. Don’t show him Nebetta.”

“I’m not stupid, you know,” Julia said, kissing him quickly before heading out of the tent.

Nob sat down and ran his fingers through his long hair. He really needed to get a haircut. Then he grinned as he remembered Julia running her fingers through his overgrown tresses as he slid inside her last night. He remembered the sultry way she’d looked at him and how soft she felt under him.

His cock hardened and he smiled. “Later,” he said, looking down. He pulled his hair back into a ponytail and grinned. The sooner he got to work, the sooner the day would end and he could take Julia back to bed. And work more on improving her self-esteem.

He stilled a bit at the thought of Derrick arriving. He wondered how Julia would react to him, and how Derrick would react to the news of Nebetta.

* * * * *

At least there was air conditioning inside the Department of Antiquities. Julia crossed her legs, uncrossed them, and then re-crossed them.

Despite the troubles of the day, her body was still tingling from Nob's lovemaking. She tried to concentrate on the problem at hand, but in her mind she could see him above her, pleasure shining from his smile as he drove himself into her over and over and over again.

"Tell me you're beautiful. So very beautiful." Her nipples tingled at the memory. So strong and hard. She couldn't wait for later tonight.

"He was rather magnificent," Nebetta said.

Julia looked at the secretary who worked on as if no one had spoken. Then she sat up straight, thankful for the first time that Nebetta could read her mind.

"Did you watch the whole thing? I mean each time?"

"Every wonderful thrust. It made me ache for my pharaoh. Except for the condom. Disgusting thing."

Julia stifled a laugh.

"Julia, how wonderful to see you again, and so soon," Ahmed said, a smile on his handsome face. He looked as if he'd just been laughing at a funny joke. "It's good to see you laugh despite the problems you had this morning. Come in, come in."

Julia smiled at Ahmed. He was not yet thirty, young to be in such a high position. He had beautiful dark skin and a full head of black hair that he wore in a ponytail.

He ordered tea from his secretary and then shut the door behind them. "Please sit."

Julia sat in a wingback chair opposite Ahmed. "You're very well informed," Julia said. Did he have a spy in the camp?

"It's my job to be informed," Ahmed said. "Now, tell me what I can do for you today. Extra security, perhaps?"

"Actually I've come to ask you about Peneb-Ra. The man who owned the house we found."

Ahmed frowned, and then walked quickly to his chair. His secretary delivered their tea and he stood while she poured and served. When she was gone, he sighed and sat back down.

"Peneb-Ra is not listed in any scrolls," Ahmed said. "I am sorry, Julia, but I have nothing to tell you."

He took a sip of tea and she frowned.

"Nothing?"

He sipped his tea and sat back. "I found his name in no index."

"He's lying," Nebetta said, her voice angry.

"I would never lie to you, Julia," Ahmed said. He frowned and took another drink.

Julia felt as if her heart had stopped. It had been Nebetta who had spoken about lying, not her. Ahmed had heard Nebetta. But he had thought Julia had spoken the words.

"Quiet!" Julia said to herself, hoping that Nebetta would get the message.

"Tell us about Peneb-Ra!" Nebetta's voice was harsh. "How did he die?"

"How would I know how he died, since I've been unable to find his name in any text? Julia, your words are most disturbing. How could you think I would lie to you, keep information from you? Have we not been friends since you arrived?"

"I'm sorry, Ahmed," Julia said quickly before Nebetta could speak. "I must be going. I'm afraid that the break-in has bothered me more than I thought."

"Julia, if I can be of any assistance ..." Ahmed's words followed Julia as she walked quickly out of the office. "Julia ... wait."

She ran to the car and slammed the door shut. As she left the parking lot she could see Ahmed framed in the doorway, a frown on his face and a cell phone in his hand. She fought the Cairo traffic and made it to the house in half-an-hour.

All the cars were present, and when she didn't find Noble in the workroom, she ran upstairs.

"He could hear her; he could hear her!" She burst into their room and stopped short. Nob was talking with a tall blond man.

"Oh, Isis," Nebetta said. "Who is that? His hair is the color of straw."

Nob laughed. "Julia, Nebetta, meet Derrick Matthews."

Derrick smiled and Julia gulped. Shit, she'd opened her big mouth again.

"It's OK," Nob said. "I've told him everything. We're up here because I wanted to talk to him in private, without the fear of being overheard."

"May I see the box?" Derrick held out his hand and Julia took Nebetta from her pocket. She looked at Nob, who nodded, and then she handed the box to Derrick. It looked smaller as it rested in the palm of his large hand.

The glow that showed when Nebetta was excited intensified.

"By the gods, he's magnificent," Nebetta said. "He would fit perfectly between my thighs."

"Why, thank you," Derrick said with a grin. "I'll keep that in mind."

Then, as if realizing he was talking to a box, he shook his head. "This is extraordinary. I've read tales of things such as this, but to actually find something ... Amazing. Just amazing."

He lifted the box lid and Julia gasped.

Nob gathered Julia close to him. "Relax, baby, relax. I'd trust Derrick with my life."

The three of them gathered around the box. Resting inside on a bed of linen was a paddle doll. The doll was made of ivory instead of the usual wood. It was painted as a naked woman, with large breasts and the outline of a vagina that was bare of hair. The head was topped with a wig of black hair, decorated with faience beads. A beautiful face had been painted on the ivory. The doll and the material inside the box were perfectly preserved.

Derrick picked it up gently and Nebetta moaned. He turned the doll over and examined its smooth edges.

"Can you release her?" Julia asked.

"I don't know," Derrick said, placing the doll back in the box. "I know some people in Cairo who might be able to tell us more about this Peneb-Ra. That might lead to more information on spells for capturing kas. We can go and see one tonight. Now, what were you saying when you came in?"

"Oh! I forgot. Ahmed heard Nebetta, but he thought it was me talking. She called him a liar."

Nob frowned. "That's not possible. Someone has to touch the box to be able to hear her."

"She said two things and he heard them both. What could it mean?"

"Good question," Nob said, giving Derrick a thoughtful look.

"I'm going to the hotel to sleep and do some studying," Derrick said. "May I take the box?"

A yes and a no rang out at the same time.

"Yes," Nob said firmly, putting his hand on Julia's arm and pushing down. "If you think it will help."

Derrick put the lid back on the box and pocketed it over Julia's objections.

"I'll be careful with her," Derrick said, putting his hand on her shoulder. "I promise you can trust me. I'll be back around eight."

He walked from the room and Julia wheeled on Noble.

"How could you just give her to him, huh?"

“Because he’s my best friend,” Nob said. “I trust him implicitly. And he’s an expert on Egyptian magic, remember? What do you know about it? What do I know about it? Nothing. Chill, Julia.”

“Chill? You want chill?” She slammed her hands against his shoulders. “That’s a real person trapped inside there. Not some artifact you can pass around.”

She pushed him again and again, and he backed up with each push. When he fell onto the bed, he reached up to pull her down on top of him and kissed her hard.

Then he rolled her over, pinning her arms to the side of the bed as he continued to kiss her. He grinned at her wickedly.

“Get off me!”

“Make me!” He kept kissing her. “Um, yummy!”

Julia laughed, and then her breathing grew heavier and she moaned.

“You want to talk about magic? You’ve got me bewitched.” Nob’s breath was warm against her face. “All I could think about today was you. Your sweet breasts, your hard nipples, your wet, tight pussy.”

He kissed her again and then lifted his lips so that their mouths were inches apart.

“Did you think about me?”

“Not for a second,” Julia said solemnly, and then she laughed. “What do you think?”

“I *know* you want me just as much as I want you.” He stood and stripped quickly, his cock proclaiming the truth of his words.

Julia reached up and ran her fingers down his length, causing Nob to hiss. Then she leaned over and replaced her fingers with her tongue.

“You’ve changed quite a bit in one night.” Nob’s words came out in a whisper.

“Maybe I’m just taking Nebetta’s advice,” Julia whispered as she gently licked him with her tongue. “Or maybe you’re the one who has *me* under a spell.”

Nob threaded his fingers in her hair as she ran her tongue up and down, circling the head before sucking it in gently over and over. She wanted to please him, make him feel as wonderful as he made her feel.

She sucked him in as far as she could and tried not to laugh when she heard his “oh, fuck yeah. Better than the dream. So much better.”

When she finally let him go, he pulled her up and reached for her shirt. She pushed his hands away and he frowned.

“Julia ...?” His voice held a warning and Julia smiled.

“I want to do it,” she whispered. Her words brought a big smile to his face. She began to unbutton her blouse as Noble climbed on the bed and sheathed his cock in a condom.

He lay down on his back and threaded his hands behind his head. His gaze was trained on her hands as they undid her blouse.

Her fingers trembled as she reached the last button. Last night it had been dark; even with the light on, it would have been hard for him to see. Today sunlight shone through the windows, but Julia didn’t care. She knew that he wanted her.

She dropped her blouse and bra and he smiled at her, his brown eyes turning almost black with desire.

“Hurry, baby. I can’t wait much longer.” His voice was deep and gravelly.

Julia shimmied out of her jeans and panties, and then twirled around, grinning when Nob rewarded her with a “that’s my girl. Come here, baby. Now.”

She climbed onto the bed, straddling his hips and lowering herself onto his cock. They both let out deep moans as she began to move, Nob’s hands taking hold of her hips to guide her up and down, back and forth.

“Did Nebetta teach you this?”

She grinned and nodded. “Like it?”

“Julia,” he rasped. “Nothing’s ever felt this good to me. Nothing.”

His words wrapped around her heart and squeezed. She leaned down to kiss him, gently nibbling his lower lip as she whispered, "Me, either."

His thumb found its way through her wetness to her clit. He rubbed and pushed on the hard nub and Julia felt waves of warmth spread through her body.

"Good, baby, hum?" He continued to rub, his other hand planted firmly on her hip as he continued to guide her back and forth on his cock.

She managed to say, "Yes, Nob, so good," before her orgasm exploded and her pussy tightened around him. Nob groaned and pushed himself farther inside her wetness. A second wave of pleasure spread through her limbs as Nob came, slamming himself into her over and over again.

"Noble, oh, Noble." Julia collapsed on his heaving chest. He lifted her head, cradled between his hands.

"Say it again."

"What?" She giggled and kissed him gently.

"My name. I want to hear it on your lips again."

"Noble."

He captured her lips. "Again."

"Noble."

He kissed her again. "Once more."

"Noble."

She laughed and then gasped as he kissed her hard, pressing himself up into her mouth until Julia felt they would meld together. She'd been a fool. Six wasted months.

When he broke the kiss, he moved so that they were on their sides. His semi-hard cock was still buried inside her as he gathered her in his arms.

"We only have a few hours before we need to meet Derrick."

“Hum.” His answer was short and Julia laughed. His fingers tickled her back gently. No man had ever held her like this. Her heart beat rapidly and she resisted the urge to reach for a cover.

She ran her fingers through his long hair and was rewarded with a huge grin.

“We can’t go like this.”

“Hum.” He began to nibble on her neck.

“Noble, you can’t be serious.”

“Hum.” She felt his body shake as he tried to suppress his laughter.

“Hum,” Julia said softly and his laughter broke through and filled the room.

He let her go and gave her a solemn look. “Did you move your stuff?”

“Have I had time?” Her breath caught in her throat as he stood and walked to the bathroom. She still couldn’t believe that he wanted her. Only her. Her heart soared at the thought.

“Good thing I did it for you,” he said with a grin, popping his head out from the bathroom door. “I’d hate to see you walking down the hallway naked, unless I was waiting at the other end equally naked.”

She sat up and for the first time saw her suitcases stacked against the wall.

Nob grinned at her and held up a washcloth. “You scrub mine and I’ll scrub yours.”

“Your back?” Julia gave him a grin.

“Among other things.” He disappeared into the bathroom and the water started to run.

Julia padded across the room with a huge smile on her face. If they were late, Derrick would just have to deal with it.

Chapter Five

“I thought we were going to dinner,” Julia said, glancing around the smoky room with a frown on her face. “This is a brothel.”

“It’s not a brothel; it’s a dance club that serves meals,” Derrick said. “And the food is very tasty.”

Julia’s frown deepened and beside her Noble chuckled. “OK, it’s a brothel. But think of it as a field trip, Jules, a look at the seamier side of Egyptian culture.”

Julia punched him in the stomach and he groaned.

“Dancers!” Nebetta yelled. “Oh, how beautiful they look. I would love to join them. Your rod would grow really hard then, my sweet Derrick. I could dance for you until I was naked and then impale myself on that wonderful cock of yours.”

Noble and Julia exchanged looks and then stared at Derrick.

“What?” Derrick twisted his head and looked toward the belly dancers. A huge grin lit his face. “Can I help it if I was hard? All this woman has done is talk about sex and how she wanted to suck and fuck me. Geeze, give me a break. I’m only human.”

Julia blushed furiously and then held out her hand. “Give her to me.”

She shook her head when Derrick placed Nebetta's box in her hand. "Nebetta, behave yourself."

Nebetta giggled and Julia fought not to join her. How hard would it be, Julia wondered, to be screwed by an Egyptian pharaoh every night and then be locked in a paddle doll for two thousand years? Then you finally get a view of two gorgeous men, naked and fully erect? Who could really blame the woman?

"That's an interesting thought, buddy. Did she talk you through the whole thing, stroke by stroke?" Noble tried not to burst out laughing.

"Yeah, she did, and she said she's seen you in the same position. She said you two fucked all night long."

Julia's blush deepened. Derrick gave her a knowing look and then gently stroked her arm. He raised his eyebrows in a come-hither fashion and Julia thought she would turn as red as the sun. Just the same, a shiver of delight ran up her spine. Then she shook her head. What was wrong with her? She should slap the man. She was with Nob, not Derrick. She glanced at Nob, who had a look she couldn't decipher on his face.

Derrick started across the room and Noble pulled him back.

"Did she compare our dicks? What did she say?"

"Please, please, boys." Julia laughed, thankful that Nob obviously hadn't noticed the way Derrick had stared at her. And the way she'd reacted. "We're not going to pull out a tape measure. Nob, you told me size doesn't matter. I think that would apply here also."

Nebetta was laughing uncontrollably. "There is no need for a measuring device, Julia. Both of them are impressive men."

After plastering a cocky grin on his face, Derrick started across the floor again. Julia pulled him back and he turned on her.

"What?" Derrick shot her an exasperated look, but she didn't care. He couldn't just expect them to follow him blindly.

“A little idea of what is going on here would be nice,” she said.

“We’re going to meet a friend of mine who lives in Cairo,” Derrick said. “He might be able to give us some answers. And before you ask, no, I’m not planning on telling him about Nebetta, or the box. Now, can we go?”

The trio moved to the other side of the room and Julia stared at her surroundings. Colorful wisps of material hung from ceiling to floor. Large pillows, mostly occupied by Western businessmen, surrounded low-slung tables. Scantly clad women tended to the businessmen. Braziers sat in the middle of each table to provide low lighting. The tables were arranged in a circle around a dance floor.

“Amazing,” Julia whispered, stopping to stare at the four belly dancers who were swaying and shaking their bodies. The women were barely clothed and their movements were very seductive. They shook their hips and swayed back and forth to the beat of the music.

Julia stared. Oh yeah, this was definitely a brothel. The clothing was clearly designed to cater to Western men’s sexual fantasies. Nothing like the real belly dancing outfits. Their breasts were held up by jeweled demi-bras. Jeweled belts were worn low on their hips and supported their gauzy harem pants. Julia shook her head, however, when she saw the dancer’s heavily rouged nipples barely hidden by thin scarves. True belly-dancers would not display their nipples so brazenly. Belly-dancing was an art with a long standing tradition.

I’ve always wanted to learn belly dancing,” Julia said.

“I like that idea,” Nob said, pulling her into his hard chest. “Would you do the dance of the seven veils and strip for me?”

Julia raised her eyebrows and tried to hide her nervousness with a laugh.

“A woman my size could never dance like that.”

Nob frowned. “Back on that again, are we? I guess my little lesson from the other night didn’t sink in.”

Nob crossed his arms around his chest and stared at Julia. “Look at these women. Not a one of them is tiny. All of them are voluptuous, like a woman should be. This dance enhances their beauty, and all the men in this room are responding to their beauty. It’s only Western culture that says a woman should be a stick figure.”

Julia frowned and looked at the dancers. There was no way she could do a seductive dance like the women in the center of the floor were doing. Of course, Nob was right. None of these women were model-thin. They were rounded in all the right places. But they weren’t as round as she was.

“Of course they’re round,” Nebetta said with a laugh. “Belly dancers need something to shake. And I don’t understand where your ideas of beauty come from, Julia, but they are all wrong. Men in my time liked a woman, not a pole.”

“Well put, Nebetta,” Noble said before he pulled Julia toward Derrick, who was waving at them from across the room. They stopped in front of a table where a fiftyish man in white robes sat.

“Noble, my boy, so good to see you again.” The man’s voice was loud and Julia could tell he’d had more than a few drinks. His accent was English.

“And who do we have here?” He jumped to his feet and pulled Julia’s hand to his lips. “Such beauty to be with these two rogues. You’d do much better sitting next to me, my dear.”

Julia grinned at Nob as the man steered her toward a pillow. He held her hands while he lowered her down. Then he sank onto the pillow next to her.

“Jack Kent, my lovely. And you are?”

“Julia Rafferty.”

“Ah, I’ve heard the name. You’re an expert in language and hieroglyphs.”

Before Julia could answer, he clapped his hands and two scantily clad women delivered bottles of wine and glasses. They scurried away and returned seconds later with plates of food, including stuffed vine leaves, cheeses, hummus dip and aish bread.

"I took the liberty of ordering," Jack said, handing Julia a plate full of food. "Our main course will be stuffed lamb. Dip the bread in the hummus, my dear. It's delicious."

"How is it you know about me?" Julia swallowed a bite of bread and hummus and sighed with pleasure. It was scrumptious.

"I know about all the beautiful archeologists running around Cairo," Jack said, handing her a glass of wine and then placing his hand intimately on her arm.

Julia giggled nervously, and then she laughed when Nob removed Jack's hand and frowned.

"Said archeologist is taken, Kent." Nob's voice was low. "Find yourself someone else."

A rush of pleasure filled Julia's belly. Taken. She was taken by Noble Walters.

"Sorry," Jack said, lifting his arms up in a gesture of surrender. "You can't blame a man for trying. Now, what is this I hear about your finding Peneb-Ra's house? And finding it fully intact, no less. Extraordinary."

"How do you know that?" The expression on Nob's face was hard to read.

Kent took a bite of bread and grinned. "Everyone knows. And Peneb-Ra is a local legend, revered in the magical community and feared by everyone else."

"Tell us what you know." Derrick smiled at the beautiful woman who set a plate of food before him.

Jack took a bite of food. "Very well. Peneb-Ra was a magician in the house of Ramesses III. He was well loved by Pharaoh, and very high up in the hierarchy at court. Then, as the legend goes, he lost favor with Pharaoh, supposedly over a woman. Imagine that, a woman."

Julia shot him a dirty look and he laughed.

“Sorry, my dear. I couldn’t resist.” Kent took another bite of food. “After his fall from grace, Peneb set up a little ‘magical practice,’ if you will. He performed spells and exorcisms for village people.”

“Why did he name himself a king? He inscribed his name in a cartouche.” Julia took a sip of wine.

“Patience, my dear, patience.” Jack patted her knee and Nob growled at him. “My, our Noble has it bad for you, doesn’t he? Good for you!”

“The story,” Nob said, shooting Jack a go-to-hell look. “Please continue the story.”

“Oh, very well. When Peneb hung out his shingle, so to speak, he named himself Peneb-Ra, the great god of magic. The villagers feared him, but reportedly enjoyed the results of his spells. Then, according to local lore, Pharaoh became enraged with him. No one knows why exactly. One day Pharaoh’s soldiers showed up, arrested him, and he was executed the next day. The villagers sealed his home and it was eventually buried in sand. And it remained in that sand until our Noble decided to go for a walk. I’d always thought the story was a folk tale.”

“Why would the villagers seal the house?” Julia’s heart was beating fast. She expected Nebetta to speak out at anytime. She’d been silent, listening to the story with the rest of them. “And what is the time frame here? How long did it take for all of this to unfold? Is this tale written on a scroll somewhere? Can we see it?”

“Curious sort, isn’t she?” Jack drained his wine glass and smiled as a woman refilled it. “There are mentions of it in various scrolls. Piece them together and you have the whole story. And as for time frame, I’d say as little as six months to a year from his fall from grace and his execution.”

“And the house?” Derrick spoke for the first time since Jack had told his tale.

“By sealing the house, the villagers insured that Peneb’s ka had nowhere to settle if it found its way back to the village.”

“No hauntings,” Julia said.

“Correct, my love,” Kent said. “Now, do you want to know what I told Joshua Oakes and his little girlfriend yesterday?”

Julia’s wineglass stopped halfway to her mouth.

“Oakes was here? With his daughter? Come to think of it, we haven’t seen her since he got into town.” Noble sounded confused.

Jack dissolved in laughter. “Daughter? Do you need glasses, Noble? If Carin is his daughter, he’s a very naughty man. After our discussion, the two of them picked out one of these lovely ladies of the night and went upstairs together. And I don’t think they were deciphering hieroglyphs.”

* * * * *

“How did we miss this?” Noble ran his fingers through his hair as Derrick drove his small rental car through the busy Cairo streets.

Julia was sandwiched in between them. The feel of their hard thighs against her legs sent her body tingling.

“I don’t know,” Julia said. “You’re the one who kissed her. Why didn’t you get her to confess, ‘Guess what? I’m not really Carin Oakes.’”

Nob turned an angry face on Julia. “I didn’t kiss her; she kissed me. There’s a difference!”

“Didn’t look that way to me. You had your tongue down her throat,” Julia said, laughter bubbling out of her mouth. It was amazing she could laugh about it now.

“Listen, Jules, if you need a lesson in who is kissing who, then Derrick and I --”

Derrick held up his hand for silence. He pressed a button on his cell phone earpiece and nodded. “Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. She’s how old? OK, thanks.”

"I believe that people kiss each other," Nebetta said. "One person might start the kiss, but it is two people that are kissing."

"Exactly," Julia said, pumping her hands in the air. "Thank you, Nebetta."

"OK," Derrick said. "Can we get off of kissing and discuss something important?"

"Kissing is important, sweet Derrick," Nebetta replied. "It brings people closer together. And leads to other wicked things."

Derrick shook his head as Nebetta's giggles filled the car. "I mean important to right now. I just had a friend of mine run Oakes's name through the Internet. He's divorced and does have a daughter named Carin. But she's fourteen and lives in England with her mother."

"So he just adds a few years on her age and passes his little girlfriend off as his daughter. But why?" Noble shook his head again.

"So Carin could keep an eye on us," Julia said.

"But that doesn't answer the question why," Nob said. "We sent regular reports to the university. Why send in someone as a spy under false pretenses?"

Derrick pulled up in front of the commune. "Let's look at this logically. Wasn't Oakes the person who suggested the Saqqara site?"

"Yes, but we, rather Nob, found Peneb-Ra's house by accident," Julia replied.

Nob shook his head. "And Carin was working with us before the discovery."

Derrick nodded. "The only logical explanation is that Oakes wanted you close to where Peneb-Ra's house was in the hopes of you finding it."

"That's an awfully big chance," Nob said. "I worked that site for two years before I found the house. And it was purely by accident."

"He knew you were in the right area," Derrick said. "Is he a collector? Could he have gotten hold of scrolls that mention Peneb-Ra and Nebetta?"

Julia shook her head. "No one's mentioned Nebetta."

“But someone’s looking for her,” Nob said. “When they ransacked the house they only went through the room where you found the box.”

The car remained silent for a few minutes. Then Derrick broke the silence. “Nebetta, you’re awfully quiet. Are you OK?”

There was another moment of tense silence and then Nebetta’s voice filled the air. “Don’t let him find me, Derrick. Please. I’m frightened.”

Julia pulled the box from her pocket and ran her fingers along the smooth surface. Then she sighed and passed Derrick the artifact.

“Take her back to the hotel with you. I think she’d be safer there.”

Derrick placed the box on his lap and pulled Julia in for a hug. “I’ll take care of her. I promise.”

“Oh, look how close I am,” Nebetta said with a giggle. “If I were in human form, I could stick my tongue out and wrap it around your delicious cock.”

“Nebetta!” Julia tried to be stern but ended up laughing, burying her face in Nob’s shoulder.

“Geeze! Even when she’s scared she’s horny,” Noble said with a laugh.

“All right, I’ve got a date with Rosy Palm and her five sisters,” Derrick said with a grin, causing a flush to spread over Julia’s face. “You two go upstairs and we’ll talk more at the dig tomorrow.”

The last words Julia heard as she got out of the car were “No, Nebetta, Rosy Palm isn’t a woman. I’ll explain it later.”

* * * * *

Julia sat by one of the tent tables and yawned. She and Nob had made love until all hours of the morning and she was exhausted. Now he and Derrick had a wonderful idea

about the three of them exploring Peneb-Ra's house after the students went back to the commune.

"We'll just tell them we're taking watch duty for the night," Nob said with a shrug of his shoulders. "Then the three of us can camp out."

After he'd left the tent, Julia had shivered. She wasn't sure what scared her the most: camping out with Nob and Derrick and Nebetta's sexy ideas, or going back inside Peneb-Ra's house.

The idea of going back inside the house won out. The hot gust of wind they'd felt when opening the door for Ahmed had been something evil; she was sure of it. Had that something taken hold of Joshua Oakes?

She shook her head. That was ridiculous. Joshua Oakes had started his little charade with "Carin" way before they entered the house. So he was already evil. But the house would make him more evil.

Was the wind Peneb-Ra's ka? Had he spent all that time in the house? Julia shook her head again. Nebetta would have known. She would have communicated with him if that had been the case. Peneb-Ra would have made sure of that.

Maybe his ka had been wandering around the desert and had only found its way home when they'd opened the house. Then he'd been pissed when he couldn't find Nebetta and had gone in search of her. If that was the case, why hadn't they felt him again? Would they feel him tonight when they went back in the house?

Julia shuddered and pulled her arms around her chest.

"Cold?" Derrick's voice was low. He placed Nebetta's box on the table and smiled at Julia.

"I didn't hear you come in. I was just thinking."

“About what? Kent said he didn’t tell Oakes anything but what he told us, so we don’t have to worry about him being one step ahead of us.” He put some books down on the table and sat down.

“Good day to you, Julia.”

“Hello, Nebetta. How was your evening?”

“Wonderful. I enjoyed myself very much.”

Julia raised her eyebrows at Derrick and he smiled.

“So I had to jack off a few times; sue me. Think of it as ancient Egyptian phone sex. Her voice is hot and I was hard half the night. I couldn’t just ignore it. And she has some very wonderful ideas. Including some ideas about her and you that sounded very interesting.”

“I don’t think you should be talking to me about this.” Julia felt the blush spread from her cheeks to her neck.

“I’m sorry,” Derrick said. “Am I making you uncomfortable? I figured Nob had already tied you to the bed when he had his wicked way with you.”

Julia blushed further. Nob wanted to tie her to the bed? How come Derrick knew that and she didn’t? But then again she’d only known Nob intimately for a few days.

She cleared her throat. “My relationship with Nob is none of your business.”

“Don’t feel shy, Julia. Things like that can be very enjoyable.” Nebetta giggled. “I could give Noble a few ideas, too.”

Derrick laughed. “Believe me, Nebetta, he doesn’t need them. He’s had his walk on the wild side. And he’s still walking.”

When Julia frowned deeper, Derrick shook his head.

“Nob is my best friend, Julia. He’s got a kinky side, just like I do. He just hasn’t shown it to you yet. But he will.”

Julia felt as if her head would lift off her shoulders. Part of her was thrilled, if not a little afraid, at the idea. Part of her was pissed as hell. If Nob liked kinky stuff, he should have told her at some point. When he'd mentioned it the night in the house, she thought he was kidding.

She wasn't opposed to a little bondage. It had been a fantasy of hers for years. But what about other things? Threesomes? Would she participate in a threesome? She and Noble and who? Derrick? Another woman? What would it be like? The thought was running sideways through her brain when reality slammed her back to the here and now. She could take her clothes off in front of Nob, but Derrick? She shook her head. No way.

"Good morning, Noble," Nebetta said.

Julia turned as Nob walked into the tent. She tried to slow her breathing as he set down his canteen and leaned down to kiss her.

"Good morning, Nebetta. Derrick, find anything new?"

"Yeah, he found a new way to get himself hard and jack off," Julia said.

"Really, again? Did you have a good time?" Julia stared at Nob, who seemed very interested in Derrick's sexual activities the previous night.

"As a matter of fact, I did. It would have been better with a flesh-and-blood woman, but Nebetta's got a sweet voice and she told me about the time she and Ramesses went to the temple pond with another man and ..."

Julia cleared her throat. "Could we get back to the subject at hand, please?"

When she realized what she'd said, she blushed. Then she smiled. Both men laughed.

"All right. I found a few spells in the Book of the Dead that deal with bringing back kas. But Nebetta said Peneb-Ra used his own spells. That's why we need to go inside the house tonight. Julia will work on the hieroglyphs in the magic room. Read them through and look for anything referring to kas. Nob and I will check the scrolls."

"Have you looked at the ritual room?" The trio turned toward the box.

“Ritual room? I’ve looked at both rooms with the carvings. Are those the rooms you’re talking about? The ones with the altars? I was in the big room the night I found you.”

Nebetta sighed. “This is a different room. Peneb-Ra would always hide my eyes before he took me there. This was the room I was in when he bound my ka to the paddle doll.”

“So there’s another room in the house,” Nob said. “A hidden room. Any idea where we could find it, Nebetta?”

“No. I am sorry, Noble.” Her voice was low.

Julia felt as if her heart would break. She could hear the fear in the other woman’s voice. What would it feel like to know you were stuck inside a box for two thousand years, with no possible means of being released? Julia wouldn’t let that happen. Not on her watch.

“We’ll get you out, Nebetta. I promise. We promise. Right guys?” Julia moved her gaze back and forth between Nob and Derrick.

“As much as I’ve come to enjoy Nebetta, we shouldn’t promise things we know nothing about,” Nob said. “It would be unfair to her.”

“It’s fine, Noble,” Nebetta said. “I trust you to find a way. And if I can help, I will.”

* * * * *

Julia pushed her hat off her head and wiped the sweat from her brow. She had been working hard since that morning, but her mind was on everything except what she was doing.

Derrick’s words kept replaying in her mind. Nob has his kinky side. Exactly how kinky? Would Nob jack off while Nebetta whispered sweet nothings from her box?

Julia shook her head. That wasn’t really kinky. People paid good money for phone sex. Maybe if they couldn’t get Nebetta out of the box, they could set her up as a phone sex operator. They’d just have to figure out a way to have her answer the phone.

Still, Julia wondered exactly what Derrick had been referring to. Just how kinky was kinky? And how would she react if, or when, the subject came up? Nob was only the third man she'd ever been with, and the first man she'd ever climbed on top of and fucked.

"So technically, being on top is kinky for me," Julia said, her voice echoing inside the mastaba.

"What is this word, kinky?" Nebetta had been so quiet while Julia was working that Julia jumped.

"Didn't your little spell give you a dictionary in your head?"

Nebetta giggled. "Yes, but kinky, according to the spell, is twisted, curly. So that would be twisted sex?"

Julie snorted. "No, it's sex that's considered outside the norm, like three-ways and such."

Silence permeated the mastaba. "So I would be considered kinky in your time. I don't understand why something like that would be considered outside the normal realm of things."

"Nowadays, popular society says sex is supposed to be sex between a man and a woman."

"Not always." Nob's voice was deep. Julia turned to watch him walk into the dark space. He set down a lamp and then secured the door behind him.

"Derrick told me what he said to you."

Julia shook her head and went back to copying the hieroglyphs on the walls. "Don't worry about it."

"I'm not," Nob replied. He came up behind her and cupped her breasts. "I just wanted to talk with you for a minute or two, or three."

Nebetta's laugh filled the small space. Julia moaned as Nob's hands undid her pants and tugged them down to her ankles.

"Step out," he whispered in her ear. He pulled the pants off and Julia shivered.

"What if someone comes in?"

"Then they're gonna see your naked little pussy." He took her hands and led her toward a pole they'd installed to hold lamps. He sat the lamp on the ground and smiled at her.

"Hold your hands out."

"Why?"

"Do you trust me?"

She nodded.

"Hold your hands out."

She held them out, trying to still the shake that was very visible. Nob smiled at her and then held her gaze as he wound rope around her wrists. She started to struggle when he raised her hands above her head, hooking the rope on the lamp hook.

"No, no, Nob, let me go!" She pulled on the ropes, but she couldn't free it from the hook.

"Relax, baby. Trust. Remember? Breathe deep." His fingers dipped down to caress her folds and a smile lit his face. "Breathe deep. You're so wet, baby. This excites you. Any minute now somebody could walk in and see us. See you bound to this pole. On display for me. See me fingering your pussy."

Julia's breaths were coming in deep gasps. She moaned and then watched as Nob licked her juices from his fingers.

"What should I do to her, Nebetta? Should I make her come with my fingers? With my mouth? Or should I fuck her until she can't stand up straight?"

Julia and Nebetta moaned together and Noble laughed. "Or maybe I should just jack off while I watch her squirm."

"You're an evil man," Nebetta said, laughter in her voice. "Look at how aroused she is. Don't make her wait, Noble. Satisfy her."

"Soon. But not yet. Do you want to talk about kink, Julia?"

Julia nodded, then she groaned again when Nob lifted her T-shirt and bra, freeing her breasts to his view. She felt on display, and she was loving every minute of it.

"What is kink, really? Is it being with more than one person at a time? Is it tying someone up, like you are now? Is it spanking? Toys? Anal sex? Double penetration?"

As he spoke, Nob walked around her, his hands lightly trailing over her breasts and pussy, her other exposed flesh.

"Nob, oh, please ..." Julia felt as if she was on fire. "Please fuck me."

He stood next to her and raised his hand to cover hers so that his free hand was left to explore her breasts. He pinched her nipples and she squealed in delight.

His breath whispered against her neck as his teeth tugged gently on her earlobe. "Derrick wants to fuck you."

The words sent a shiver down her spine.

"Oh, lord," she whispered.

"I knew he would. But I told him the decision was up to you."

She turned toward him and he kissed her, his tongue melting against her own.

"Have you done it before? A threesome with him?"

His grin was answer enough. "I've done a lot of things, Jules. I've been known to deliver a few erotic spankings." He pushed her thighs apart and trailed his finger along her slit.

Julia shivered and moaned. She spread her legs wider and closed her eyes. She imagined herself over Nob's knees, his hand reddening her bottom even as it dipped down to her pussy. What a deliciously naughty idea.

"I've been known to have sex with two women at once, and with a woman and another man."

He pinched her clit, pulling on it as she bucked against his fingers, begging for mercy, begging for release.

An image of herself, Nob and Derrick flitted through her mind and caused her to shiver with delight.

When he pushed two fingers inside her wetness and then rubbed her clit with his thumb, she sobbed again. He gently moved his fingers in and out, increasing the pressure on her clit. Julia bucked against the building pressure.

"Do you want me to fuck you?" Nob's voice was low and husky.

She nodded, not trusting her voice.

"Say it. Say it out loud."

"Fuck me."

"Not yet. I like watching you squirm. You look so damn gorgeous, all trussed up for me. Only me. You like doing this, don't you, Jules?"

Julia was on the edge. Nob kept just enough pressure on her clit to keep her on the verge of an orgasm.

"Yes, oh, lord, yes. I'll do anything you want."

"No." Julia jerked her head up at the simple word. "I want you to do it because you want to, not because you think I want you to. I want you to do it for you. For us. Not just for me."

"Noble." Tears formed in the corners of Julia's eyes.

“There is one thing I want you to do for me. Come for me.” He added another finger to her pussy and increased his finger thrusts, his free hand moving to rub her clit.

She bucked against her restraints and then screamed out his name as wave after wave of bliss spread through her body.

She moaned louder when Nob took his cock out and grabbed hold of her waist.

“Wrap your legs around me.”

“Nob,” Julia said, trying to catch her breath. “You can’t hold me. I’m too fat.”

A sharp slap resounded against her ass. “Say it again and you’ll get a real spanking. Do as I say.”

He lifted her by the hips and she wrapped them around him; his cock thrust into her wetness in one swift stroke. With her arms bound above her head and her legs wrapped around his waist, there was nothing she could do but love every bump and thrust he gave her.

He remained silent as he fucked her, his lips dropping from time to time to gently bite her nipples. When he came, his powerful thrusts drove her over the edge yet again.

He buried his head in her chest and then gently lowered her to the ground. Both of them were gasping for breath.

“Think we need a pole for the bedroom?” He laughed as he reached up to release her hands.

She slumped against him and he pulled her close. Only Nebetta’s moans reminded them they were not alone.

“What do you think, Nebetta? Are we loosening her up?”

“I think Pharaoh would have loved her,” Nebetta said.

Nob kissed her gently and smiled. “I think I do, too,” he murmured into her lips. Then he grinned at her devilishly, turned, and left without another word.

* * * * *

Nob's words still rang in her ears as Julia stepped out into the hot sun. She started toward the main tent, wondering about their adventure that evening. She pulled up short when Ahmed came into view.

"Nebetta, stay silent," Julia said, placing the box in her pocket.

Ahmed's smile was very genuine when Julia came up to him and Noble. Derrick came up at the same time.

"I won't take no for an answer," he said, shaking his head. "Dinner is at eight. My house is on the Nile. We can take a nice walk along the riverbank after dinner and discuss Peneb-Ra."

He turned to Julia and bowed low, and then left.

"What's going on?"

"I think we have a change in plans for the evening," Derrick said. "He knows something. We'll have to switch our little expedition to tomorrow night."

Chapter Six

The moonlight reflected off the Nile as Julia stared at the famous river from Ahmed's patio. Her arms were slightly sore from this afternoon's adventure but it had left her feeling wonderfully naughty.

She wondered if Nob had told Derrick, but then she shook her head. This wasn't high school. And even if he had, what did it matter? She'd already made up her mind that she wanted to experience a threesome with the two men. The only problem was trying to find the courage to actually tell Nob.

She watched boats float by in the moonlight and wondered what it would feel like to take a midnight cruise on the river.

"We're drinking beer tonight," Ahmed said as he offered her a glass. "Very Egyptian."

She laughed and looked at her host. She'd been a little shocked when he'd answered the door wearing long dark blue robes, but then she realized that it suited him.

Nob and Derrick were standing nearby. Derrick had Nebetta nestled in his jacket pocket. She'd been instructed to stay silent since Ahmed had heard her the last time they'd been with him. She'd agreed, but she hadn't been happy about it.

They stood and admired the river, making idle chitchat, until Ahmed cleared his throat.

“I’ve discovered something about your magician.”

The words sent a chill up Julia’s spine. “Their magician.” She didn’t want to claim the evil man. She shook her head.

“I thought you couldn’t find him in the records.”

“I had an assistant do some research,” Ahmed said casually. He nodded at the housekeeper, who announced that dinner was ready. When they were taking their seats at the table, he asked the woman to bring more beer, and Julia started when she realized he’d spoken in the ancient language.

“You speak ancient Egyptian?”

Ahmed smiled and nodded. “I’m a scholar, Julia, and an Egyptian. My father taught me the language of my people.”

Even though the answer was probably true, it left Julia feeling uneasy. Not many people knew the language used by the pharaohs.

“About Peneb-Ra?” Noble took a bite of his shish-ka-bob and winked at Julia.

Ahmed told them the same story that Jack Kent had told them earlier. Except for one major difference.

“The scrolls say Peneb-Ra was executed because he killed one of Ramesses’s favorite concubines. A woman named Nebetta.”

Julia took a sip of her beer and watched as Derrick drained his glass. While the housekeeper placed four more full glasses on the table, she tried to decide what to say.

“Wasn’t murder unusual in that time period?” She knew the answer, but it made for a good question.

“Yes,” Ahmed said. “But the scrolls say that Pharaoh asked Peneb-Ra to perform a spell on the woman. We think she might have been ill and Pharaoh thought she would be helped more by the magician than by the physicians.”

“A lie!” Nebetta’s voice rang out and Julia coughed loudly.

“That is the second time you have accused me of lying, Julia,” Ahmed said, a frown marring his handsome face.

“No, I was coughing, honestly.” The look she got showed that Ahmed didn’t believe her.

“Tell me,” he said, his voice soft, “when you went in the house, did you find anything of interest? You’ve spent the most time in there, Julia.”

Ahmed ate a piece of his kabob and stared at her.

“No. I only spent time in the magic rooms.”

Her words were greeted with laughter. “Yes, I’ve heard of your little names for the room. The break-in is disturbing, though. I don’t suppose you would be able to tell if anything was missing.”

Again he looked at Julia and she shook her head.

“We hadn’t taken an inventory,” Nob said. “So really, if something is missing, we wouldn’t be able to tell.”

Ahmed shook his head sadly and then smiled at the woman who came to clear the plates. He spoke to her in the ancient language again and then smiled at his guests.

“Coffee and desserts on the deck.” When they were seated at the table, the woman served coffee with a tray of cheeses and baklava.

Julia took a sweet and nibbled on it nervously.

“Her body was never found,” Ahmed said as he bit into his own confection.

“Whose body?” Derrick asked.

Ahmed gave a knowing grin and Julia knew the gig was up. Ahmed knew about Nebetta. And he knew that they had her. Why wasn't he saying anything?

"Nebetta's body," Ahmed replied. "The scrolls say that Pharaoh ordered a search but nothing came of it. The woman just disappeared. Like magic."

Ahmed snapped his fingers to demonstrate his point and Julia took a sip of her coffee. It was really too hot for coffee, but if she didn't do something, she thought she would lose her mind.

"What do *you* think happened to her?" Noble's voice was strong and even.

"I wouldn't know," Ahmed replied. "The scrolls do not include that information."

Ahmed sighed and stared at Nob. "Your friend, Mr. Oakes, came to see me today."

All three of them stared at the Egyptian. "He wanted to know why I'd closed the house."

"And ..." Nob sat down his now empty beer glass and refused a third one when the housekeeper offered.

"I told him that we were waiting for word from the higher ups. That we had to do everything by the book. Does that work?"

"Thank you," Julia whispered.

"My pleasure."

An awkward silence dragged on and Ahmed nodded and sighed. "Let me show you the grounds. I have a wonderful garden, and a boat to take out on the Nile. Come."

They followed him down the path to the river and Derrick paused to slip Nebetta into Julia's hands.

"He looks so familiar," Nebetta whispered when Julia pulled back from the men. "I should know him."

Fear danced in Julia's stomach. "Do you think he's Peneb-Ra?"

"I don't feel the fear I do when Peneb-Ra is near," Nebetta said. "But something is strange. Very strange."

"Julia," Ahmed called, beckoning her to him. "Come and see the river."

She walked toward them, grateful when Nob distracted Ahmed enough for her to slip Nebetta back to Derrick. She couldn't wait to tell them what Nebetta had said.

* * * * *

"Julia, baby, Peneb-Ra is dead," Nob said with a sigh. "He's not resting in Ahmed's body."

They were headed for the commune, having decided they didn't have enough time left tonight to make a thorough search of the house.

"I'm telling you that gust of wind was his ka! You have to believe me. And Nebetta recognized him. She said Ahmed looked familiar."

Nebetta sighed. "She's right. He did look familiar."

Derrick shook his head as he stopped in the commune driveway. "Nebetta, sweetie, it's been two thousand years. Does Ahmed look like Peneb-Ra?"

"No."

"Then you could just remember him from the other day when he came and visited the dig, right?"

Nebetta's voice was dejected. "I suppose you are right, Derrick."

"There you go." Nob held up his hands. "Now can we please stop making every man the bad guy?"

"It might be you," Julia said, pointing at Nob. "You were there when the air came out. I think we can leave Derrick out because he didn't make it here until later that day."

"Thanks," Derrick said with a laugh.

“Making me the bad guy, huh? That’s gonna cost ya.” Then he turned to Derrick. “Coming in?”

Derrick shook his head. “I’m tired. Jetlag, I think. Plus, I don’t think a decision’s come down yet.”

He gently caressed Julia thigh and she sighed.

“Maybe you could bribe a juror,” Nob said, his voice husky.

Derrick leaned in and kissed Julia softly, his tongue pushing gently against her lips. Julia and Nebetta moaned at the same time, and Derrick’s tongue slipped inside as Nob’s hand caressed her breast.

When Derrick’s hand cupped her other breast, Julia threw her head back and moaned deeply.

“I think she likes it,” Nob said. “Do you like it, baby? Tell us.”

“Yes,” Julia whispered as the wonderful new sensation spread through her body. “But I think we should go to the hotel.”

Nob laughed as Derrick nodded and then reached to start the car. A pounding on the car’s hood stopped Derrick before he could put the car in gear.

Joe shook his head even as he grinned at them.

“Where the hell have you guys been? Mr. Oakes is waiting inside, and he’s been waiting for two hours. He’s not a happy camper.”

* * * * *

Julia yawned and took another drink of her coffee. Joshua Oakes was due to arrive at the dig site in fifteen minutes. He’d argued with Nob for more than two hours the night before. Nob had finally agreed to let him in the house the next morning.

She was disappointed that her fun with two gorgeous men had been interrupted, the mood broken for the evening. But she knew another time would come.

“Good morning, Julia.” Ahmed’s voice was warm and Julia looked up at him, shielding her eyes against the sun.

“What are you doing here?” she asked, watching as four muscular Egyptian men she’d never seen stopped behind him. “Noble called me about the excursion inside the house. I thought I’d bring a few co-workers to take the tour also.”

The men all nodded at her and moved toward Peneb-Ra’s house without saying a word. When Oakes arrived, he was not happy about the crowd that would accompany him inside.

“My money funded this dig,” he said, clenching his fists. “I deserve a private tour.”

“I promised Ahmed his colleagues could see inside,” Nob said. “This kills two birds with one stone. We don’t want to open the house over and over again until the walls have been shored up.”

Julia took another drink and watched as the men disappeared inside the house. They’d agreed that it would be better for Julia to keep Nebetta outside. Julia smirked as Carin bounded down the steps, shooting an evil grin at Julia as she entered the structure.

She sat on a stool and took another sip. “Did you feel him? Is Peneb-Ra here?”

“No,” Nebetta said. “I don’t feel his ka.”

Julia shook her head. “He’s here, inside the house right now. I know it.”

Nebetta’s voice was solemn. “When he does appear, he will fight with magic, not with weapons. And he will not do it with so many people present. In his heart Peneb-Ra is a coward. He hides behind his magic.”

Julia shook her head as she realized they were talking about him in the present tense, as if he would walk up at any moment.

“Nebetta, is there somehow we could call him out? Some ceremony perhaps that ...”

“Talking to yourself?”

Julia turned toward the house entrance to find Carin standing with her arms crossed in front of her chest.

“You look a bit tired today, Julia.” Carin’s voice was full of ice. “Not sleeping well at night?”

“I’m doing just fine. Thank you for your concern.”

Carin examined her fingernails. “Yes, I’m sure it’s Nob I should be concerned about. I’m sure he’s not getting any rest since there’s no room in his bed for him anymore. You really should think about going on a diet, Jules; you have such an interesting face. Too bad it’s hidden by all that flab.”

“She-demon! She should be fed to the crocodiles.”

Julia grinned at Nebetta’s remark. But a part of her, the one who had been told fat jokes all her life, winced at Carin’s words. *Let it roll off, Jules, don’t rise to the bait.* She squared her shoulders and took in a lungful of breath. Then she turned back to her coffee.

Carin tossed her hair and laughed.

“Well, little miss tubby. You should enjoy your job while you can. I’m going to make sure that Daddy gets you fired from the dig.”

Julia felt as if her stomach would fall to the floor. Carin was right. Her “father” was the money, and he was on the board. He could make any decisions he wanted at the dig.

She stood up and shrugged her shoulders at the same time Nebetta urged her to “slap her. Slap her hard.”

The men began coming out of the house and Julia’s eyes widened as she saw that Nob was already outside, and had heard every word. Had seen her take the abuse and not do anything to defend herself.

“Oakes doesn’t have that authority.” Carin jumped at Nob’s voice. “I hire, and fire, the workers here. And since you’re only causing trouble, maybe you should go back to town.”

“You have to answer to my father, Nob. If I want her gone, she’s gone.” The venom in Carin’s voice shook Julia. Had she wanted Nob that badly? She had *Daddy*. Why did she need Nob?

Nob shook his head. "I have full authority on the staff. If Oakes wants to pull his funding, let him. I'm sure with our new find I could find a backer anywhere."

"We'll see about that!" Carin stormed from the house and Julia shuddered.

"Why did you put up with her? Why didn't you tell her to just get the fuck out? You sure don't have any problem yelling at me."

Julia shrugged her shoulders. "It's just words."

"Bullshit. It's about sticking up for yourself. Is that why you pushed me away for months? You're so afraid of words and confrontation that you would rather sit by yourself and blame it on the fact that you're heavy? You push me away by arguing with me and cower when a bitch like Carin calls you names."

"I'm fat. Just say it. All she did was state the truth."

"Fuck no, I won't say it!" Nob glanced over his shoulder as Ahmed, Oakes and the men came outside, Derrick bringing up the rear and locking the door. Nob pulled Julia off to the edge of the structure.

"I don't see you as fat. I see you as you. A fantastic archeologist who I love to see panting while my cock is buried inside her."

Julia blushed. She remembered Nob's words and his gentleness from the first time they'd made love. *Tell me you're beautiful. Tell me. So very beautiful.*

She started to open her mouth, but Nob interrupted her.

"You know what, Julia? You're in a box, just like Nebetta. Only you're in one that you made yourself. You've put up walls around yourself so that when someone like Carin comes along, you can slam the door and shut down. You hide behind what other people think of you. And you use anger to push away people who show interest. Well, I hope that while you're wallowing in the fact that Carin threw daggers at you about your weight, you remember I don't give a shit what she says and I'm not afraid to tell her. I just wish you felt the same."

Chapter Seven

The hot Egyptian air slapped Julia in the face when she stepped outside the mastaba at lunchtime. She put her tools up and looked around at the workers near the lunch cart. Nob was nowhere to be found.

“Perhaps he’s in one of the structures. Go and find him. Talk to him.”

“Nebetta, please, not now. I just need to be by myself for a little bit.”

“Julia, don’t let your sorrow grow. Go and speak with him.”

“Why? He’s right. I’m in a box just like you. Only there’s no spell that will release me.”

“But, Julia ...”

Julia tuned her out. Then she went to Derrick and handed him the box.

“Something wrong?” Derrick gave her a confused look as he took Nebetta from her hands.

“No, I just need some time alone.”

Once she had her lunch, she found a seat at the farthest table where no one was sitting. She stared at the food and took a sip of water.

A box, Nob thought she was in a box. And he was right. Shit, how had things come to this? She was thirty years old, not some teenager in high school gym class. She should have told Carin to go to hell, instead of taking her abuse.

She took another sip of water and jumped when Chris and Joe slammed their trays down on the wooden table.

"Details! We want details! The really nasty ones. How big's his dick? Tell us! We want to know about his hunky friend, too. Wow!"

Joe laughed at Chris's words, slapping his boyfriend playfully on the arm, and Julia smiled.

"Sorry, I don't kiss and tell," she whispered, taking another drink to hide her trembling mouth. She should have known that little movement wouldn't fool her two friends.

"Jules, are you crying?" Joe moved to sit next to her, taking her in his arms and patting her head as she buried her face in his chest, sobs racking her shoulders. "Baby girl, what's wrong?"

"That bastard!" Chris picked up a plastic knife and looked around at the crowd. "I'll kill him for you, or at least emasculate him."

"Not with that you won't. Put that down." Joe slapped the knife from Chris's hand. "He's so easy to set off. I just love it."

Julia wiped her eyes and joined in their giggles. "It's not Nob. It was Carin. And then it was Nob. No, really, I guess it's just me."

Chris picked up the plastic knife. "Sweetie, this knife ain't that big. I think you better tell us who the real target is."

Julia opened her mouth and the whole story spilled out, from Nob's sweet lovemaking, which had the two moaning with pleasure, to Carin's harsh words and Nob's reaction to her reaction. Of course, she left out the part about Nebetta.

“He’s right, you know, I have walls built up around me.” Julia wiped her eyes again and drained her water bottle. “I’m held captive by my weight, or by my feelings about my weight.”

“You just have to learn to break out of the box,” Chris said softly. “It’s hard, but it’s worth it, believe me.”

“It’s not the same thing,” Julia said, sighing as she watched Joe lift Chris’s hand to his mouth and kiss it.

“Isn’t it? You don’t think we’ve faced verbal abuse, and worse, for loving each other? We could put up walls, let everybody think we were straight and hide the fact that we sleep in each other’s arms every night. But we don’t. Our love for each other is too strong. We have enough self-confidence to face up to them and live how we WANT to, not matter what they think of us.”

“I’m not that strong,” Julia said softly.

“But you are, sweetie,” Joe said. “You just need to bring it out somehow. Just because you’re heavy doesn’t mean you can let people make fun of you. Take a step away from your box. Do something that you wouldn’t normally do. And remember that Nob likes you as you are, or else he wouldn’t have invited you to his bed.”

Chris was nodding his head to all the statements. Then he grinned mischievously. “And when you punch out Carin, make sure we have front row seats.”

The bell rang for work to resume. They both kissed her on the cheek and Julia turned to watch them walk, hand in hand, to their mastaba.

She started toward her own and then stopped. Nebetta was right. She needed to find Nob right now and make things right. And Chris and Joe were right. She needed to take a step outside her box.

She found Nob doing paperwork inside the main tent. Butterflies took flight in her stomach.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, dropping to her knees before him. He grinned at her and she felt the butterflies double as she reached for the buttons on his jeans.

"Whoa, what's up, baby? We might get caught here." He grabbed at her hands and she pushed him away. She undid his zipper and pulled his jeans down enough to free his semi-hard cock.

"I don't care. I want to do this, here and now. I want to feel you in my mouth."

The butterflies hit warp speed as she leaned over and sucked him in, running her tongue around the head, her hands circling the base of his cock and pumping gently. She laughed inside when Nob moaned out her name.

She could hear the workings of the camp outside the tent. It thrilled her that one of the workers could come inside at any moment and find her with Nob's cock in her mouth. Yesterday there'd been little chance of getting caught. Today there was a huge chance. The idea was wonderfully naughty.

She sucked him in deeper and deeper and his moans of pleasure filled the tent. She knew someone had to hear, had to know they were having sex. But she didn't care. All she cared about was Nob. He had threaded his fingers through her hair, strands pulling loose from the pins that held it in place.

The tent flap opened and Derrick walked in. Julia pulled back, a huge blush spreading across her face. Derrick's smile was devilish. He pulled the flap shut and leaned against the pole.

"Can I watch?" His voice was deep with desire, and Julia felt a shiver run up her spine. He sat Nebetta's box on the table and walked back to the tent opening, tying the flaps on the inside.

Julia bit her lip and Nob smiled. "You can do it, baby. Suck me back in."

Julia moaned and took a deep breath. She cut her eyes to Nob who smiled at her and gently stroked her cheek. Then she leaned over and sucked him in deeper. Both men moaned

and she sucked harder. The thrill of Derrick watching gave her a huge rush. And so did Nob's reaction. She felt wanton. She felt sexy. She was pleasing the man that she loved. And she had an audience.

She moaned her disappointment when he pulled her head up gently. "Julia, baby, I'm not going to last much longer. Why don't you bend over the table?"

She looked at Derrick. He'd taken out his fat cock and was stroking it gently.

"Julia, you're a wicked girl," Nebetta said with a laugh.

Julia squared her shoulders and looked at Nob from under her lashes. "No, I want you to do it. This is for you. I want you to come in my mouth."

She heard Derrick moan "oh, fuck" as she sucked Nob in again.

"You sure?" Nob's voice was heavy with desire, and Julia knew that he was fighting the need to come. She could hear Derrick's movements as he walked to her and stroked her hair.

She nodded and pulled Nob farther into her mouth, the head of his cock hitting the back of her throat. He thrust his hips against her, his hands in her hair as she felt his come hit the back of her throat. At that moment, Julia felt a wave of pleasure wash over her. It was salty and heavy, but it was Nob, and it felt like heaven.

"Julia, oh, fuck, baby!"

She milked him, sucking harder and harder as his moans rang out.

When his cock had stopped throbbing, she ran her tongue over the tip and then grinned at him.

"Is this make-up sex?" He pulled her onto his lap and kissed her hard, forcing his tongue into her mouth.

They turned toward Derrick, who was still gently stroking his cock. Nob lifted Julia to her feet and placed her hand in Derrick's. He in turn guided it to his cock, and Julia sighed as she began to stroke him.

The two men sandwiched her in between them as Nob dipped his fingers into her wetness. He found her clit easily and began to caress her. She marveled at the fact that Derrick had no pubic hair, but didn't ask why.

"Stroke him, baby. Make him come." Derrick threw his head back and groaned as Julia began a rhythmic massage on his cock. Moments later Derrick's come shot up and soaked Julia's shirt as Nob captured Julia's cries of pleasure with a kiss. Nebetta's giggles filled the air.

Julia laid her head back on Nob's shoulder. He stroked her breast, and she sighed when Derrick did the same.

"Enjoy the show?" Nob grinned at his friend.

"Yeah, gave me a hard-on knowing you were in here getting your dick sucked," Derrick said as he gently ran his fingers over Julia's breasts. "I had to watch. I wished I had a beautiful woman kneeling before me. Don't worry, the only other person who heard was Carin, who stormed away."

Julia flushed at his words. Had she really just done this? Sucked off Nob and then jacked off Derrick? She'd never given a hand-job before, but Derrick hadn't complained about her technique.

Nob pushed his cock back inside his pants.

"I don't care who knows," he said, pulling Julia into his chest and caressing her face.

"Me, neither." Her voice was loud, and Nob inclined his head to her, a questioning look on his face. Then he grinned and laughed.

"Well, this has been great fun," Derrick said, kissing Julia lightly. "But we still have tonight to contend with. Maybe you two should just go back to the house and rest up. Not that you'd get much rest from the looks of you. I'll hold down the fort."

Derrick kissed her again. Then he took her hand and placed it on his cock, and she moaned softly as he moved her hand up and down. Nebetta giggled but didn't offer advice.

Nob stroked her hair and leaned in to kiss her neck. “Does he feel good, baby?”

Julia moaned out a yes, and Derrick broke away with a groan and then buttoned his hardening cock back into his pants and started from the tent. When he looked back at her, he had a huge grin on his face.

“Oh, and Nob, fuck her from behind for me. You know how I love to take a woman that way, and I can enjoy it vicariously just thinking about it.”

* * * * *

The night sky sparkled with stars. Julia smiled to herself as she placed a box full of snacks on the table set up near Peneb-Ra’s house. Nob and Derrick were behind her, lugging a cooler full of ice, soda and water bottles.

Each time Derrick looked at her, she blushed. The afternoon romp had given her a huge confidence boost.

She and Nob had gone back to the house for a rest, and he’d taken her from behind. She blushed at the memory of his words as he pounded into her.

“Would you like it if Derrick watched me fuck you, like he watched you suck me? Hum? Tell me? You would. I know you would.” He’d pounded harder and ordered her to stroke her clit.

She growled out the word yes as her fingers worked against her slick nub. Then she’d moaned when Nob said, “And I’d like to watch him fuck you, too, his cock deep inside you, making you scream. I wanna see you suck his cock while I fuck you.”

Julia had come instantly at the thought of both men inside her. Nob had followed quickly, then pulled them onto their sides, curled together with his cock still buried deep inside her.

Now she watched them walk across the desert. Both were laughing about something.

“Where will you search?” Nebetta had been silent and Julia had almost forgotten the box was there.

“I’m not sure,” Julia said softly. “But before the guys get here, I want to ask you to help me with something.”

She quickly made her request and Nebetta laughed. “Wonderful. I would be honored.”

“Honored about what?” Nob sat his side of the cooler down.

Before Nebetta could answer, Julia spoke up quickly. “Honored to guide us through the house.”

Nebetta giggled and Derrick shook his head. “Right.”

“Before we go in, nobody told me about the tour today,” Julia said. “What happened?”

“Nothing,” Derrick said. “Both Oakes and Ahmed looked around. Oakes was interested in the magic room and both of them searched through the sleeping chamber. But everything was very polite, very calm.”

Nob shook his head. “OK, let’s get down to business. Considering what happened to Kevin, I think we should stay together. We need to run our hands along walls and furniture to see if there’s anything that might hold a spring to move a wall.”

The trio went inside and Julia shivered. The dark feeling she’d had the first night was stronger. Whatever evil was here was growing. She stopped at the main door and shivered.

“You OK, baby?” Nob held out his hand and pulled her toward him.

“Maybe this isn’t such a good idea.”

Nob kissed her forehead. “Sweetie, it’ll be all right. I feel it, too, but if it could hurt us, it would have already.”

“But it’s getting stronger. What happens when it’s at full strength?”

“We don’t know how, or when, that will happen,” Derrick said. “We need to search now and stop whatever evil is here. And the only way we’re going to free Nebetta is by finding the spell that Peneb-Ra used. And that spell is hidden somewhere in this house.”

Julia threw back her shoulders and sucked in her breath. “Then let’s do it.”

Several hours later they were all sitting in the hallway, an oil lamp in the middle of their little circle. Empty bottles of water and used candy bar wrappers littered the floor.

They’d searched both the magic rooms, Julia deciphering enough of the spells in her mind to know that none of them had to do with Nebetta.

“Virility, protection against crocodiles, fertility. They all seem very ordinary.”

Derrick took a drink of water. “What about the one you read the first night? The one that made Nebetta moan?”

“It wasn’t a spell,” Julia answered. “It was more a proclamation saying that Peneb-Ra was the master of Nebetta, the beautiful captive. It extolled all his virtues. Favorite of Pharaoh, follower of Set, owner of a huge cock, and on and on and on. He was just patting himself on the back.”

“Huge cock. Ha!” Nebetta’s words caused them all to laugh.

The longer the trio was in the house, the more confident they felt. The bad feelings Julia had were slowly ebbing away.

“Nebetta, are you sure you don’t know where his ritual room is?” Julia took another sip of her water.

“No,” Nebetta whispered. “There were no stairs; I know that. And the room was small.”

Nob lay down on the floor, his head on Julia’s lap.

“It’s almost four,” he said, running his hand up and down Julia’s calf. “We don’t want the students to know we’ve been here, so maybe we should pack it in for the night. We can get some sleep and try again tomorrow.”

Derrick lay down full length, his feet even with the doorway of the smaller magic room. Julia admired his long frame and remembered how his cock had felt against her hands that afternoon, how wonderful his lips had felt. He really was a very handsome man.

He raised his hands above his head and stretched, and when he did, Julia let out a sharp intake of breath.

“That’s it. How could I have been so stupid?”

“What? I stretched out and you finally realized I’m better-looking than Nob? That I have a better body? Sorry, buddy, but it looks like you’re going to be replaced.”

“No,” Julia said, ignoring Derrick’s humph of disbelief. “The rooms. Why is the second magic room so small? The hallway goes all the way back, yet the smaller magic room ends before the outside wall. There has to be something behind the wall.”

Nob ran into the smaller room and pounded his fist against the brick.

“This is the end of the room,” he shouted, pounding again. “Does the hallway end here?”

Derrick pounded where he heard the noise and Julia did a quick measurement with her eyes. There was at least ten feet behind the far wall of the smaller magic room.

“I knew you would find it,” Nebetta said once they were all inside the smaller room.

Derrick raised his arms wide and said, “Open sesame.”

Nob buried his head in his hands, his shoulders shaking with laughter.

“Worth a shot,” Derrick said with a grin, staring at the solid walls.

“Can we be serious, please? We don’t have a lot of time left until daylight.”

“Lighten up, Jules,” Nob said, kissing her quickly. “We’re all a little punchy from lack of sleep. And we should be celebrating. Half the battle is over. We’re three of the brightest minds in archeology. Opening this room can’t be that hard.”

An hour and a half later, Julia put her hands on her hips and stared at Nob. “You were saying?”

They’d tried everything. They’d pushed walls, deciphered hieroglyphs and run their hands under the altar. The wall had remained solid.

“It’s after six,” Derrick said. “We need to go outside and seal this place back up. We can come back tonight, now that we know where to look.”

“Nebetta?” The woman had been silent and Julia could almost feel her sorrow.

“I’m all right,” she said softly. “You can try again later.”

The trio gathered their trash and went outside. They locked up the house and headed back to the cemetery. They weren’t even halfway there when they ran into Joshua Oakes, who had Carin in tow.

“I would like my private tour now,” Oakes said angrily. “I don’t need the DA lackey following me around. Why were you inside? Open the door immediately.”

“We were just checking things out,” Julia said with a laugh.

“I didn’t ask you, Ms. Rafferty,” Oakes responded. “I want this woman gone from my dig site.”

Carin gave Julia an “I told you so smirk” and Julia shrugged her shoulders.

“This is not your dig site, Mr. Oakes,” Nob said as he tried to control his anger. “It’s the university dig site and I’m in charge, not you.”

“As a member of the board, I have authority over you. Either she leaves, or I withdraw my funding. She was rude to my daughter, and I understand she engaged in sexual relations with you in one of the tents yesterday afternoon.”

“Then withdraw your money, because she stays,” Nob replied. “I’m sure I won’t have trouble finding funding, considering our new find. And from what I hear, Carin is not your daughter. I’m sure the other members of the board would be interested to know why you’re

passing her off as such. And if she is your daughter, I'm sure they'd be interested to learn that you and she visited a brothel together the other evening."

Oakes face turned stark white as Carin gasped behind him.

"Joshua! You said no one would know."

"Shut up, Martha!"

Nob raised his eyebrows. "What exactly are you looking for at the house, Oakes? What do you know about Peneb-Ra, and how did you find out?"

"Stay out of my way, Walters; I'm warning you." Oakes took a step closer to Nob. Derrick pressed closer and the older man looked between the two of them.

"I want in that house. Right now."

"No," Nob said. "*Right now* I'm going to call the university president and let him know that you are no longer associated with the dig. Then I'm going to call Ahmed and ask him for help from the DA in association with the university. Now get off *my* dig site."

Oakes's anger was almost overwhelming. Julia could tell he was considering pushing past the two men. She could also see the exact moment that he knew he would fail.

"This isn't over." Oakes turned toward the cemetery and pushed his way past his "daughter."

"Martha, huh? Does he make you call him *Daddy* when you go down on him?" Julia curled her lips at Martha, who screamed in anger and ran after Oakes.

"Good job, Jules," Nob said, kissing her lightly. "I'm proud of you. Now I have some calls to make, so if you'll excuse me."

"He won't stay gone," Nebetta said. "He knows something of Peneb-Ra. He is dangerous."

"I agree," Derrick said. "Maybe we should ask Ahmed for extra guards on the house."

He took off after Nob and Julia smiled.

“Should we have our first lesson now, Julia?” Nebetta asked.

“Let’s go to the house,” Julia said with a grin. “Then we can begin.”

Chapter Eight

Two days later, they were no closer to finding a way into the hidden room.

Ahmed had doubled the guards and hired staff to begin cataloguing the house. Nob had assigned Chris and Joe as leaders for the team and both men were thrilled.

And after work was done for the day Julia, Nob and Derrick would go inside and try to find a trigger for the ritual room. But they always came up short. And there hadn't been a repeat of a sexual encounter between the three of them. There hadn't been any sex at all. They'd all been exhausted.

Three days after getting Oakes evicted from the site, Julia rose from bed, stretched and gave a large yelp, her hand flying to her hip.

"What's wrong, baby?" Nob ran his hand up her back.

"Just sore muscles," she said with a grin.

"Yeah, well, I have a remedy for that." He pulled her back down onto him, rolling her over until he was on top of her. "A little workout will be good for that soreness."

"You're insatiable," Julia said, even as she moaned under the kisses he rained over her breasts. She wondered how she'd ever lived without this man in her life. She hoped he felt the same.

He tickled her and she laughed, pushing his hands away from different parts of her body. She tried to tickle him back and failed.

Then she gasped when Nob stood up and walked to the dresser. “Where are you going?”

“Time for a little lesson in pleasure,” Nob said, returning to the bed with a bandana in his hand. She watched as he folded it into a blindfold and then straddled her legs.

“Close your eyes.” She shook her head violently and he grinned. “There’s still the threat of a spanking out there, Julia. Do it or face the wrath of Nob.”

He laughed evilly and then grinned at her. Her breathing increased as he blindfolded her and told her to lie back down.

“Can you see anything?”

“No.”

“Good. A little pleasure for breakfast. Reach up and grab the headboard, and spread your legs.”

She did as she was told, her heart beating rapidly at the thought of him tying her again. When he didn’t, she let out a sigh of frustration.

“Your job, Julia, is to keep your position. If you don’t, you’ll be punished.”

Julia’s breath was coming in rapid gasps now. Part of her wanted to disobey him, so that he would punish her, spank her. The other part wanted to see what he’d do next. She stayed in position and he whispered, “Good girl,” in her ear, sending a shiver down her spine.

“Nob ...”

“Hush. Don’t talk. Just lie there and let me look at you. So beautiful. So ready for me.”

She shivered as Nob ran his fingertips over her thighs and stomach.

“Ignore the fat,” Julia said. Then she wished she could suck the words back in.

“What did I say was going to happen the next time those words came out of your mouth?”

“I’d get a spanking?” The words came out as a question and Nob laughed.

“Roll over.” He placed a pillow under her hips and instructed her to grab the headboard again.

She moaned softly when he caressed her behind. Then without warning he smacked first one cheek and then the other.

“The ‘fat’ word is a bad word.” He smacked her ass again and Julia moaned. “I don’t ever want to hear it come out of your mouth again. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, Nob.” He smacked her again and Julia groaned. He wasn’t spanking her hard, but it did sting, and the sting shot straight to her clit.

“Tell me what you are to me.”

He spanked her several more times until she moaned, “Beautiful.”

“Say it again.” His hand came down twice more on each cheek.

“I’m beautiful.”

He delivered several more rapid slaps and then told her to roll over. He pulled away the pillow and straddled her body.

“I love you, Julia.” Tears snaked out of her eyes as he kissed her gently. “I love you. And it hurts me to hear you say things like that about yourself.”

“And I love you.” Her tears were flowing freely now and she hiccupped as he licked and kissed the ones that escaped the blindfold.

“Next time I’ll use a belt, if that’s what it takes to get my message across. I don’t ever, ever, ever want to hear that word come out of your mouth again. Are we clear?”

Julia nodded and he kissed her. He moved off of her and then pushed her back down when she sat up.

“I’m not done yet. Assume the position.”

She giggled and grasped the headboard, spreading her legs and getting the wonderful feeling of being on display for Nob.

She gasped moments later when a soft feather trailed across her nipples. They tightened in response and she groaned.

“Don’t say anything,” Nob said. “Just lie there and enjoy it.”

He traced the feather across her breasts and stomach, her thighs and arms, studiously avoiding her pussy. Not knowing where the feather was going to caress next kept her entire body on high alert.

“There’s a little river down here,” he said as he finally traced the feather over her mons. “I think you want me to fuck you. Do you want me to fuck you, baby?”

“Yes.” The word came out as a moan and Nob laughed. He traced the feather down her legs and Julia sighed.

“You can do better than that. Beg me.”

“Nob. Please.”

“Please what?”

“Please fuck me.”

“Tsk, ts, ts. Not a very good job of begging. I guess I’ll just go into the bathroom and jerk off. Keep this beautiful hard-on all to myself.”

“Don’t you dare! You get back here and fuck me now!”

His lips landed on hers, his kiss demanding. His breath was hot in her mouth as he repeated, “BEG me!”

His weight disappeared from the bed and Julia whipped her head from side to side, wondering where he was.

“Please, Nob, please! I want you inside me. Now. Oh, Isis, please now!”

His laugh came from the bottom of the bed. She could feel it dip as he crawled in between her legs.

“Isis, huh? You’ve been taking lessons from Nebetta.”

She bucked her hips at him. “Please, Nob. Please.”

Julia sighed in pleasure as the head of his cock centered at the opening of her pussy. He pushed in gently and pulled back just as quickly.

She reached out for him and he laughed. “Put your hands back up or I’ll stop.”

She grabbed the headboard again and moaned as he entered her again, pulling out and pushing back in several times before he traced her slit with his cock, centering the head on her clit and rubbing gently. She felt as if her whole body was on fire. Never had she felt so open.

“I want to move. Please.”

“No. I told you to hold still. What a pretty little clit you have. Have I told you that? So hard and ready for action all the time.”

He slapped her clit with his cock a few times and Julia came, her hands clutching the headboard as Nob stroked her stomach with his free hand and whispered, “Good baby, yeah, my good girl, oh, yeah,” over and over and over.

When her breathing had calmed down, she reached for the blindfold.

“Not yet. Roll over for me.”

Julia centered her hips on the pillow that Nob provided, her senses on fire from her earlier orgasm. She sighed when he gently caressed her behind.

“I want to know you everywhere, baby. Every last inch of your delectable body. Even where I’m sure you’ve let no one go before.”

Julia tensed when he pulled her cheeks apart and gently caressed the orbs, his fingers putting subtle pressure on her anus.

“Nob, no.”

“Relax, baby. Just relax. You know I’d never do anything to hurt you. You’re gonna love this, I promise.”

“What if I don’t?” Her voice was shaky.

“Then I’ll stop. All you have to do is tell me.”

Julia nodded, her body shaking with desire when Nob snaked two fingers inside her wetness and trailed it back to her anus. When his fingers mirrored the action, she sighed with pleasure, her hips sinking into the pillow.

“That’s it, baby. Relax.” He coated her opening and then rubbed it gently with his thumb. When she let out a loud hiss, he pushed his thumb inside her and she cried out in pleasure. He sank it all the way in, his fingers lightly caressing her pussy as he pushed it back and forth inside her tight opening.

“You look so gorgeous.” He continued to gently move his thumb back and forth until Julia began to buck her hips in acceptance. Then he removed it and replaced it with his index finger, sliding inside her as she moaned his name.

“So tight. So warm. Can I have your sweet ass, Julia?”

“Yes, please.” Sensations were swimming in her brain as she heard the click of a bottle and then felt Nob’s fingers rub warm gel across her rosy opening.

“You were prepared for this.” Her voice was low and contained a little bit of fear.

He laughed softly as he straddled her hips. “I told you I want all of you. I want you to relax again.”

Nob stroked her hips until she began moving them again, and then he placed his cock at her opening.

“Take the blindfold off and look at me.” His voice was tender. When their gazes locked he smiled. “Push out baby, gently.”

Julia loosened her muscles and pushed out at the same time she felt Nob push the head of his cock into her anus. The pressure was incredible and she moaned and tried to pull away. At the same time, she loved having him where no one had ever been. Loved the intimacy that she felt as he pushed in with slow, easy strokes.

“Does it feel good, baby?”

“Yes.” The words slipped from her mouth as he slid all the way inside. Julia could feel his hips against hers, his skin warm, his muscles hard. She could also feel him holding back, trying to give her a chance to get used to having him inside her ass.

He leaned down and rained kisses on her shoulder and back, gently nipping at her neck until finally he growled, “Baby?”

The question was understood and Julia gave him a shy smile over her shoulder. “Yes, Noble, yes.”

He groaned and started to thrust, slow even strokes that had Julia grinding her clit into the pillow below her. She met each thrust with a whimper of pleasure. When he eased them onto their side and began to rub her clit she cried out and came immediately, bucking her hips into him to urge him to increase his pace.

The incredible full feeling increased as he pushed harder and harder until he finally growled out her name as he flooded her insides. Julia turned her head toward his and his lips came down on hers, hard and demanding.

“Thank you, baby. Thank you.” His words sent a wonderful shiver up her spine as his heavy breathing tickled her shoulder. She turned her head to look at him and then angled her hand to stroke his hair.

Their gazes locked, their bodies still joined together as he gently caressed her lips with his. He kissed her and then smiled.

“Let’s take a shower and then take a nap. You’re gonna wear me out.”

“Me? You’re the one who’s starting everything.” She grinned.

“Yeah, but you’re the one who’s fueling it. If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t be hot all the time.”

His words burned into her mind as he slipped from her and she felt empty. He stood and held out his hand and she took it. Ready to go wherever he would lead her.

* * * * *

“I think you’re almost ready, Julia.”

Julia sat down next to the box, her breath coming out in shallow gasps. Nebetta had been teaching her how to belly dance for almost a week now. They had been practicing in one of the abandoned tombs near the edge of the cemetery. And although Nebetta had showered praise on her, Julia was still apprehensive about her upcoming performance, even though Nob didn’t know about it.

“Do you think it looks good? Will he like it?”

“Noble will love it. And so will Derrick. Have you found the proper costume?”

“I’m having one made especially for me, at a shop near the bazaar,” Julia said. She was very excited about dancing for the two men in her life. And about the lovemaking she knew would come afterwards. “I ordered it in bright green, which is Nob’s favorite color.”

“With lots of beads on the top portion? It will be heavy, so you need to be prepared. Let’s go over the dance one more time.”

Julia stood and took a sip of water. “Nebetta, you’re a real taskmaster.”

“Yes, but you want it to be perfect.”

Julia did the routine again, cooled down, and headed for the main tent. She grinned to herself as she walked toward the camp. In a few short days she’d taken big steps away from her box. She just wished they could get Nebetta out of hers.

Nebetta was retelling a story about Ramesses when Julia noticed a glint of light near the edge of the cemetery where it led to the desert.

She moved toward the flash and frowned.

“Are we going somewhere?”

“I want to check out that flicker of light I just saw.” She moved toward it and the sparkle came again, almost as if the sun was reflecting off a mirror.

“Be careful, Julia. The desert can be deceiving. Maybe you should go and get Noble first.”

“It’s probably just some broken glass. Or maybe some little trinket that’s been buried in the sand for a while.”

But when she got closer to the light, she inhaled sharply and then forced herself forward. Lying in the sand was Carin/Martha, the sunlight glittering off the bracelets on her outstretched arms.

* * * * *

“We need to contact the police,” Julia said as Derrick knelt down next to Martha.

“She’s not dead,” Derrick said. “But she’s got a pretty big knot on the back of her head. And he beat the crap out of her. I think Oakes left her for dead.”

“Yeah, in the hopes that it would get us in trouble,” Nob said sullenly.

“She’s a bitch, but she doesn’t deserve this,” Julia said. “She needs a doctor.”

Nob pulled out his cell phone and dialed. He walked away, but Julia heard the word Ahmed and knew that he was searching for a doctor who would come to the commune and not report the attack to the police.

He walked back seconds later. “We’ll see you there in fifteen minutes.”

“I’ll go get the van,” Derrick said, taking off at a trot.

“What happens if she dies?” Julia knelt down and ran her fingers along Martha’s hair. Derrick was right. The knot was huge. Oakes must have hit her with something very heavy.

“She won’t die,” Nob said solemnly. “Martha? I know you can hear me. Stay strong. We’re getting help and then you can help us get back at Oakes. I know you know what he’s searching for. If you help us, he won’t get what he wants. That will be the greatest revenge.”

* * * * *

“It’s a mild concussion, just let her sleep. If you can’t wake her, make sure you get her to a hospital immediately.”

Julia nodded and thanked the woman for coming. She nodded and told Julia to call if they needed her again. Ahmed shook the woman’s hand and offered to drive her home.

Martha was lying on the sofa in the commune, her eyes fuzzy.

“You must think this is pretty funny, Julia.” Her voice was weak.

“I never think abuse is funny, Carin, I mean, Martha.”

“Let’s keep it at Carin for now,” Nob said. “We don’t want to have to make explanations to the students.”

Carin blinked and then sighed. Tears were slowly leaking from her eyes. “I’m an idiot.”

“Yes, you were. But you should rest now. We’ll talk about it later.” Julia tucked a blanket under Carin’s chin.

Derrick pulled them into a corner. “We need to go back to the house. Tonight. Oakes probably thinks Carin is dead and we will be busy with the cops. We need to go and find that entrance ASAP.”

“And how are we going to do that, Derrick? We’ve looked for a week. Nothing’s jumped out at us.”

Julia could feel Nebetta’s fear. The box was in her pocket, but Nebetta remained silent.

Then Carin made a sobbing noise and whispered, “Nob?”

The trio went to the couch and Carin smiled. “My pants.”

“Geeze!” Julia said. “She never quits.”

“I have the key to Oakes’s hotel room in my pocket. Room 307. Take the diary in between the towels in the bathroom.”

“Julia, get the key,” Nob said.

Julia fished in Carin’s pocket until she found the key. She gave it to Nob, and he and Derrick took off without a backward glance.

“Don’t try to poison me,” Carin said softly.

“Tempting. But I’m not a bitch like you are.”

Another tear fell from Carin’s eye and Julia wanted to kick herself in the ass.

“I’m sorry, Carin.”

Carin continued crying and then a choked “don’t be” came out. Moments later the young woman was asleep.

When the students showed up after work, Julia made up a story about Carin falling and hitting her head on the outside steps.

“She has a mild concussion.”

Maggie stepped closer. “Looks more like somebody beat the shit out of her. How come she’s not with her dad? I saw him at the house today.”

Tendrils of fear ran up Julia’s spine. She tried to even her breathing so no one knew how much the news upset her.

“We haven’t been able to find him. How long was he there?”

“He’s an evil man,” Nebetta whispered. “He’s looking for me, working with Peneb-Ra.”

Julia patted the box and looked at Maggie.

“Just a few minutes,” Maggie said. “He asked Chris what was going on. When he was told ‘nothing,’ he looked really pissed. Then when he couldn’t get into the magician’s house,

he left in a huff. Ahmed was there and wouldn't let him in. That Ahmed's pretty sexy, don't you think?"

Julia grinned at the photographer and nodded.

"He is, and he's single."

Before Maggie could respond, Nob and Derrick returned. After arranging for Maggie to sit with Carin, they went upstairs.

"So Oakes keeps a diary? He doesn't seem like the type."

"This isn't Oakes's diary," Nob said. "But he marked the pages of interest. This diary belongs to a man named Stephen Alcott. He was an Egyptologist in the last 1800s. While he was working on mastabas in Saqqara, he started having dreams about Peneb-Ra."

"Seems our magician friend would come to him and demand to be resurrected. He told Alcott that if he found the house he could restore him to life by saying the spell on the ritual wall." Nob's voice was tight with an emotion that Julia couldn't read. Then a light went off over her head.

"He didn't help you find the house," Julia said softly.

"How do we know that? Maybe over the years he just got sneakier. Maybe he was guiding my walk that day. Alcott became obsessed and could think of nothing else. Peneb-Ra took him over completely."

"You're not possessed, Nob," Derrick said, taking the book from his hands. "I don't think Peneb-Ra knew how to find the house in the sand. He said 'if Alcott could find the house. He didn't tell him where to find it.'"

Julia cleared her throat. Then she left the room quickly, both men yelling after her. She returned about twenty minutes later.

"Well?" She smiled that Nob knew her well enough to know what she'd gone downstairs to find out more about the diary from Carin.

"He bought the diary at an auction. After he began reading it, he started to have dreams about Peneb-Ra. So he set up the dig site here in the hopes someone would find the house."

"Nebetta, any suggestions on how we can handle this?" Julia waited for an answer and then spoke again. "Nebetta?"

"Once Peneb-Ra gets into the ritual room, he will take human form and come after me." Her voice was tight with fear. "You must stop him."

"That's exactly what we're going to do," Derrick said. His voice was soothing, and Julia could imagine him stroking Nebetta's hair and holding her close.

Nob opened the diary again and flipped to a marked page. "According to this, you open the ritual room by placing a slender object inside the ankh symbol near the door and running it the length of the glyph. Then the door will open."

"Let's go." Derrick grabbed Nebetta from Julia's hands and ran for the door.

"There's an inherent problem here," Julia said. "If we open the room and Oakes gets inside, Peneb-Ra could take him over, and then we're up the proverbial creek. I don't know about you, but I don't know how to fight a two-thousand-year-old Egyptian magician who is a master at the dark arts."

Derrick grinned. "There are spells that will drive him back to the underworld."

"Then we need to do that *before* we open the ritual room," Nob said. "All this hocus pocus crap is getting in the way of my dig."

"We have to find the spirit first," Derrick said. "How do you plan on doing that?"

"Through Oakes," Julia said. "He wants in the house. I say we let him in. Peneb-Ra will be nearby. He's probably not far from Oakes now. I'm sure that hot gust of wind we felt the other day was him looking for Nebetta. When we know he's in the house, you can say the spell and banish him."

Julia's heart was beating rapidly. Were they really talking about banishing ancient spirits? Despite all the classes she'd taken on Egyptology, she'd never put much stock in the

magical aspects. Now she was talking to a two-thousand-year-old concubine of Ramesses and planning on fighting an evil spirit.

“It might work,” Nob said. “We need to let Oakes know we have the diary. And that we’ll let him in the house, alone. Of course, he’s not going to trust us, so we need to think of a good excuse.”

“On it,” Derrick said as he headed for the door. “I have a stop or two to make. I’ll see ya tomorrow.”

Nob pulled Julia in for a kiss. “Hungry?”

“Not really. I need to go down and check on Carin, make sure there’s a schedule to keep watch on her. Want me to get you something to eat while I’m down there?”

Nob’s grinned at her. “I’m not hungry for food. Hurry back.”

Julia almost skipped down the stairs. She checked on Carin and found out that Joe had already made a schedule for her care that evening. The young woman had not said anything of interest, according to Maggie, who was still on duty.

When Julia went back upstairs the room was empty.

“Nob?”

He poked his head out of the bathroom and crooked his finger toward her. “Come here.” He had a towel wrapped around his waist.

Once inside the bathroom he pulled her in for a kiss. “You know how the ancient Egyptians shaved all their hair?”

A tingle of anticipation ran up Julia’s spine. She nodded.

“Derrick’s the same way.”

“Yes. Some people don’t know that shaving makes the pubic area more sensitive.” He flicked his tongue over her lips. “Take off your clothes and sit on the edge of the tub.”

Julia stripped quickly, then gave a sharp intake of breath when Nob dropped his towel to the floor. His entire pubic area was free of hair.

“When did you do that?” She looked up into his laughing eyes.

“This morning before we left. But I didn’t want you to know until we had time to play. I was hard all day thinking about your reaction. It’s your turn now. Spread your legs.”

Nob knelt down before her and Julia eased her legs open.

“Wider, baby.” He caressed the inside of her thighs and Julia moaned.

When he rubbed the shaving cream over her mons, her moans increased. “Noble.”

“Shush, baby, just hold still.” He ran the razor over her pussy, starting at the bottom, and Julia thought she would come on the spot. It seemed as if each new experience with Nob was more erotic than the next.

He whistled lightly while he shaved, and Julia tried her best to hold still. When she did wiggle, he laughed.

“You’re gonna get nicked. Stay still.”

When he was done, he ran a warm, wet cloth over her and then pulled her nether lips apart to nip at her clit. Julia pushed herself into him as he ran his tongue over her folds.

“Delicious,” he murmured. Then he pulled her hips forward until the small of her back was lying against the ridge of the tub. Nob grinned at her and then pushed his tongue inside her opening, pulling out and pushing it back in over and over until she thought she would explode.

She laughed and bucked against him, gripping his hair with one hand as she tried to balance herself with the other. He continued to plunder her with his tongue as he put his thumb on her clit and pushed, rubbing the swollen nub in circles until Julia came, tendrils of pleasure shooting across her body.

“More, more, Nob, please.”

She slumped against the back of the tub as he continued to lick her folds. Then she let out a whoosh of air when Nob stood and pulled her into his arms. He carried her into the bedroom, turning her over on the bed before burying himself deep inside her from behind, his weight pushing her deep into the mattress as he pumped.

“Take all of me,” he whispered in her ear. “I want to be deep inside you. I don’t ever want to leave.”

Julia’s heart soared. He lifted her up by her hips, his cock thrusting deeper inside her as she clawed at the bedspread. Nob’s thrusts grew harder and harder and Julia felt as if he would split her in two. And she loved every minute of it.

“Come with me, baby,” his breath was hot in her ear. “I want to feel it, need to feel it. We’ll come together, as one.”

Julia began to stroke her clit, which was already sore from Nob’s earlier attentions.

When the hard thrusts of his orgasm came, she went over the edge with him, gripping his cock with her inner muscles until she heard him whimper. She moaned with him as he pulled her head back and kissed her, his tongue fucking her mouth the same way his cock was fucking her throbbing pussy.

“So fucking good,” he whispered in her ear as he collapsed on top of her. He rolled to his side, pulling her with him. “My sweet Jules.”

She scooted away and turned to him, kissing him gently as she trailed her fingers down to his bare loins.

“You trying to kill me? I’m not a teenager, you know.”

Julia’s laugh was soft. She trailed her fingers along the soft flesh of his sac. “I just want to feel it. I wonder who first thought about shaving the pubic area?”

“The ancient Egyptians.” Nob laughed. “And stop that. I don’t think I can get it up again that quick. Plus we need to sleep. We have work to do in the morning. And you can’t be late.”

“Geeze, you’d think there’d be some benefit to fucking the boss.”

“I’d spank you for that remark, but I don’t have the energy.”

Julia laid her head on his chest; the *thunk* of his heart making her own heart beat faster. She felt as if the walls of her box were totally down. Nob had set her free. He loved her as she was, expecting nothing more, or nothing less. She thought about Nebetta and her fear of Peneb-Ra.

“Do you think our plan will work? Can we actually get rid of Peneb-Ra?”

“We’ll find a way. Derrick’s the best in his field.”

Julia stretched her arms above her head. “Nebetta’s so scared. He must be a truly evil man.”

Nob straddled her, his fingers outlining her breasts before he leaned over and took a nipple in his mouth.

“Stop that!” Julia giggled and pushed him away. “I thought you had no energy.”

“I changed my mind. And I can’t think of a better way of distracting you than playing with your beautiful breasts.”

He sucked her nipple deeper into his mouth before he trailed his tongue over to the second one and Julia sighed. She could feel his cock hardening against her stomach.

What better way indeed.

Chapter Nine

Julia squared her shoulders and knocked on the hotel room door. This was confrontation, and she wasn't very good at it. *The box, Julia, you're outside the box.* She took a deep breath and knocked again.

When Oakes pulled it open, she tried to stifle a gasp. He looked as if he'd been hit by a truck. Dark circles surrounded his eyes, which held a hazy look. He was wearing clothes that looked as if he'd slept in them for two days. And there were scratches on his arms and hands, probably from where he'd beaten Carin.

"Well, if it isn't the whore. Come to give me the same treatment you gave Walters and Matthews?" He pushed the door back as a way of invitation and walked into the room. He collapsed on a couch and stared at Julia.

"What the hell do you want, bitch?"

"I've come to tell you that Carin -- I mean, Martha -- is going to be fine. She's up and about today."

"Do I give a shit? How about telling me something that I care about? Like which one of those bastards stole my property?"

Julia took the diary out of her purse and laid it on the table. Oakes grabbed at it, holding the book to his chest as if it were a lifeline.

"Tell me why you want to go inside the house alone."

"That's pretty obvious isn't it? There's great power inside there and this is the key to releasing that power." He shook the diary and laughed. Then he leered at her and Julia stiffened.

"Does your fuck know you're here? I can't imagine him letting you walk into the lion's den by yourself."

"I don't believe in your magic," she said. Then Nob's voice rang in her ear. *Put conviction in your voice, baby. Make him believe you. And if anything happens, scream like hell. I still have the key. We'll be in there in a flash.*

"It's a load of hogwash. I want you to go inside so you can see that for yourself. Tonight. Then we can get back to what needs to be done to catalogue and excavate the house."

Oakes's eyes cleared somewhat, and then darkened. "I don't believe you."

"Look, your little stunt with Carin could have gotten us shut down yesterday. We're sick of dealing with you. If you don't want to take me up on my offer, fine. Give me the diary and I'll do it. Maybe we can find what you're looking for. Either way I want it over, tonight."

She held out her hand as Oakes continued to scrutinize her.

"What about the box?"

Julia gave him a confused look.

"Don't pull that bullshit on me. I want the box."

"Mr. Oakes, I don't know what box you're talking about. Nothing has been taken from the house."

A look of uncertainty passed over Oakes. Then his face darkened.

“I hope you’re not lying to me, little whore. That box contains a great treasure.” The voice came out of Oakes’s mouth, but it was not his. It belonged to someone else. Someone dark.

Julia took a step backward and then Nob’s voice reverberated in her head. *Confidence baby, confidence*. Maybe with Oakes, she thought, but this wasn’t Oakes. This was Peneb-Ra. Julia worked to swallow her nervousness. A two-thousand-year-old evil magician was sitting in front of her, shooting daggers at her from his wicked eyes.

She straightened her shoulders. “I don’t lie to people. I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Her hands were shaking, and she worked to keep them still. Should she yell for Noble?

“Since the other whore is alive, bring her with you to the house tonight at dusk. You may bring your male friends, too. They are no match for me.” As he spoke, the tone took on an accent much like Nebetta’s.

Julia moved toward the door, stopping in her tracks when Oakes spoke again, this time in ancient Egyptian.

She whirled to stare at him, fear contorting her features.

Peneb-Ra laughed, an evil laugh that set the hair on Julia’s body on end. “I know you understood me, little whore. Do as I say, or you and your friends will die. All of you. Now go.”

Julia turned and stared at him. “I’m not afraid of you, Peneb.”

“You forget your place. I am Peneb-Ra, the great god of magic. You will learn to kneel before me.”

“Never.”

“The younger whore is very pleasing to me. She is beautiful, but not very good at what she does. Just the same, she will serve as a vessel for Nebetta until I can restore her to her

own body. Nebetta can please me in any form. And you, you will also be my slave. When your lips are wrapped around my staff, then you will know true power.”

* * * * *

“The man is evil. Pure evil.” Julia’s breath came in ragged breaths. Nob rubbed her back as Derrick drove the rental car down the road.

“Breathe, baby, breathe. Tell us again exactly what he said.”

“That I was to bring Nebetta tonight. That he knew I had her. And if I didn’t, then he would kill us.” She conveniently left out the part where Peneb-Ra had said she would kneel before him. That she would suck his cock. That he planned on making her his whore.

“This is a good thing,” Derrick said as he turned into the commune driveway.

“How can you say that?” Nebetta’s voice was almost as shaky as Julia’s. “You cannot win against Peneb-Ra. If he has already possessed Oakes then he is powerful enough to destroy you all. And make me serve him again.”

Julia shivered and Nob pulled her close to his chest.

“Since we know that he’s already possessed Oakes, we know he won’t be at the house until Oakes gets there,” Derrick said as he parked the car. “We can get inside the house and be waiting for him when he enters. I’ll say a few spells and he’ll be remanded back to the underworld.”

“This isn’t TV, Derrick! You didn’t see him, hear him. He’s going to be ready for anything. He wants in that room.”

Nob stopped them at the front of the car. “I’m confused. If he’s already possessed Oakes why does he need in the room?”

“Because the full resurrection spell is in there,” Derrick said. “Before he says that spell, he’s still vulnerable. After he says the spell, all bets are off. I think it was only anger that

forced him to reveal himself today, anger that he hasn't been able to find Nebetta or get inside the room."

Julia wrapped her arms around her waist and shivered.

"And Peneb-Ra doesn't need the diary to open the room, but Oakes does," Derrick said. That tells me that he's not totally taken him over, seeing as how Oakes was so desperate to get the book back."

"Trust me," Nob said. "I won't let anything happen to you, or Nebetta."

He kissed her forehead. "Derrick and I are going to the house to do some recon work. We'll be back later."

Derrick passed Nebetta to Julia and then placed a kiss on Julia's cheek, dipping down to kiss her gently on the lips.

"Relax. I'm a professional." He grinned, but Julia could see the apprehension behind the smile.

When they were gone, Nebetta let out a groan.

"We can't just sit here, Julia. They will not be able to beat Peneb-Ra."

"What can I do, Nebetta? I don't know anything about Egyptian magic."

"No, but you know something about Egypt."

Julia brightened. "And something about research. Come on, let's go hit the Net."

"Why do we need a net? Do we have to catch something?"

* * * * *

The desert air was cool and the tension in the air was thick. Julia watched as Nob and Derrick dismissed the guards at Peneb-Ra's house.

Deciding that it was the lesser of two evils, they'd brought Nebetta with them. But Derrick had the box with a fake paddle doll in his pocket, and Julia had the real paddle doll in her pocket.

Martha was sitting quietly in a chair, wringing her hands.

"You know what to do," Julia said to her.

"Yes."

"Don't turn on us, Martha. We need you."

"You saved my life. I may not like taking orders from your fat butt, but I owe you."

"You know what, Martha, I don't care if you don't like me," Julia said. "You can think what you want. Nob has taught me that I'm fine as I am. I don't give a shit what you think. I just want you to play your part. It's just as important to you as it is to us."

Martha shrugged her shoulders and then let out a small gasp. "Here he comes."

Penneb-Ra, for it was most definitely him, was striding across the desert, his shoulders thrown back, a wicked grin on his face. He stopped in front of Julia and held out his hand.

"Give me the doll."

"I don't ..."

"I can sense her here, near you. Don't lie to me. And I want the real doll. You can not fool me."

"It's all right, Julia," Nebetta said, her voice low. "Remember Derrick's plan. And don't forget what we did this afternoon. Things will be fine."

When the real paddle doll was in his hand, Penneb-Ra ran his hands over the breasts and thighs, moaning softly.

"Have you missed me, my pet? I have missed you so very much. Soon you will be able to serve me as you should." He looked at Martha and sneered.

Martha looked as if she would faint on the spot. She ran behind Derrick and hid her face in his shoulder.

"Speak to me, Nebetta." Penneb-Ra's voice was as soft as a caress.

"How may I serve you, Master?"

Julia could hear the fear in Nebetta's voice and Peneb-Ra laughed.

"Oh, my lovely captive, what joy we will have together in this new world."

"Shall we go inside?" Nob stared at Peneb-Ra. Julia couldn't decide if he was scared to death or fascinated that he was actually meeting an ancient Egyptian.

"Of course, Noble. Derrick." He inclined his head toward both men. He seemed like a proper gentleman, not a man intent on basically killing four people, two of them by taking over their bodies with other people's spirits.

Once they were in the house Peneb-Ra took a deep, satisfied breath.

"So wonderful to be home."

"Very egotistic of you to carve your spells into the wall where anyone could find them." Julia looked at Noble who nodded.

"I had planned on living here forever. And no one can use those spells except me."

"Bet you didn't think so much of yourself when Pharaoh's soldiers showed up. Did they kill you by cutting off your head? Or did they stone you?"

Peneb-Ra whirled on her. "Insolent, whore! Pharaoh was not my master. I am my own master."

"Yeah, Pharaoh just proved you were nothing more than a man. Cut your head off, did they? Bet he didn't even afford you a proper burial. What a disgrace."

Behind Peneb-Ra Julia could see Derrick's lips moving. It was going to work. It was going to work.

"If you're so strong, how come your ka took so long to get back here?"

But this time Peneb-Ra did not rise to the bait. He whirled toward Derrick and muttered a few words. Derrick fell to the ground, clutching his throat.

Nob rushed forward, a stun gun in his hand, but before he could reach the magician, Peneb-Ra moved, muttered a few words and Nob slammed into the floor.

“Bastard!” Julia ran toward Nob’s prone body, but Peneb-Ra grabbed her.

“Your weapons are no use against my magic, which is almost at full strength, as you see. I will finish with them later. First I want total possession of this body.”

“Bring the lamp, slave.” He released Julia and turned to Martha. “You wait here until I call for you. And if you leave, I will find you and punish you as I did the last time.”

Martha nodded, tears streaming down her face.

“Thanks for nothing, Martha,” Julia muttered as she picked up the lamp. Peneb-Ra waved his hand toward the hallway.

“After you, my new slave.”

Julia cringed at his words but led the way down the hall. When they entered the small magic room, she watched as he inserted a slender length of metal deep into the ankh and ran it down the length. There was a loud whooshing noise as the stone door pushed open.

Peneb-Ra groaned as he pulled on the stone slab. “Don’t worry. This room is airtight and will not have been disturbed until now.”

He motioned Julia into the dark space and she went inside. Their shadows danced in the lamplight and Julia sighed.

“Nebetta?”

“Oh, don’t worry about Nebetta. She is a good slave who knows not to speak unless spoken to. You will learn the same. I will take great pleasure in teaching it to you.”

Julia shivered at the thought. Then she sat the lamp down on the altar that was in the center of the small room and glanced around. Three of the walls were covered in hieroglyphic carvings.

On the end wall was a painting. Julia moved closer to decipher it. When she realized what it was, her eyes widened.

Penneb-Ra was wearing the twin crowns of upper and lower Egypt. A beautiful woman with long black hair was kneeling in front of him, naked, her head bowed. The woman was obviously Nebetta. And under his feet was Ramesses III, a spear through his heart.

"Of course, my sweet whore, you are not as beautiful as Nebetta or Martha, but you can still serve."

Julia felt like a fist had slammed into her stomach. She flattened her back against the painting and let go of a huge scream.

"I wouldn't get on my knees for you if you were the last man on earth."

Penneb-Ra had been studying the walls, tracing his fingers along the symbols. He wheeled on her, anger flashing from his eyes.

"You dare speak to me that way! You will learn your place!"

"Screw you, Penneb-Ra, and the horse you rode in on!"

Julia flinched when he raised his hand to slap her. Over Penneb-Ra's shoulder she could see Nob, Derrick and Ahmed. Derrick and Ahmed were chanting softly, holding a small wooden box between them.

She ducked and missed the slap, and Penneb-Ra shouted out in rage.

"You dare insult me! Take your punishment, whore!"

Penneb-Ra advanced toward her and Julia laughed. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a large golden amulet. She held it up and for the first time that evening saw uncertainty in the magician's eyes.

"Aren't you the clever one? The Eye of Horus for protection. Do you think that will work for you?"

"It worked for us." Penneb-Ra reeled toward Nob's voice.

"Not a bad acting job, eh?"

Derrick and Ahmed's chanting increased, and when Peneb-Ra realized what they were doing, he charged. When he reached Nob, the younger man raised a canister; pepper spray filled the air. Julia pulled her blouse over her face as the magician began to scream, clawing at his eyes.

"Demons! You dare ..." A loud clap of what sounded like thunder filled the room and seconds later Oakes's body went flat, as if all the air was gone from his lungs. He collapsed on the floor and the room filled with hot air.

"Now, Derrick!" Ahmed screamed and set the box on the altar.

Derrick ran toward the altar and held up a statue of a woman with the head of a crocodile and a body that was part panther, part hippopotamus. Then he cried out:

"Great Goddess Ammit

Who eats the heart of the unjust

Take this evil from our sight

That he may walk the earth no more."

Loud wails filled the room and Julia could swear she heard Peneb-Ra screaming "no" over and over again. The air gathered into a small tornado and then crashed into the box that Ahmed held in place on the altar.

The Egyptian quickly slammed the lid down and fastened locks on the front and both sides. Julia crawled toward the doorway, waving away clouds of pepper spray. Nob had already pulled Oakes's body from the room and was performing CPR in the hallway.

"Get some water to rinse out his eyes," he yelled.

Julia ran for water, almost tripping over Martha, who was sitting near the doorway, sobbing and rocking back and forth.

When she got back, Oakes was coughing. He reached for the water bottle with shaky hands and took a healthy drink. Then he poured water over his head and rubbed his eyes.

"Don't rub your eyes," Julia said, pulling his hands away. "You'll only make it worse."

Derrick and Ahmed came up behind them. Ahmed clutched the box that now held the ka of Peneb-Ra.

Julia passed Derrick the paddle doll that she'd taken from Oakes's body. He nodded and went into the other room. Then he came back with a huge grin on his face. Nebetta was fine. And from the looks of Derrick's smile, she was happy as a clam.

"I think we all could use a dousing with water," Ahmed said calmly. "Shall we go back to your little commune?"

* * * * *

In the end, Nob decided the students would ask too many questions, so they went to Ahmed's house. After they were showered, Ahmed's housekeeper placed beer, bread, hummus and dates on the table and they all dug in.

"I can't believe what just happened," Julia said. She took a big swig of her beer and then laid her head on Nob's shoulder.

"We're grateful for your help, Ahmed," Nob said before he kissed Julia's forehead and hugged her tight.

"You should have trusted me with the whole story earlier," Ahmed said. "Derrick is indeed an expert, but where this type of thing is concerned, another person is always helpful."

Julia blushed. "Actually, Ahmed, I wasn't planning on telling you about Peneb-Ra. I just wanted your help with the amulets."

Derrick gave her a pained look. "I could have done it. You could have asked me."

"What made you think of the amulets, Jules?" Nob kissed her again before she could answer.

"Research," she said smiling up into his eyes. In truth, it was really Nebetta who had suggested the amulets to protect them against Peneb-Ra's magic. But when Julia had asked

Ahmed about the amulets and he asked what she wanted them for, she'd blurted out the whole story.

Well, most of the story. She hadn't told him about Nebetta. She was afraid that if she did, he'd try and confiscate the paddle doll.

"The house will be sealed, of course," Ahmed said, holding up his hands to stop Nob from protesting. "We really have no choice. If word of this gets out, the house will become a tourist attraction and there is no telling what that will bring about."

"And what about Peneb-Ra?" Nob pointed to the wooden box that sat in the middle of the table.

"I will find a place for our friend in my office. He will be safe there until I decide how to dispose of him permanently."

"You'll let us know?" Nob stared at Ahmed, who smiled.

"Of course. I will consult you all with any decision. You have my word."

* * * * *

"We've got to get in that house and copy down the resurrection spell," Derrick said once they were back at the commune.

"We'd better do it soon," Nob said. "I think Ahmed will close the house tomorrow. I don't think anyone should go in there alone, so we'll go first thing in the morning."

"Agreed." Derrick yawned.

They climbed the steps toward the bedroom. Once inside, Julia felt the inside of her stomach clench. Nob began taking off his clothes immediately.

When Derrick moved toward the doorway, Julia stopped him. She took a deep breath and looked at Nob, who grinned at her.

"The bed's big enough for the three of us. Want to stay?"

“No sex tonight,” Nob said. He was wearing nothing but his boxers. He grinned and waved his finger in Julia’s face. “We’re all too tired and we need to get to the house very early in the morning. But by tomorrow things will change. And Julia will get another taste of double loving.”

Nob stripped Julia down to her panties. He pulled her onto the bed with him. She tried to cover herself and then pulled back when she realized what she’d done. She was past that.

She watched as Derrick placed Nebetta on the night table and stripped down to nothing. He lay down on her other side and kissed her gently, his hand cupping her breast. She shivered at his gentle touch, turning slightly so he could caress both her breasts while Nob watched.

She sighed as Derrick suckled a nipple, kissed her again and whispered, “Good night.” He laid his head down, his arm still around Julia’s waist, and looked at the box. “Good night, sweet Nebetta.”

“And to you, too, my Derrick,” Nebetta whispered. “Will there be room for me tomorrow?”

“Plenty,” Nob said with a grin. “Right, Julia?”

“More than enough,” Julia said as Nob kissed her.

Chapter Ten

“Ahmed, we just want to examine the walls. Our inquiring minds just want to look. Call it professional interest, but I think we deserve it.”

Julia listened as Nob tried to wheedle their way into the house. She could tell by the look on Ahmed’s face that it wasn’t working.

“While I can understand your interest, I’m afraid I must say no.” Ahmed turned toward the workers who were boarding up the windows. “The house is now the property of the government. There is too much danger here. No one is going back inside. I am in the process of researching ways to destroy the structure without releasing any negative energy.”

It wasn’t even 6:30 in the morning, and already the workers had boarded up most of the windows of the structure.

Julia sighed and exchanged looks with Derrick as Nob walked toward them, grumbling.

“What happens now?” Julia asked.

Derrick looked decidedly dejected. “I have some spells that we can try. But the problem is, I don’t know which spell Peneb-Ra used to bind her to the paddle doll. There’s no telling if the spells will work. We need to go back in that house, into the ritual room specifically.”

“Our only chance of that is breaking in,” Nob said, his anger palpable. “And if we’re caught, we’ll never work in Egypt again.”

They walked toward the cemetery, stopping midway there.

“Nebetta? Do you remember any of the spells Peneb-Ra used when he captured you?”

“No, Julia, I am sorry.” She could hear the fear in the woman’s voice. “He made me lie on the altar. I remember he had an ankh in one hand and was shaking a sistrum with the other. He placed the paddle doll on my stomach, and a scarab beetle on my heart. I was so frightened that I don’t remember most of what happened.”

“That’s good,” Derrick said. “That will help. I need my research books, the ones that are at home. I’ll go home tomorrow and see what I can find. And I’m taking Nebetta with me.”

Julia grinned at the look he gave her. He was willing to fight Julia on the matter if necessary.

“I understand,” she said. “Will you bring her back here to complete the spell?”

“Yes,” Derrick said. “But there is a problem that I didn’t think of until this morning. We need a physical body. I don’t know of a spell that can create a human form.”

Silence permeated the hot air. Julia stared at him and shook her head. Why hadn’t they thought of that? Nebetta’s ka had to have somewhere to land when they released her.

Peneb-Ra had used Oakes. And he’d planned on using Carin/Martha for Nebetta. She shook her head in disgust and walked toward the cemetery, Nob and Derrick trailing behind. Then she stopped abruptly and wheeled on them. What an idiot she’d been.

“Her body is in the house. Peneb-Ra told me so himself. He said, ‘this body will do until I can restore her to her own body.’”

“Julia, her body is two thousand years old,” Derrick said with a snort. “She can’t walk around like a mummy.”

“If Peneb-Ra was planning on restoring Nebetta to her proper body, then he used some sort of a spell to preserve it.”

Julia lightly slapped Derrick upside the head and Nob laughed.

“Nebetta, do you know where he put your body?”

“No, Julia. I can see things while in the box, but only when I am in the same room. I am not helpful, am I?”

Derrick stroked the lid of the box and Julia got the feeling he was caressing it as he would a lover.

“I’ll get you out, Nebetta, I promise.”

“I know you will, sweet Derrick. And when you do I’m going to show my appreciation.” She giggled and they all laughed.

Julia chuckled as she watched him with the box. Waking up between the two of them this morning had been wonderful. Both had sported huge hard-ons. Several times during the night, Derrick had caressed her in his sleep. And Nob had done the same thing. By the time morning had come, Julia had been so wet she thought they would all float away as if on a river.

Nob patted his friend on the shoulder. “Let’s all go out to dinner tonight to celebrate the end of Peneb-Ra. And we can discuss more plans for freeing Nebetta. Sound good to you?”

“Yeah,” Derrick replied. “And we can use my hotel room.”

Julia laughed nervously. Tonight was the night. The playing would turn to real sex.

They started back toward the cemetery and Julia pulled Derrick back. “I’ve been learning to belly dance. Nebetta taught me.”

Derrick raised his eyebrows and smiled.

“I was going to do it tonight in our room, but if we use your hotel room, that would be better.” She cleared her throat. “And it’s a surprise for Nob.”

“I can keep a secret.” Derrick agreed to take Julia’s costume to the hotel with him and the trio arranged to meet at eight.

When Derrick was gone, Nob pulled Julia close. "Shall we find a nice quiet mastaba before the students arrive? I'm pretty worked up after lying in bed with both of you last night."

Julia laughed. "You gonna tie me up again?"

"Would you like me to?" He raised his eyebrows.

Julia returned the look and took off at a run, Nob fast on her heels.

* * * * *

Julia looked in the mirror and sighed. Was that really her staring back at herself, draped in gauzy green material with dangly gold bracelets around her anklets and feet?

She'd had several glasses of wine with dinner, but her nerves had worn thin by the time the tray of baklava and cheeses was delivered for dessert.

The costume she'd ordered left little to the imagination. Her face was covered by a veil draped around her nose and mouth. The jeweled bra was heavy and very low cut. Four gauzy scarves hung from the bra. The equally jeweled girdle held up wisps of green gauzy harem pants that fully displayed her denuded mons.

"I can't do this. I can't do this. I can't do this." She leaned over the sink, a light headed feeling taking over her brain.

"You look beautiful, Julia," Nebetta said. "And you can do this. Tell Derrick to start the music. And remember what I said, sensual movements to attract your lovers. Lift and drop your hips. Move them by lifting your hips and legs, not by jerking your body about."

"My lovers," she said. "Nebetta, I'm sorry ..."

"Do not be troubled. I have no actual physical desire now, although I will enjoy watching the three of you make love, and dream of it being the four of us."

Julia stuck her head out the door to nod at Derrick. Middle Eastern music filled the air. Julia took Nebetta in her hands and glided into the room. Derrick had turned down the lights

to lend a sensual feel to the atmosphere. She felt her resolve tighten when both men gave a huge intake of breath.

“Oh, my lord.” Nob’s voice was tight with passion.

Julia handed Nebetta to Derrick. Then she began ringing her finger cymbals and moving her hips.

Once the dance started, the movements were easier. She could hear Nebetta’s voice in her head, telling her to lift and drop and shimmy. She turned round and round, shaking her body and loving every minute of it.

Each shimmy and shake sent a quiver of delight through her body that centered in her clit. Was she going to come? Damn, it sure felt like it.

A few minutes into the dance, she straddled Nob’s legs and undulated her body. The pressure in her stomach increased as her breasts threatened to break free of the bra and she giggled. She pulled off one of the scarves and wound it around his neck, pulling him close for a long kiss.

She shivered with delight when he ran his hands up her bare torso and whispered, “Oh, baby, you’re so fantastic,” into her lips.

She stripped off another scarf and draped it over him. Then she turned to Derrick, who grinned at her. Nebetta giggled when Julia leaned over to kiss his lips greedily. He pulled her in for a full kiss, earning a moan of pretend disapproval from Noble.

“You really are beautiful,” he said when he released her. She twirled away, the beads hanging from the bra shaking in time to her finger cymbals. When she stripped away the last two scarves from her bra she dropped them at their feet, giving her hips a final shimmy before she ended the dance with her arms above her head.

Her breasts and stomach rose rapidly from the exertion and there was a huge smile on her face. She’d done it. She’d danced half naked in front of two men. Shaking her size-16 body until she thought she’d come on the spot.

She turned and collapsed into Nob's arms, her back pressed into his chest. She giggled with delight when his fingers moved the material that still covered her mons and sought out her wet pussy.

Derrick's hand encircled her breast and she breathed heavily. He pushed away the bra and gently pinched first one, and then the other nipple.

Nebetta's voice sent chills up her spine. "Touch her, Derrick. See how she wants it. Needs it. Touch her, my sweet Derrick. How I wish I could touch her also."

Julia shivered with delight, partly from Nebetta's words but mostly from the hands that were roaming up and down her body. Nob's fingers gently pried apart her nether lips and he began rubbing her clit. At the same time, Derrick leaned over and began suckling a nipple.

Julia moaned and shivered under their attention. She'd never felt anything so wonderful in her whole life.

"Oh, Isis," Nebetta said. "How beautiful you all look."

"Come for us, baby. I know you're almost there. I can feel it in your sweet pussy." Nob's breath was hot against her neck as he spoke.

And then Derrick dipped his fingers down, competing with Nob's for possession of her clit and Julia came, screaming out the names of both her lovers as she bucked against their fingers.

She could feel Nob's hard cock pressed against her ass and Derrick's equally hard cock pressed against her thigh. It was decidedly wicked. And it felt delicious.

"Let's go to the bed," Nob said as he lifted Julia up. Derrick was already stripping off his clothes.

Julia reached up to undo the heavy bra and both men said, "Leave it on."

It was already pushed down enough that her large breasts were bare, her nipples wonderfully erect. The girdle rode low on her hips. She crossed to Derrick and he smiled at her as he took her hand and placed it on his cock.

Nob came up behind her and cradled her ass against his now naked crotch. "Touch him, Julia. Feel how much he wants you. See how hard you've made him."

She lightly stroked Derrick's hard cock. Then she let out a gasp of surprise when Nob wrapped his fingers around hers and tightened her grip on Derrick's cock.

"Don't tease him, baby," Nob whispered in her ear, nibbling on the lobe. "Stroke him hard."

Derrick hissed over and over, whispering "fuck yeah, oh, fuck, harder, guys, harder," as they stroked him.

She could hear Nebetta's soft sighs in the background as they played. What must she be feeling? It was obvious that she had feelings for Derrick. Was that why she wanted to see them together, to see him pleased? The woman had said she couldn't feel desire, but she did have feelings, Julia knew that.

Julia moaned when Derrick kissed her and whispered, "So good, baby. Y'all feel so good. Both of you."

He grinned at Nob, bit his lip and gave a deep sigh.

"Fuck. I never thought I'd ever want to do this." Derrick shook his head and gently stroked Nob's cock, his breathing coming in short, shallow gasps.

Nob laughed and then guided Julia's free hand to his cock. Derrick wrapped his around it and they began to stroke together.

The sensation of having a cock in each hand, coupled with the men's continued stroking of each other's cocks, caused Julia to giggle. They were so close that their foreheads were resting against each other's.

"This feels good," Derrick said with a groan.

"Yes, it does," Nob said. He and Derrick pulled back and nodded at each other, and in tandem they dipped their heads to her breasts, each one capturing a nipple in his mouth and

sucking it in deeply. She arched her back into their mouths as they continued to stroke each other. It felt wonderful, decadent, to have two cocks in her hands.

Her lovers pulled away from her as one and Derrick gently pushed her down to her knees. He offered her his cock and Julia sucked him in greedily. She never dreamed she'd do something like this. Nob ran his fingers through her hair as she sucked on Derrick, whose moans of pleasure were loud.

Julia's pussy clenched as Nob knelt down behind her and began stroking her mons. He pulled her body against his, pulling her back and sliding his cock into the globes of her ass.

"Hands and knees, baby," Nob whispered, pulling her back. Derrick pulled away long enough for Julia to get into position.

Nob knelt behind her and spread her legs with his own and entered her pussy at the same time Derrick's cock re-entered her mouth. Julia whimpered around Derrick's dick as Nob began to fuck her with quick, even strokes. Her spine tingled as Derrick reached out and stroked her cheeks.

"You feel so good, baby," Derrick said. "Nebetta, do you see her swallowing my cock? How wonderful it feels."

Nebetta murmured yes and encouraged Julia to try and take more in. She relaxed her throat muscles and felt him slide further inside. Both men groaned their approval and Julia soared. She was definitely outside her box. In fact, the box had been shattered.

She'd never done anything so wicked and it felt fantastic. So damn good. She wanted more.

"I need to fuck you, Jules." Derrick's voice came out in deep rasps.

Julia looked over at Nob, who smiled at her wickedly as he pulled out of her and then stood. Derrick pulled her up into his arms and kissed her, pushing his tongue far into her throat. When Derrick began licking her lips, Nob pushed himself into the fray until all three of their tongues were lapping at each other.

She pulled away and climbed up on the bed on all fours, shaking her ass at them both.

“From behind, right?” Her grin spreading when Derrick grunted.

She chuckled as she watched him search for a condom. Nob settled himself against the headboard, stroking his cock. Derrick knelt behind her, his hard cock rubbing against her ass.

She took Nob in her mouth at the same time Derrick slipped inside her, grabbing her hips to steady himself.

Julia loved it. Loved every minute of it. The jeweled costume made tinkling noises as Derrick bucked into her. She sucked Nob down, drawing back each time Derrick withdrew from her pussy, and sucking back down when he thrust inside.

She lifted her mouth long enough to smile at Nob and then gave a moan of pleasure when Derrick leaned over and linked their fingers, wrapped their hands around Nob’s cock and stroked him up and down.

“Sweet Jules, you should never cut yourself off from pleasure, even if it means trying something new,” Nob whispered as he threw his head against the headboard, letting out a loud “ouch” as he rubbed his head where it’d hit the wood. “I know I’ve never kissed another man, or touched another man’s cock until tonight. And I’m pretty sure Derrick could say the same thing. See what you’ve brought out in us?”

“Nebetta’s brought it out,” Julia whispered as she and Derrick continued to stroke Nob’s shaft.

Nob’s loud groans filled the air, mixing with Nebetta’s sighs.

“Suck him back in, sweet Jules,” Derrick whispered. She took him in and sucked as Derrick continued to fuck her with short, rapid thrusts.

And the whole time she was sucking and fucking, Julia could hear Nebetta as she voiced her approval and urged them on.

Julia sighed as Derrick dipped his fingers down to gently play with her clit.

“So wonderfully wet,” Derrick murmured as he twisted and rubbed the swollen nub. “Nob, I think I’m going to have to fight ya for her.”

Julia giggled as she wiggled against Derrick’s fingers as he slipped out of her.

“Come for us, Julia,” Nob whispered, reaching down to massage her breasts, pulling on her nipples. “Remind us you like it. Come for us again. Come hard.”

The word hard was barely out of Nob’s mouth when Derrick pinched her clit and Julia came. Wave after wave of pleasure rolled through her body. The pleasure was so intense she lost control of her senses. She felt as if the air was just going back into her lungs when she heard Nob say, “I think she’s ready. Are you ready, baby? Ready for both of us together?”

“What?” Julia panted the word out and then realization dawned and she shook her head, her eyes wide. “I could never ...”

“You can,” Nebetta whispered. “I’ve done it. Julia, let yourself go.”

Julia thought about the pleasure from the first time Nob had taken her that way, the closeness that she’d felt, the joy of giving to him what no man had ever had. And the joy of giving to herself, too. This time they’d just add Derrick to the mix. She bit her lip and nodded.

Derrick and Nob quickly changed places as Julia knelt at the bottom of the bed. When he was on his back, Derrick opened his arms and smiled.

Julia kissed Noble lightly and then crawled over Derrick, lowering her wetness onto his cock. She rocked back and forth a few times as Derrick clutched her hips. When she felt Nob’s hands gently push her down toward Derrick, she almost panicked, until Nob ran his fingers up and down her spine and reminded her that he loved her, that she was so beautiful.

Derrick kissed her gently as Nob rubbed soft gel into her rosy opening. When he positioned himself behind her, she leaned her head into Derrick’s shoulder. Both men rubbed her back and whispered endearments into her ears as Nob tenderly pushed his way inside.

Shivers traveled up and down her body as Nob settled himself inside her ass and both men continued to caress her. Derrick kissed her, and then Nob pulled her hips back into his and they began to move, one going in while the other was pushing out.

The sensation was overwhelming and Julia began to whimper, begging them to continue. Derrick's hands guided her hips as they slid in and out of her.

"Fuck, it feels good," Nob said, nibbling on Julia's ear. "Do you like it, baby?"

Unable to form a coherent answer, Julia nodded and threw back her head.

"I can feel you, man," Derrick said. "I'm not gonna last long."

"Me, neither," Nob said. "One more time, baby." The thrusts grew harder and Julia managed to growl out, "Can't, too much, can't."

"Yes, you can," Nob whispered, his voice coaxing. "One more time, baby. Just once more. I can feel it; you're so wonderfully close." He pulled her back enough to find her clit. He and Derrick linked fingers and pressed them into her clit.

Julia moaned when Nebetta whispered, "Again, Julia, again. Do this one for me."

And she did, shuddering when both men pumped harder into her. While her lovers soared over the edge, Nob pushed himself down, pressing her flat into Derrick so the three of them could share a kiss, their tongues mingling in a final dance.

She sank against Derrick's chest, breathing hard as small aftershocks rocked her body.

Nebetta giggled. "I can hardly wait to join you."

They all laughed and collapsed on the bed with Julia in the middle. She kissed both her lovers again, her smile spreading straight to her heart. She'd never done anything so wicked before. And she couldn't wait to do it again.

* * * * *

Hours later when they were bathed and had eaten room service snacks, Julia cuddled close to Nob's chest. Then they'd both fucked her again, one after the other, until she

screamed in pleasure. Derrick was now sleeping on her other side, his light snores a comforting noise.

“You OK, baby?” Nob gently pushed hair back from Julia’s face.

“Thrilled.”

Nob grinned and kissed her lightly. He continued to stroke her cheek. “Surprised?”

“You mean, surprised when I saw your hand wrapped around Derrick’s cock? Yeah, a little. OK, more than a little.” She giggled nervously.

“I figured since I was urging you to try new things that I needed to do the same.” His voice was so gentle that Julia felt as if he were running his tongue along her lips.

“You took a step out of your box?”

Nob laughed and kissed her forehead.

“And you let me out of mine,” she whispered.

“You let yourself out of your box. You just needed a push. You stood up to a two-thousand-year-old magician who could have killed you, learned to belly dance, and then made love with two men at once. Not bad for your first time out.”

“What happens now?” Julia could feel the constriction on her throat. “There’s only about three more months left on the cemetery dig.”

“Do you really love me?” His voice was deep.

“More than you could ever know.”

He stroked her hair and Julia felt as if she would melt right there on the spot.

“And I love you. When the dig’s over, we’ll find another job together. We’ll apply as a team. If they take one of us, they have to take us both.”

“We’ll be joined at the hip?” Julia asked with a giggle.

“And in other places,” Nob said, pulling her down and settling in for sleep.

“Hey,” Derrick said softly. “I hate to eavesdrop, but we have something serious to talk about. We still have to free Nebetta. I’ve decided to have my books shipped here. I think we should rent our own apartment so we can work on it whenever we want, with nobody asking questions. What do you think?”

Julia’s heart double-tapped. Would what had happened tonight become a common occurrence?

“Works for me,” Nob said as he gave Julia a questioning look. “With some ground rules, of course.”

She grinned and nodded.

“The sooner we can free Nebetta, the better,” she whispered. “Because being a captive is just no fun.”

 THE END 

Melinda Barron

Melinda Barron loves to explore Egyptian tombs and temples, discover Mayan ruins, play in castles towers, and explore new cities and countries. She generally does it all from the comfort of her home by opening a book.

Melinda is the fourth of five children born to an Army officer and his wife. A longtime newspaper journalist, Melinda has loved to read and write from an early age. Now she lives in the Texas Panhandle with two cats, Amelia and Pippin, and enough books to, according to her brother, open her own library. In addition to reading and writing Melinda enjoys travel, cross-stitching, watching movies and spending time with her friends and family.