

The Depths: Tale from the Sahara

The sequel to Horror Beneath the Waves

Prologue

Bora Bora, an ancient volcanic island part of the Polynesian Island chain in the South Pacific Ocean. A paradise a friendly tribe of sea otters calls home with all sorts of lush wildlife above and below the surface of the sea. However it was once plagued by one creature, so ferocious and so terrifying it makes even those who love the sea close to their heart drown with endless tidal waves of nightmares, that was until it died by the hands of an explosive diet.

My name is Cheops Longfang, I am that guy who put an end to the creature's reign of terror beneath the surface of the Polynesian Island chain and across the South Pacific once in for all. I was once part of a research team of dedicated explorers to examine the island's lush ecosystem with blooming coral reefs, lots of common and some exotic wildlife all under research funds provided by Harvard University. Things went smoothly for the first few days, but things quickly turned to disaster as I accidentally woke up a monster that has been sleeping in a boneyard of underwater corpses at the depths of the island's waters. The monster almost killed me but it had a feast of the other explorers and sunk the ship that brought me here, but sweet revenge was given when the US Navy stepped in to help me kill the creature, and I succeeded! As a reward for such an incredible feat, the tribesmen considered a miracle, I am now married to the sister of the chieftain's daughter, a bright tan otter girl named Malana. Since the night that the beast was killed, I could not be a happier jackal, however, that is not where my story ends, oh, no, it's only begun from there!

Chapter 1

It felt like I was reliving the night of the wedding as I woke up in my bed with Malana right beside me, I could never be any happier with her being by my side than anything else in the whole world. She was still soundly asleep cuddled up against my arm with her breasts lightly pressing against my right shoulder with my forearm fit snug between those mounds. I didn't want to move to wake her up, instead, I gaze out of the open windows of my hut, the bright morning sunlight peering into them and showering me with glittering light as if it were telling me that the day ahead will be marvelous. It wasn't long until the sun's rays beaming into Malana's face wakes her from her slumber and she let out a cute yawn while stretched both of her arms out.

"Mmmm, good morning my husband," she yawned and adjusted her hair a smidge, it was a little messy from being in bed. "So is this the day where you start this "honeymoon" thing you do after getting

married?” She asked me curiously, she definitely loathed the concept of marrying someone as her sister had done so with David years prior, but I can clearly see she’s never heard of the honeymoon tradition.

“Good morning to you, to Malana.” I lean my head to the side to give Malana’s cheek a kiss before wrapping my arms around her belly and back. “Usually yes, this is the day after the wedding and married couples get to go to a romantic vacation somewhere, usually somewhere like Hawaii or some other tropical getaway like Fiji, but because I still don’t have any way of stepping off the island like another freighter, I’m having very limited options and I’m stuck here until a freighter drops anchor so I can head home.” I gasped for a small bit of air from my long-winded response to her question.

Malana thought it was funny watching me struggle to breathe from my answer to what is the honeymoon tradition, giggling before hugging me. She then pulled off the covers to reveal the rest of her nude body, she had some admirable abs and a few muscles here and there which I definitely appreciate. She also reveals I’m naked, too, my flaccid, uncut penis sits peacefully between my legs, resting on my heavy offspring sac with the tip almost completely hidden underneath all that foreskin. She gives the floppy shaft a couple of light strokes with her fingers and gives it three kisses, one at the tip, one towards the base of the shaft and the last kiss was to his balls where she takes a whiff at my masculine scent.

“Mmmmm, Malana you just can’t stay away from what I’m packing down there, can you?” I ask in a very suggestive tone, taking the opportunity to reach my hand towards her pelvis so I could finger her holds, she’s pretty wet down there judging by how much of her sweet-scented, crystal clear fluid sticks to my fingers, and drools from her nether lips when I pull my fingers away from it.

“You’re so big when you get a hard husband, How could anyone not stay away from something that large on a male?” Malana teased, giving my penis a couple more light strokes as it then begins to pulse to life, beginning to lengthen and grow in her gentle grasp. “You’re also born to breed from how big your um, orbs are as well~”

“Heh, that’s always pretty hot to here from the same girl who put me in my place underneath you when we first had sex, and ripped my only pair of pants to show everyone how much I’m packing, including your sister and Kalea.” The jackal let out a small huff and he sits up a little bit, looking down at his hardening member continuing to receive attention until it finally reaches his full erect length after about 40 seconds of stroking with licks and kisses in between.

Malana then takes her tongue and slurps my shaft from the base to my partially exposed, onyx colored cocktip while stroking it with her hand. Her fingers wrap around his girthy rod and give it a couple more teasing strokes, her other hand meanwhile, traces down his thighs and begins fondling his balls.

She then suddenly grabs my necklace by the golden ankh and she yanks his head and upper torso towards her with that same lusty and naughty look she gave me when she first rode me at that freshwater lake.

“And Cheops... I just can’t take it anymore~ Malana giggled and she got up out of her position in bed, straddling her jackal husband, but instead of instinctively stuffing his black dick inside Malana’s tight and drippy pussy, she grinds said pussy up and down his shaft, her juices oozing onto that throbbing pillar between his legs. “I-I need you again Cheops, and I’ll do anything to get what I want~” She teased, her hands reaching towards my somewhat toned chest and she begins playing with my pec nipples, what a strange yet so strong otter woman.

I have to admit, I'm really starting to like Malana's dominant side a little more, the way she grabs me and teases me, I think it's called role reversal when a woman takes charge over a man during sex, but I wouldn't know that for sure, after all, this is the second time I'm having sex not just with Malana, but with anyone. Things were going so smoothly until,

"OOOOOOOHOOOOO~! Someone's wanting a very spicy first day of their honeymoon~" A familiar feminine voice called out from the open doorway in a very playful tone, me and Malana both turn our heads to the door sharply, and it was Leilani and Kalea at the doorway, giggling like mad seeing us engaging in some rather hot sexual teasing with Malana grinding her pussy against my erection. Of course, I turn bright red when I see those two other otters which only made them giggle even more

"How many times do I have to tell you all to knock before entering my hut Leilani?" I snarled, but I didn't really mean it that way.

"Um, there's no door." Kalea pointed out, sticking her hand past the doorway and into the hut with a playful smirk on her face.

"Well, you'll have plenty of time to install a door when I and Malana go out to the rest of the islands for the first day of our honeymoon," I replied, sitting up a bit more and giving them both a bit of a pouty look. "So, yeah, maybe get one of your tribesmen to do that?"

"How about we come with you on your honeymoon Cheops?" Kalea asked while approaching me and playfully giving my offspring factory a teasing grope. "You know, Malana needs to share a barracuda this size for the three of us, it's not fair for her to keep it all to herself."

"Kalea!" I exclaimed in shock, my whole face turning red from the idea of sharing my cock with all three of the girls, including my new wife. "Sheesh, you girls are so naughty today, holy shit."

Leilani and Kalea simply laughed at that and even my wife let out a giggle, but Kalea gives me beet red left cheek a light kiss.

Malana then gets off my cock and lap and pulls herself out of bed, I might as well, too as my dick went flaccid after being interrupted by a good pelvis grind session. I didn't have any proper legwear anymore so the tribe was kind enough to make me a makeshift double-sided loincloth with a bit of an Egyptian style to it as it had some hieroglyphics on both cloth pieces, poorly drawn ones. I still have my white undershirt which combined with the loincloth, doesn't admittedly look that good and the girls could see that, too. I remove the shirt and set it back in my closet before grabbing my water canteen and a small bag containing some survival essentials like a knife and flint and steel to start a campfire. I even bring a couple of tents that are tightly wrapped up in large rolls underneath my bed, strapping them to a few leftover bags belonging to the research team, (My hut was originally the team's on-land storage shed before deciding to put my bed in here.)

"Alright, I'd say we should be all packed up and ready to go then!" I said to the girls while pulling up my bag and carrying on one of the two adjustable straps. "Let's grab the nearest sailboat and start exploring!"

All of us stand up and leave the hut, but not before I let out a gasp upon feeling my rear end get grabbed at, turning my head over the shoulder sharply to see Malana giving me a toothy grin and then a lewd wink. That girl is so naughty sometimes, and she loves to take control of her partners as I found out the hard way and lost my virginity to her as a result. We board a wooden sailing raft with two spearmen

pushing us off the beach and into the water, it's very breezy today so the boat gets quite a bit of speed this time around.

"It's so good to be out on the ocean again without having Alecto popping up somewhere to ruin it for once!" I exclaim through the breezy wind gusts that somewhat makes it a little hard to hear anyone on the sailing raft. I then gently reach my hand over the side of the raft, dipping it into the sea with a fountain spray curving around my hand like the tail of a comet. "Even though the creature's dead, I was still expecting it to give us a little scare to be perfectly honest." He sarcastically remarked, but the girls didn't really get it as sarcasm because Malana shivered at that thought.

Before anything else could be said, the raft gently runs aground on the soft sandy shore, giving everyone a bit of a jolt forward, but it's far enough onshore so the waves don't take it back.

"Here we are!" Malana gleefully exclaimed, hopping off the raft and her feet almost bury themselves in the sand from the landing, me, Leilani and Kalea just step off the raft and down onto the sand, carrying all our gear except Malana, who's already at the edge of the jungle so eager to set up camp to officially begin the honeymoon.

Our camp is in a bit of a flat area with the edge of the beach just a few feet away, it took a few hours to set everything up from the tents, the campfire, a clothing rack despite me being the only person wearing clothing as the girls are all naked except for having on some jewelry and finally another rack holding all sorts of miscellaneous items, including wooden spears in case an unwelcomed predator decides to pay a visit.

Kalea headed out of the camp to gather some food, leaving me, the overly excited Malana and her dear sister Leilani. It was quiet at first with Malana cuddling me once again but Leilani soon broke the silence.

"You two look so cute together," she would say while sitting back against her bag as if it were a pillow of some kind, not the most comfortable in the world but it kind of works like a pillow. "You and Malana remind me so much of David, how we used to cuddle up in bed together each night, and admittedly you kind of look like him." Leilani traces her fingers up along my chest, her hand lightly rubbing my pecs and then my belly. "Even down to the shape of the body."

I honestly didn't know what to say, was it a really good thing I remind her so much of David? Didn't take long to see that wasn't the case because immediately broke down in tears, hugging me and her sister tightly, did something happen to David that tore up her heart like this?

"So..? What happened? Did he suddenly leave you or something like that?" I asked, having my hand press against her right shoulder.

"He's dead..." Both Leilani and Malana answered, their eyes watering up but trying their hardest not to shed a tear.

My long ears immediately droop downwards and I quickly hug the two tightly in my arms. "I-I'm so sorry..."

Kalea interrupted by stepping into our large tent and setting a small net full of herbs and berries and then next to that, another net the same size, but containing a lot of fish to feed four. All of us whip up some lunch on the campfire cooking the fish, and of course, I go with another recipe I learned in the US with lemon. It really cheered up Leilani despite not having David with her physically, but I'm sure he's here with her spiritually.

After lunch, we all decided to settle down to let our lunch digest and hang out for a while with the breeze blowing into the tent, making it much cooler inside. I take this opportunity to give Leilani just a little love after losing her dear husband. She was napping to better digest her meal, so I lift her bare feet up onto my lap and begin rubbing them, this is something David would do if he was still around, right?

I haven't given anyone a massage in a long time and I used to work at a parlor in New York after the British brought me there, so it felt a bit weird to get back into it when giving someone like Leilani or any other girl a nice foot-rub. My thumbs rub and knead at the bottoms of Leilani's feet, they feel like some kind of leather but at the same time, they felt pretty soft to the touch. I started with her arches, the response from her was a short purr with her wiggling and curling her cute toes from the massage, prompting me to keep going.

Wow, she and Malana have very nice feet, Kalea as well. I thought to myself while playfully rubbing at Leilani's soft toe digits. I really like how soft they feel when I rub them with my hands, no marks like cuts of anything on their soles and the way they wiggle their toes and curl them is just absolutely adorable. From there I slide my hands back down towards the arches of Leilani's feet, her purrs getting a little louder and she shifts her position on the sleeping mat to get a little more comfortable. Once I reach her heels and knead them a little harder than the rest of her feet, she lightly kicked her foot back towards me, almost hitting me, but she relaxed again so I can continue with no issues, it doesn't take long for me to finish up ten minutes of foot-rubbing dedicated to Leilani as my way to cheer her up from the thoughts of David not being with her anymore, hopefully, this does the job well. I give the balls of her feet a couple of kisses, as soon as I did that, her toes curled around my nose and muzzle, pinching both of them tightly between her toes with my cheeks turning red. This kind of attention makes my member hidden away under some flimsy fabric begin to stiffen, prompting me to lick her toes so she could let go of my muzzle, and it worked out for me as she did let go, but not before letting out a sleepy giggle and wiggling her toes in my face probably to tease me, she was probably awake the whole time I never really realized it, I don't know.

It was now Malana's turn for a foot massage, and with her down on her stomach, I'd have to work backward. But before I could begin to lift her feet up to my lap, she suddenly grabs me and then pulls me straight down next to her, giving me a naughty, toothy grin as she does so.

How did she pull this off without waking up the other girls? I ask myself within my safe haven of thoughts, however, those were interrupted when Malana started to tease me by grinding her toned body up against me.

Malana was still staring at me while grinding herself against my body, giving me a couple of kisses on the forehead, the cheeks and then she gives a long, passionate smooch to my lips, perhaps she's more of a switch this time around and not a full-on dominant top like something out of the Greek Amazons last time? Whatever the case may be, she takes me outside of the tent, sneaking out to avoid waking up the other girls. I and her leave camp and trek through a very small section of jungle and on the other side was another beach with a view of the volcanic peak of Bora Bora in the close distance. The view was beautiful with almost no clouds and the bright morning sun still rising higher and higher into the bright sky.

"You know, for bringing me out here so suddenly, I can't be mad with this view of the main island. This is photograph material right here."

Malana twitches her whiskers and her soft rounded ears in confusion. "Phoe-toe-graph?" She asked curiously.

“Oh, um a photograph is like a drawing, but it’s instant with no lines,” I explained. “You need a big, special box called a “camera” in order to make the photographs. It’s what they used to take that photo of Leilani and David on the day of their wedding, remember?”

“Ohhh, right right, I forgot.” Malana nodded before she takes a seat on the sandy shore, patting a spot next to her so I could sit down next to her, which I gladly do and give her a hug with one arm wrapped around her back and side.

“You know, there’s always one place in the world that I really want to take you for the rest of our honeymoon,” I said, looking over at Malana and giving the crown of her head a kiss with my hand gently stroking through her long obsidian black hair.

“Where would that be?” She asked, “There’s no paradise like here to spend that kind of uh, thing.”

I then lean my body forward and using my clawed finger, I begin drawing a large symbol in the sand. Starting with one curved line that goes straight at the back and ends with an upwards flare, underneath that was an eye shape with the pupils facing forwards. Beneath that is a weird line, the first bit going down and curving upwards, the second one goes down diagonally and the third follows the first line at the top.

“Here, my home... Egypt.” Cheops finally answered. “This is the eye of our sun god, Ra. A very sacred symbol from our land. And I imagine my gods know about your goddess and other deities across the world.”

Malana’s eyes widen exponentially and her lower jaw hangs open in wonder, she was coming to where I was born and raised, but I didn’t want it just being the two of us. Leilani and Kalea can come as well, they were curious about where I was from when I taught their people some of the myths and legends from Egypt, and some modern science like the basics in an ecosystem’s food chain, including what happens when an apex predator appears and throws everything completely out of balance and Alecto was the apex predator that did just that.

“So is my sister and Kalea coming too?” Malana having quite a bit of excitement in her tone now.

“Of course they’re coming, they need to see the sights, too!” I chuckle, holding her close to me once again until something catches the corner of my eye, followed by the sound of a very deep and loud steam whistle of sorts, it’s a large freighter and it’s steaming past a few of the islands and making its way towards Bora Bora.

“Well, there’s our ride to my homeland!” I exclaim, immediately rushing towards the camp to wake up the others leaving Malana in the kicked up sand and then following behind me.

All of us grab our gear and dismantle the tents before rushing back on the sailing raft towards the main island where the freighter has anchored. A quick word with the ship’s captain and crew left him convinced to take me and the Otter Trio to the Mediterranean and cut South to Egypt. Wasting no time, we grab all the essentials we can before boarding a rowboat taking us onboard the freighter. The ship’s engines roar with chuffing steam and the ship slowly pushes forward with the anchor chain being hoisted by a pulley winch, leaving the Polynesian Islands for the second time, at least for the trio and not me.

Egypt, here we come!

Chapter 2

The journey from the Polynesian Islands to Egypt keeps on chugging, cutting through the Panama Canal and then stopping on the United States East Coast. However, we weren't finished with the short stay and boarded another freighter bound for the Mediterranean Sea. I'm resting in one of the many bunks below deck in the crew's quarters while the girls are in the higher decks as they didn't really like the cramped space inside the ship, and wanted a much larger view of the sea in the open and not through a tiny porthole. I should up there with Malana, however, I'm not moving out of my comfortable bunk bed, especially with the very calm and rhythmic chuffing of the ship's engines I could hear a few rooms away. The distant sounds of the pistons hissing and the crankshaft turning nice and slow felt like some kind of strange lullaby that can put even the most sleep-deprived individuals to a deep slumber.

It's been about a month since we left the Polynesian Islands, traveling halfway across the world tends to do that when current long-distance sea vessels are as slow as snails. As it is now, we just crossed the Baltic Strait and are tens of miles away from Greece in the Aegean Sea. Gazing out my porthole window, I can see gray clouds as far as the eye can see with slightly choppy waves cresting along as the ship cuts through them bobbing like a buoy, and I started getting a little seasick from all the rocking. I quickly rush out of the crew quarters, climb up a couple of ladders and a flight of stairs to reach the surface deck before dashing towards the port side of the ship and vomiting over the railing and into the dark choppy sea below. It's very clear I'm not used to traveling by sea, well, in rough waters such as this, but it reminded me the best way to cure seasickness is to always look into the horizon, best to be on the main deck doing this rather than be cramped inside the internals of the ship.

"Are you okay hon?" I heard Malana's voice from behind, wearing a rather cute looking white dress that was given to her and I assume the other girls by the crew.

"I'm okay, I just felt a little sick of sitting inside the ship next to the engine room so I came up here," I said, motioning her to come closer to me which she obliged, allowing me to wrap my arm around her torso and hold her close.

"Listen, about me and you being, mated and married. We... Actually didn't really do a full wedding."

"What? Wait, why not Cheops?" Malana asked, turning her head to gaze at my emerald green eyes.

I droop my long ears downwards and then turn my body to face her.

“Well, we didn’t have a lot of time to set up a wedding, that celebration of me killing Alecto was on everyone’s mind, so I said you and I married that night without them,” I said to the light tan otter girl, giving her cheek a kiss and stroking my fingers through her obsidian black hair.

“Oh... I see, and where we’re going on this iron raft, will we have a proper wedding?” Malana asks again, returning the kiss and hugging me from the side.

“I plan to, a proper wedding in my homelands would be perfect for everyone there.” I gleefully remarked. “And besides, I think it would be a lot more expansive since a lot of my friends are there already, that means a larger crowd to celebrate with.

Malana twitches her whiskers and she giggles at the idea, she then heads back into her cabin, leaving me alone again on the outside deck of the ship.

The ship travels along the Mediterranean, just then a gloomy fog swallows it, drastically reducing visibility from ten miles down to just about five-hundred feet ahead. And if that wasn’t strange enough, I heard faint voices echo through the fog and into my ears, I couldn’t tell what the voices were saying, but they were very frequent. At first, I assume I was simply just hearing things, a little uncommon when you caught in the middle of a fog, but no, the voices gradually grow louder and frequent upon getting closer and closer to our destination. And many hours later, we finally pull into the Nile Delta, squeezing through a couple of small islands channeling the river flow like a spider web into the sea.

The girls came back out of their cabin to gaze at the new scenery, almost no clouds in the sky, much hotter temperatures and miles upon miles of sand dunes as far as the eye can see. There were also lots of greenery with palm trees and other flora populating the banks of the legendary Nile River. They were all amazed at the new scenery, but they were not used to the slightly more extreme heat and all of them immediately began to sweat.

“Whew, this is way hotter than Bora Bora, there’s not much water here to dive in and cool down,” Leilani complained as she tried fanning herself to keep herself cool.

“You’ll get used to it after awhile honestly, I mean, we jackals are well adapted to such conditions, mostly because of our fur being very short,” I replied. “Though to be fair, you have short fur to be more eh, hydrodynamic? But your long hair kind of defeats the purpose, but at least it’ll help with the heat.”

The ship finally comes to a halt with the crew frantically attaching the mooring lines to secure the vessel before opening the passenger and cargo bulkheads to let us come down onto the stone docks.

It was here that the voices I heard earlier came back again, but this time much, much louder than before and way more frequent, and the more I listened to them, the more clear they became

before finally focusing on one single voice, a very deep one with one message in a rather deathly tone, and it was in Egyptian tongue.

“<He is here.>”

Huh? Who’s he? And who said that?

I turn my head in one direction, and then the other, trying to see where that voice came from, but none of the locals, tourists and other explorers were looking at us so it couldn’t be any of them. Two men in typical modern Egyptian attire came to greet us, one jackal and the other a lion with a short mane.

“Ah, welcome to Cairo!” They both exclaimed, shaking our hands and then escorting us down the main streets through many shops and stalls, there was a lot of activity going on for sure with a bunch of salesmen and women coming up to us with exotic perfume, food and other goods the girls have not seen before.

“Say, Mr. Jackal,” the lion said to me, “You certainly look familiar, were you with that British expedition team discovering that one temple in eh, Giza years ago?”

I perk my long ears upwards and I gasp. “Oh um... Yes, that was me, Cheops.”

The Lion clapped his hands once and the other jackal smirked. “Your expedition buddies are still here, and they all miss you. I’m sure they’ll be very happy to see you again, and your lady friends here.”

“I remember them as if I never left them, but um, could you, lead us to them?”

I then look at the girls, who are topless and very barely clothed at the belly and waist area.

“Oh and um... Find some more suitable clothes for the girls.”

“Ah, I can certainly do that!” The lion beamed. “Their camp is just down this road, just look for the Union Jack flag.”

With that, the lion and jackal men depart, and we make our way to the campgrounds, with a lot of tents ranging from different sizes, and some of them have two to three-floor

buildings attached to them. There were three distinct types of camps in this corner of the city, there were British, American and French flags flying in the fronts of the camps, so that goes to show that the British Certainly not the only ones interested in Egyptian archeology, the Americans were not much of a surprise, but the French? What do they find so interesting in Egyptian artifacts? I didn't have to wonder for too long as there's a huge black stone tablet sitting right outside the French camp, containing all sorts of languages from Egyptian hieroglyphics to two texts that are completely unknown to me towards the center and bottom. When making our way towards the British camp, I can see a few explorers and archeologists gearing up for some kind of expedition, about three of them. One was packing up several tools like shovels, picks, masonry hammers with iron spikes and a couple of brushes into a large, tan-colored backpack. The second one was helping the third person load more bags onto the backs of two feral camels, they seem well tamed.

"I have not seen creatures with backs like those before," Malana said while gazing at the camels with one of them turning its head to look at the bright tan otter girl.

"Those are camels Malana, they're like desert mules, but unlike them, camels can walk through deserts for days without a drink of water," I explain, reaching my hand out towards another camel and gently petting its head.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, would you like some assistance with today's expedition?" I ask the three men, they were all canines of two breeds, a Welsh Pembroke corgi, and two English bulldogs.

"And who must you be Mr. jackal?" The corgi asked with that distinct Welsh accent, taking a gander at my face and other features, then peering towards the girls behind me, licking his lips. "Ya gotta be pretty wealthy to be carrying beauties such as these fine ladies everywhere."

"That'd be Cheops to you, sir," I said giving the corgi a stern look, and then wrap my left arm around Malana's shoulder to pull her close to me. "And no, these girls are very good friends of mine. This one, in particular, is my wife, Malana."

The corgi's ears perk upwards and he backs up slowly until his back bumps into the camel behind him. "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you were one of those types of men who like to show off their wealth by surrounding himself in women. They're common here as everyone wants to make a discovery in these fascinating lands. Lots of ruins to explore and find what's in them, even the rich folks."

He was not wrong, as in some cases, exploring the unknown can bring someone great fortunes depending on where they find them, other times they are not so lucky and perish from ambition. The world's oceans are a prime example of this, someone could find great fortunes and discover astonishing forms of life unknown to science, but in my case, my efforts brought me a nightmarish sea monster that threw the food chain off balance and killed a lot of my friends from Harvard, until I returned the favor and blew it to bits.

“But none of that matters,” The corgi spoke again after hitching that tool bag on the back of his camel. “You wanted to aid us in our expedition today, yes?”

“Of course, after all, you would need a local who knows these lands as a guide after all,” I say with a bit of pride. “What's your name by the way?”

The corgi grinned and he untied the camel's hitch and then climbed up onto the saddle. “Oh, call me Calvin.”

“Wait,” Leilani cut-in. “Wouldn't be better if we found a place to sleep before venturing out?”

“Ahh, there's plenty of space here miss, on the top floor.” Calvin then pointed to the three-story sandstone building behind him. “All the rooms up there are empty so feel free to occupy them.”

“Thank you, Calvin,” I said gleefully. “I'll tell the boys back on the ship to move our stuff into our new rooms right away.” With that make a B-Line back towards the boat, slowing down once I get close to the crowded markets before being swallowed by the crowds of civilians. Leaving the three girls with Calvin and the rest of the explorers.

Hours have past and the sun was just about to set over the horizon, glowing dark crimson as the sky turns pinkish-red and dark yellow. I was hanging out on the building's balcony on the top floor, getting a wonderful view of the Nile River and the three tall pyramids dominating the skyline, I was finally home after years of being away. But those voices I heard earlier, the ghostly whispers and finally that one distinct deep one, they sounded like they were expecting me to return, but for what purpose? My thoughts were interrupted when I heard the glass double doors open behind me, and Malana stepped through. Dressed in a nightgown dress with vibrant patterns of flowers all over, she was also barefoot with her sharp nails clicking on the wooden deck with each step she takes before wrapping her arms around my torso.

“It's a beautiful Cheops. It's much hotter than Bora Bora, but it's certainly has a lot of charm.” She said to me as she nuzzles my shoulder. “But I welcome the change of scenery, and I and my sister are very curious about what life is like in your land.”

“Tomorrow you will get to learn of the ancient civilization that once called the Sahara and Nile River Valley home, maybe we'll make the newspapers if we make a breaking discovery, hoping for the positive kind.” I chuckle and give Malana's cheek a gentle kiss before nuzzling it in return, but on the second kiss, she turns her head so my lips would meet with her own, causing my cheeks to blush.

“And what would we do tonight before resting to prepare for that?”

“We unpacked everything from our luggage, you three barely had anything to bring though, but I went into town again earlier to get you, girls, some new clothes and some more appropriate footwear.” My emerald green eyes shift down towards her bare feet and then back up to her own eyes. “You will definitely need them for the deserts, the sands here during the day can be as hot as the burning coals in a fire, but you'll be alright when night falls if you can take the cold.” Turning my head back towards the horizon, the sun finally begins to set over the horizon, dipping down lower and lower slowly until it disappeared into the sand with the light slowly growing dim.

Just then, there was a knock on the door back inside the bedroom, I turn around and leave the balcony and head back inside to open the bedroom door to see Calvin standing in the doorway to greet me.

“Evening Calvin, what do I owe you this visit?” I ask him, looking down at the five-foot-tall corgi.

“Well, it’s about our expedition tomorrow,” he answered, tilting his torso to the side to get a peek at Malana out on the balcony. “We’re trying to look for the pharaoh that has built the pyramids you see here in Giza, at least one of them.”

“And which pharaoh would that be specifically? It’s one pharaoh and their queen per said pyramid.” I turn my head back to gaze at the three large pyramids slowly disappearing into the darkness as the sun’s light continues to dim.

“Khufu,” The corgi answered. “It’s said he built the largest of the three, calling it the Great Pyramid, however...” His ears droop downwards and a frown stretched across his muzzle. “When we first went there, some of the passages that were supposed to be sealed up have been broken, and then when we made it to the King’s Chamber... Khufu’s sarcophagus was nowhere to be seen.”

“It was stolen?!” I almost jump backward in shock. “Who would do such a thing??

“We don’t know, but whoever it was, they certainly got there first before we did. I’m terribly sorry.”

I dip my head down in disappointment and I felt my heart sink a little, however, there was still a glimmer of hope shining somewhere in me. “There must be some kind of clue to where he was taken, surely the thieves that took him must have left something behind.”

“Or...” Calvin cuts in, reaching to put a hand on my right shoulder. “Maybe he wasn’t actually buried in the pyramid.” I quirk a brow at the bizarre theory of Khufu not being buried at the pyramid, Calvin must be crazy to believe that.

It’s a bizarre idea, but... That actually might be possible, if the builders knew grave robbers could potentially break into the pyramid and steal the treasures within, they probably would have put a false sarcophagus in there to deter the robbers and the real one could be buried somewhere else, but where?

“Perhaps it would be wise to split up into two parties, one goes to the Great Pyramid and the other to the temple where Khufu ruled from,” I suggested.

“That’s a great idea,” Calvin said. “I’ll tell the boys downstairs at once, so for now, get a good night’s rest, we’ll be up early tomorrow.”

With that, Calvin leaves the bedroom and I close the bedroom door with a happy grin on my face, turning towards Malana and stepping back outside on the balcony.

“Sorry I kept you waiting, Calvin and I were discussing plans for tomorrow’s expedition,” I explained to the light tan otter.

“I heard you from out here,” Malana replies. “I can’t believe someone with no respect for the dead would steal someone’s body and do whatever horrible things they have on their minds.”

“That’s the nature of grave robbers,” I said sadly, tilting my head down before leaning over the balcony railing. “I do hope we find Khufu soon, perhaps becoming world-famous for finding the pharaoh that built one of the last standing Eight Wonders of the Ancient World.”

Malana gently caresses my cheek and gives it a kiss. “I have to wonder, do they have to dig graves just to find girls to fall in love with, too?” She said jokingly.

I couldn’t help but laugh, however, my mood quickly changes to disgust. “Ew, that’d be a very horrible thing to do. No one should mess with the dead like that, ever.”

before her hands explore my body, rubbing at my toned chest and abs, but her other hand snakes down into the waist pants and squeezes at my package gently, making me gasp and blush. “Mmm, I missed this down here Cheops.”

“Heh, you did? I’m certain it missed you, too.” I teased, trying to reach my own hand to playfully rub her cooch, but unfortunately her dress gown kind of prevented that as there is no easy access at the crotch area. “Damn it I can’t get you back,” I chuckled in a teasing fashion but I do kiss her again, holding her close by wrapping my arms behind her back.

The sun’s light has pretty much faded away and the moon has taken dominance over the sky, billions of bright stars glitter and sparkle as well, with calm winds and the sounds of crickets chirping providing a very relaxing ambiance. I have gotten out of my clothes and showered and Malana was taking hers. Already in bed wearing nothing but my white undergarments, I wait patiently for her to finish up as it will be a long day to prepare for tomorrow. Soon she leaves the bathroom, coming out as naked as the day she was born, or back on her home islands.

She then climbs up onto the bed and cuddles up with me once more, nuzzling my shoulder while letting out a quiet hum, not bothering to cover herself up with the blankets as I have to hide my lower half.

“So, not to be that kind of woman, but when will be the next time we make love to each other? I miss the pleasure and love I felt when you and I first mated together.” Malana gives the bulge in my underwear underneath the blankets a grope, cupping and fondling it playfully, my manhood pulses very lightly underneath.

“Mmmm, perhaps soon, and maybe, it’ll be my turn to top you instead~” I give her a cheeky grin and squeeze at her ass cheeks using both hands.

“How about a better idea, fighting for dominance~?” It was her turn to grin at me, exposing her fangs and letting out a lustful growl close to a tiger.

“You’re a very naughty otter Malana, but sure, we can fight for dominance, but no hurting each other,” I reply. “And that goes for you and that special knife of yours, or cheating by tying me to the bed or something. It has to be fair.”

“You’re on my dear husband~” She kisses me one last time before rolling over to face away from me, giggling from the idea of fighting for dominance sexually, with a hint of confidence that she’d be able to top me again and keep me pinned, welp, only one way to see how this will turn out. I hold her in my arms and quickly drift away to sleep.

Chapter 3

That night while sleeping alongside my wife Malana, I begin to feel this burning pain in my left forearm, almost like someone pressing a hot iron on a low heat level but gradually increases over time. The pain quickly spreads to my other arm, the burning pain still intensifying as I grit my teeth in my sleep before sharply waking up once it grew too great for me. Medical attention was in my mind, but I also really didn't want to disturb Malana, so I slowly pull myself out of bed, trying not to make a sound as I tiptoe out of the bedroom. Everyone else is still asleep as it is almost midnight at this hour, the bright moon shining into the building's windows to light my way with the occasional wall lamps that have been left on accidentally.

This, burning pain in both of my arms is agonizing! First I started hearing voices some... Ghostly entities and now my arms are burning like hot coals in a fire? Am I starting to go mad?

My thoughts were all over the place developing strange conspiracy theories on why I must suffer this very weird ailment, some theories growing more and preposterous while I was walking down the empty streets within the village. One building catches my attention as I turn a corner, and it's a rather sizable magenta-colored, hexagon-shaped tent with many elegant styled gold leaf fabric overhangs on three of its six sides. It definitely wasn't too out of place in an area of the village where all sorts of stands and tents line the streets, but hopefully, this one shouldn't be empty as there are lantern lights pouring out of the tent's entrance. I slowly step inside, immediately greeted by the strong scents of different essence candles smoking lightly, filling the tent with sweet-smelling smoke perfectly mixed in with the light of the lanterns on four large wooden pillars. The interior definitely has a sense of elegance but it felt more spiritual than rich.

Just then from the back of the tent, emerged a tall lioness, a few inches taller than me with a decent amount of muscle with a bosom that has to at least be C cup or larger. Her rear end was comparably the same size as her breasts with nice wide hips to add to it. Wearing some kind of transparent cloak, I could see she had no top on underneath but had some kind of undergarments up towards the roots of her legs hiding her lower half partially. She's certainly a wonderful looking lady, but I constantly have to remind myself that I'm already taken and mustn't be attracted to her for more than just seeking friendship.

"Welcome my dear, I have been expecting you," she said resting down an array of large pillows, all of them are gold-trimmed but colors range from blue to purple, to pink and to red.

"W-who are you miss?" I stuttered, taking a seat on a pillow behind me, watching her take a few puffs of smoke from a hookah.

“Mm, I go by many names, the villagers call me ‘The Healer of Sands,’ but you can call me ‘Hekusa.’” She replies, motioning me with her hand to come a little closer, and I do just that. “I can see you’re troubled my dear, tell me, what do you seek this late at night?”

“I have come... For the incinerating pains in my forearms,” I said to her, holding out my both of my arms so she can examine them. They feel like hot coals in a fire, yet they don’t have anything on them, what’s causing this, Hekusa?”

Hekusa gently grasps both of my arms, making me wince as the pain hasn’t gone away, but burning at a low level now. “Yes, I can feel it, the pain that affects you is from a painful memory reawakening inside your mind, you seem to have been away from here for a long time, and now that you have returned, the memories like these are returning.”

“But why? I can’t be anything special just because I used to live here.” I grab hold of a second pipe attached to the hookah, taking in a good puff and then exhaling the leftover smoke.

“Oh, but you are my dear, something much more special than one can see.” She insisted, rubbing both of my arms to null the pain. “I mean, after all, you are very handsome compared to the rest of the men who step forth into my tent.” She gives me a wink. “Please, let me heal you.”

The lioness gently presses both of her padded and clawed hands onto both of my cheeks, raising her top half up so she could sit back down on her pillows, her hands emitting some kind of green glow. It takes not even a second to realize I’m dealing with someone who can actually use magic, and her magic completely takes the burning pain away, however right as she did so, something flashes into my mind, a terrible image of someone standing in front of a freshly stabbed corpse. Blood was streaming down the big gash in his chest with some of it dripping off some kind of black and gold blade.

Hekusa saw the image too, and she was frightened briefly. “B-by the gods!” She exclaimed, backing away from me with quite a fright. “I sense a very, very painful past that is slowly breaking free from its dormant slumber inside you.

“A painful past?? W-what did I do?” I panicked, my body shivering from the thoughts of what other forgotten memories can resurface at any moment.

“Something terrible that prompted you to forget. Poor baby...” She answered, giving me a gentle hug with a hand rubbing over my back. “Perhaps it’s from you serving the Great War?” I let out a gasp and I almost fall backward trying to scoot back upon hearing what the lioness has said, h-how did she know I served in the Great War? Thankfully she explained rather quickly.

“I peered into your mind for a moment and I saw you in combat, you were quite skilled for someone so young, and yet, you look as if you haven’t aged for over ten years.” The lioness

blinks, her sapphire blue eyes gazing into my emerald green ones. “And... I see that you have fallen in love and married a very light tanned woman, someone with the heart of a warrior.”

“Malana?” I interrupted, drooping my long ears downwards. “I met her when I went to an island called Bora Bora. Then it was ruined by a hideous creature that I named Alecto, but in the end, I killed it and brought peace to the Polynesian Islands.”

“I see, I have to meet her myself someday,” Hekusa said, curling her toes on her bare feet before climbing to them, standing up with her holding my hand to help me up. “You must return home then hon, I wouldn’t want to keep you and leave your wife worried about you.”

“You haven’t told me how I can be rid of the um, painful memories but keep the good ones Hekusa,” I said.

“You may not be able to, but if you seek answers about them, I suggest finding one of your top priorities.”

“Khufu...? This doesn’t make sense, how does the Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid of Giza have anything to do with the more horrifying memories starting to resurface in my mind?”

“I can’t explain it well, but he is the key to your understanding, you must find him.” Hekusa insisted.

I hand the lioness a couple of gold coins as payment for the “healing session” and leave the tent, hurrying back towards the camps with a bunch of questions rather than answers, at least the burning pains in my arms are gone. Stepping back inside the main building, I sneak back towards my room and then into the bed, trying not to wake Malana who was thankfully still sleeping and didn’t notice me getting back in bed. I return to my slumber shortly, cuddling up with Malana which she responds with a light hum, however, I didn’t return to a sweet dream...

Fire surrounded me and I was on my knees, the black and gold blade I saw earlier was in my right hand, wait, there was two of them in both of my hands. The blades were laced with blood and below me rested a shadowy figure in a pool of crimson. I drop both of the mysterious weapons on the ground and tilt my head upwards to see another figure standing over me, a jackal just like me but with glowing eyes, a buff build and a very frightening voice.

“Enemies... Innocent... Kin...” The voice echoed, it was in spoken in Egyptian, but I didn’t know who it belonged to, all I saw was the shadow of a moderately toned jackal with glowing blue eyes and nothing else.

“No....” I said with immense lament, my chest tightened up with my body quivering as I look at my bloodstained hands, the other jackal laughed and suddenly sand wrapped around both of my arms and tightly jerked then down towards the bloody floor, hardening into a black colored glass, almost like obsidian that’s was as strong as steel.

“Noooooooooooo!!!” I bellowed at the top of my lungs as I was suddenly swallowed by the pool of blood, waking me from the nightmare with such a fright that it woke up Malana next to me.

“Cheops, what happened??” Malana cried, tightly hugging my torso.

“I... I just had a horrifying nightmare. It felt so real, too.” I replied, my body shaking violently despite Malana’s efforts to comfort me. Just then, Leilani and Kalea burst through the bedroom door, thinking someone was attacking us at first.

“Where is he?! Where’s the person that attacked you?!” Leilani yelled, pointing a bone knife towards us and then all around the room, putting the knife down upon realizing there was no one else here. “What happened?” She asked.

“Cheops just had a nightmare,” Malana replied. “A really, really bad one from the way he screamed.”

“Poor thing,” Kalea says as she steps towards me and then takes a seat on the edge of the bed.

“We’ll keep you company for a while then hon, the sun hasn’t risen yet.” Leilani gently rubs her thumb along my cheek and the side of my muzzle, Malana does the same, giving me a few kisses and licks.

Hours later, the sun peeks over the horizon to the East, slowly brightening up the sky as it rises. To the Egyptians, the sun is indeed Ra, the creator god himself, born on sunrise and dies at sunset. At night, he travels from the West to the East through the Afterlife and the cycle repeats. Soon there was a knock on our door and Calvin peeked into the room.

“Rise and shine you, two- Oh, em, you four I mean.” Calvin slowly pulls his head back out and closes the door, prompting me to slide myself out of bed.

“Think that’s our queue to get dressed for today, think this will be fun exploring the ruins of one of the oldest civilizations in Africa, maybe in the world even,” I said, grabbing some shorts, a nice button-down explorer’s shirt and some undergarments before heading into the bathroom, shutting the door behind me. It takes a few minutes for me to get myself dressed, I then open the

bathroom door so the girls can see how I look in my current attire while I begin to brush my teeth and then wash my face.

“You look pretty adventurous Cheops,” said Malana. “Almost looking the same way as when you first met me months ago, you know, without the shirt and the very bulky dive suit.”

I nod to her and then spit out the foamed up toothpaste and wash out my mouth before turning the faucet water off. “Yeah, honestly that diving suit felt so uncomfortable that I always couldn’t wait to get out of it when the day ends.”

“But with it on, you can outlast all of us, I mean with the um, helmet and all,” Leilani added. “Oh! I need to get back to my room and grab my clothes for the day.”

“Shit, me too!” Kalea exclaimed.

“You ladies best be off getting ready, then. This is going to be a really fun day for sure, and you might want to dress appropriately since the heat can really get to you out there.” I said, grabbing my canteen and then heading out the bedroom, trotting down two flights of stairs to reach the ground floor where everyone else sat drinking some breakfast tea and having crumpets, a British tradition I guess since I may have stayed in America for a little too long to remember that.

“Ah, there you are!” Calvin called, sipping at his tea and giving his very short and stumpy tail a slight wag. “You’re just in time for breakfast tea and crumpets, I’m sure the girls would like to try some as well?”

“They’re still getting ready Calvin, I mean we just woke up for crying out loud,” I answered, taking a seat on a rather elegant red chair, my rear end sinking into the very soft material, quite comfy.

One of the bulldogs hands me a small teacup and plate and he takes a teapot and pours hot, steamy tea into the cup for me about three-quarters of the way full.

“Thank you, sir,” I said to the bulldog before he sets the teapot back down on a mobile cart, allowing me to take a few sips of my tea, it tasted really sweet with the scents of honey and lemongrass filling my nostrils.

“Good stuff, eh?” Calvin said, taking a bite out of his crumpet and a sip of his tea.

“It’s a special blend one of my guys came up with, honey blended with lemongrass with a good amount of cane sugar, a very sweet treat indeed.”

I quickly sip the rest of the tea before setting the cup back on the small plate, setting them on a small dresser right next to my chair. The way the honey mixes with the lemongrass induced tea gives it a very unique flavor that makes my tastebuds swing dance in a concert hall, it was that divine.

“So good,” I said to Calvin, twitching my long ears as the after taste was still on my tongue. “You know you could make quite a bit of money brewing this tea and selling it.”

Calvin laughed. “Like open my own little tea shop in a busy street corner somewhere in London? Yeah, that’d certainly bring in a lot of pounds.”

I chuckled, although to be honest, perhaps Calvin could actually be a tea shop keeper someday, that’ll be something fun to do before retirement, well, one of the more fun things. At last, the other girls came downstairs to join us, but they were not interested in the special tea.

“I think we’re all set and ready to go then,” Leilani said, still wearing that very special hibiscus flower she always carries in her onyx colored hair, as well as a very elegant red dress covering up most of her body from the neck down. In fact, all of the girls were wearing the same kind of dress, only Kalea’s is blue and my wife, Malana’s is an amber color, matching her eyes.

“Well, all you ladies look so splendid wearing those dresses!” Calvin exclaimed, standing straight up to his feet. “Are we ready to start our day today then?”

“Oh yes,” I replied. “This will be one hell of an expedition, finding the legendary pharaoh, Khufu at long last.

The crew quickly leave the living room, with me and the girls following behind them, stepping outside and immediately feeling the hot yet welcoming morning sun with a few passing clouds overhead. It’s a perfect day to head out on any given expedition, and the camels were all packed up and ready for the journey.

We left the camps and headed off for the excavation site a few miles away from Cairo, all of us were on the backs of camels since the scorching sands easily prove too much for any of us to handle on foot. All the girls have leather, open-toed sandals given to them by one of Calvin’s team members, custom fit, too. Hopefully, that’ll be enough to protect them from the hot sands as this is new territory for them. The camels have trotted over the dunes and crossed the Nile River on a small river barge, and in the distance, was the three giant pyramids of Giza, standing tall and dominating the skyline as the morning sun very slowly climbs the Great Pyramid, block by block.

“Hey, Cheops!” Calvin called from the leading camel in the caravan. “Isn’t it great to be back home after leaving for the United States quite a few years?”

I give my camel a light tap with my right foot, telling it to go a little faster until both mine and Calvin's camels are neck and neck at a few feet of a distance.

"It really is a breath of fresh air to return home to vast open spaces," I replied, taking a sip of water out of my canteen. "Besides, staring at skyscrapers while the constant noises of traffic, trains, and other things blare out through your window gets really annoying after a while."

"Yep, that's what the city life does to you, not to mention the streets literally reek with shit from all the horse carriages they're still using, thought they'd be completely replaced by now." Calvin huffed as a gust of wind almost blew off his explorer's hat, but he catches it quickly and sets it back on his head. "But I suppose your time at Harvard University took your mind off the constant consequences of living in a big city?"

"Oh, it was definitely worth it." I cheerfully chimed. "I met so many new friends and got really high grades in history as I am a quick learner when it comes to history from the Ancient World... And as if someone commanded a spell, my smile instantly turned into a frown with my long ears drooping downwards. "That is until all of them died when we went to Bora Bora..."

Calvin's eyes widened and his body shivered a tiny bit. "What?? W-what happened??"

I sighed. "I accidentally woke up a giant sea monster and it destroyed our ship."

"You can't be serious, a sea monster? Preposterous!"

I throw my hand inside a small satchel bag I had strapped around my shoulder, throwing something towards Calvin which he catches with both hands, it was the tooth fragment I took from the site where Jamie was eaten by the massive creature months ago. "I named it Alecto after one of the Greek Furies, that's a tooth fragment I found on my first dive, no other creature could ever have teeth such as that monster."

Calvin took a close look at the tooth fragment, there was still dried up blood near the sharp tip and some patches of dried up sea-salt along the middle and broken-off base. "Woah... And how big was this 'Alecto?'"

"The main body was the size of a battleship, not counting its 6 main tentacles that extend to about an additional 300 feet long and are as thick as Redwood trees."

"GOOD GOD!!" Calvin shrieked, almost falling off his camel in shock. "So where is that beast now??"

"Dead," I replied. "Killed it with the help of the US Navy by shoving two torpedoes down its throat, and it exploded from eating a lot of ammo mags from some of the ships it destroyed."

“Bloody hell...” Calvin panted, setting his hat down as he turns his head the gaze at the Great Pyramid that slowly gets larger upon getting closer and closer. “At least you’ve avenged the deaths of your friends by killing that bastard. And, you brought a wife back with you as a prize, with two more girls to call your own.”

“Ehh, just one wife Calvin, the other two are close friends,” I said to the corgi, suddenly my arms start burning up again and I clutch my left forearm, the scorching pain now more intense than before. The voices I heard when I arrived here, my arms burning up with no fire, there had to be some meaning to it all, hopefully, my answers are in this ancient temple close to the pyramids sitting on top of the Giza Plateau.

At last, the camel caravan reaches a small spot with a few limestone pillars poking out of the sand as well as deteriorated sections of walls that one belonged to a few buildings of some kind, and towards the back was the entrance to the temple, half-buried in a large dune. The temple itself is much larger than the buildings in the market village or the campsites, though a lot of it is obscured by the dune that almost swallowed it. And the only portions exposed to the outside happens to be a balcony, all made from the same material with a large opening in the back wall, might just be a bedroom, possibly belonging to the pharaoh.

I couldn’t wait to explore the temple any longer, I hop off my camel and hitch it up to a small wooden post poking out of the ground before immediately heading towards the buried temple’s balcony.

“Wait!” Malana called as she hopped off her camel and made a dash towards me with Leilani and Kalea quickly following behind her. As soon as I headed inside the temple, the three otters caught up to me and knocked into me, causing us to tumble forward and land on the interior floor with a hard thud. I lift myself up to my feet with a bit of a groan and then take a gander of the room connecting the balcony, it was definitely a bedroom, a very large one at that. On one side there’s a collapsed bed and the other, several urns covered in cobwebs and sand next to what looks like a stone desk, a large mirror and plenty of broken pieces of ceramic littering the floor.

“Wow... There’s so much stuff in here. It’s pretty amazing to see what things might have been like... How long ago this was built.” Leilani said, bending down to pick up a small silver trinket of sorts, a ring with the head of a scarab.

I paid no attention to Leilani for a moment and I exit the bedroom through one exit doorway, leading to a large corridor connecting other doorways, some flooded with sand while a downstairs section strangely remained open, leading to darkness.

I guess I won’t be going anywhere without a torch, I thought but just then, something began to glow underneath the destroyed bed with a bright, cyan, bluish color. Kalea who happened to be nearby and notice the enticing glow of the light, reached her hand underneath to grab the glowing object and pull it out.

“Guys, I think I found something here.” She said, holding what appears to be an hourglass, the bases holding the glass in place had hints of gold but it was mainly lapis blue, and it was still in really good condition as if time has never inflicted any damage like thousands of years worth of wear like everything else in the temple.

“The sands are glowing, too... Here, give me that hourglass, Kalea.” I hold out my hand in front of her, she hesitates a little bit, perhaps she thought it would be dangerous since none of us know what else the hourglass can do, but she hands it to me regardless.

Making my way back towards the stairwell, I used the light glowing from the hourglass to light my way down towards another flight of stairs with more hallways until eventually, I reach the ground floor. Down here was a massive corridor with rows of giant pillars lining the hall and supporting the other floors above, at the end was indeed the throne where the pharaoh used to sit and command his forces from. Just then, I see another light back towards the golden throne, reddish-orange with a sizzling sound-emitting, the sound of a torch fire.

“Who’s there?” I called out, it was only Calvin and the other explorers, they must have found another way into the temple. “Nice of you to join me and the girls, Calvin.”

“I and my guys found another entrance from the top, we came down on ropes through a collapsed roof of sorts,” Calvin explained, stepping towards me but more so towards the throne. “So this is the throne room of Khufu’s temple, very spacious for a room fit for a king.”

Calvin was interrupted when Malana called to us and pointed at the wall on the left side of the room, noting the hieroglyphics lining them, all sorts of colorful paintings and murals etched into the limestone, written like a story of sorts. One of these that caught my eye the most were drawings of copper-colored, bird-like beings that are fat looking but look like they were made out of some kind of metal, not organic. There were four of them stepping towards two drawings of two jackals, one shorter than the other. The four strange beings were carrying a silver sarcophagus with the head pointing towards the two jackals as if it was supposed to be put down on the bottom end so the head points towards the heavens perhaps, very weird indeed.

“There is some very, very strange stuff on these um, hieroglyphics,” Calvin said while having a close eye on a drawing depicting a younger jackal and a hawk side by side. “What intrigues me is that this young jackal here looks to be related to the bigger one, but which one is Khufu?”

“I don’t know, but honestly if I had to guess, Khufu might be the bigger one, and if that’s the case, who’s the smaller one?” I said while making my way back towards the throne, taking a seat in the golden seat and gazing at the main entrance wall. At this point, the hourglass in my hand

glows once again, much brighter this time. The bright light revealed something as a portion of the throne seat vanished, behind it was a slot in the shape of an hourglass.

“Wha— Hey guys, I think I got something here!” I said sliding off the throne seat with the three girls and Calvin bunching up behind me to gaze at the hourglass-shaped key thing.

“A key slot?” Calvin asked, looking down at the hourglass in my hand before taking it out of my grasp and very slowly pushing it into the said slot, clicking it into place. The throne shook and the floor glowed bright blue like the sand in the hourglass, suddenly, the throne started moving! Sliding forwards at a snail's pace, but it reveals another staircase behind it, leading to the dark depths of wherever it leads, the throne stops moving when the bottom edge of it aligns with the edge of the opening in the floor with a small cloud of dust.

“Woah... Now that was pretty neat.” I broke the silence and peer into the dark stairwell, removing the hourglass from the slot in the throne, holding it in my hands to light up the floor below. “So, any volunteers to go down into the deep dark, deep down?”

Everyone went silent for a moment, the awkward kind. The otter girls would have volunteered if

“No one? Fine... I'll go first since I have light.”

With a little disappointment, I venture into the darkness below, carefully stepping down each of the stone steps until I reach the bottom floor. The catacombs were shrouded in complete darkness, dark enough that I basically disappear completely like a phantom. Of course, Malana was afraid of what exactly might be down here and I can see her light tan short fur gleam in the light peering from the entrance until she's out of its grasp. All was silent for a while, however, it didn't last long, as I have decided to devise to play a little trick to give my beloved otter wife a little scare, it is October, and Halloween is a few days away. I douse the light from the hourglass by shoving it inside my satchel and then I sneak up behind her as my eyesight adjusts to the dark, allowing me to partially see the otter.

“Cheops? W-where did you go?” Malana asked, turning herself in all directions trying to look for me. Getting more and more frantic as each second passes.

“This isn't funny, where are you??” She cried, not knowing I was behind her, silently approaching my unsuspecting wife. When I got close enough to her, I suddenly grabbed her by the shoulders with both of my hands, and what came next sure sent a shiver down everyone else's spine.

Malana let out a banshee-like scream at the very top of her lungs and jumped almost a foot in the air before she fell backward, tumbled onto her back on the floor and scurried all the way back towards the stairs as fast as she could. I could tell her blood ran ice cold and she was shaking like crazy, her facial expression of pure horror, complete with heavy breathing as if she had actually

seen a ghost, very much unlike her usual tough warrior spirit she always carries around. I pull the hourglass back out of my satchel to reveal myself, laughing hysterically after getting her really good while everyone else looked shaken after hearing Malana's blood-curdling scream.

"You should have seen your face when I grabbed you Malana. You're a tough as nails warrior that isn't afraid of anything, and yet you screamed like a frightened little girl when I scared you? I'm shocked." I teased, clutching my sides as I was still laughing my head off until my lungs caught fire a minute later.

Malana just put her head down and stayed silent, not saying a single word.

"...Malana...?" I slowed my laughter and then completely stopped, leaning in close to see if she was okay, but my mood drastically changed when she lifted her head up to look at me with a completely different face, one of inexpressible anger. Her gold-colored eyes went blood red, her sharp teeth exposed in a nasty frown, letting out an irate growl. She was fumingly mad, and her growl got louder and louder as she kept staring at me at those anger induced eyes.

"...Uh-oh..." I whimpered, and before I could get away in the darkness to hide, she lunged at me and slammed me down onto the ground with her on top of me, scratching my cheeks, neck, and forehead in a blind fury.

"I'M GONNA FUCKING KILL YOU FOR SCARING ME LIKE THAT!!" Malana shouted right in my ears as she kept clawing my face like Swiss cheese in a cheese-grater. She even gave me one good punch square in the face as she cried out in her rage, and before she could land another one that would have given me a black eye, two torches on two sides of this narrow corridor lit up with blue flames, instantly simmering Malana before everyone else rushed down the stairs and into the corridor to pry her off of me before things got a lot worse.

"There's the tough warrior wife I know I love... Ow..." I said through the burning pain of all the scratches and that painful wallop to my left cheek. Grabbing the wall behind me to help lift myself up to my feet again, gazing at the stone pillar torches. "Am I bleeding?" I asked, sliding my fingers over my face to check for cuts deep enough to bleed.

With a few steps forward, another pair of torches ignite a distance away from the first pair, there must be a path leading somewhere if it keeps going. I and Malana followed the torches, with another pair lighting, and then another, and another, and another until a large ring of torches light at the end of the hall, illuminating a circular chamber, almost like some kind of altar and there on top of it is a large sarcophagus, gold, bronze, with the face shaped like a jackal wearing a gold and lapis blue striped headdress. The body of the jackal carved into the sarcophagus is very

muscular, the Herculean kind, like the ones I've seen on painted posters for a circus. This has to be the pharaoh's true tomb, as it doesn't match my body structure, typical for pharaoh buried.

"Guys... I think this is it. The true tomb of the pharaoh Khufu." I declare, sliding my hand along the top lid of the giant coffin while examining it a little more closely. "Hmm, now how does one open something like this?"

"Crowbars?" Calvin replies. "But we don't have any of those."

"There has to be a way to open this thing and see who's inside here." I turned my head back towards Malana, but then to Kalea as she seemed to have spotted something now that the room's lit with all these blue flamed torches. "Kalea, what do you have there?" I ask her, pulling away from the sarcophagus and back towards her, facing the direction she was looking in, there was another pedestal but it had the same hourglass-shaped slot like the hidden one in the throne earlier.

"Oh, another of those key slots. Maybe this is how we open it?" Kalea asks, taking the hourglass out of my hands.

"Alright. Today, either we are going to make history by finding the legendary pharaoh who built the last standing Ancient Wonder of the World, or a curse that can end the world." I declared as I almost slam the hourglass into the slot, the sands within it glowing a much brighter blue with a much higher intensity than before. Just then, the blue flames also burned brighter, streams of flame pour from all the pillars in the ring towards the sarcophagus in the middle, causing it to rumble and shake, markings and hieroglyphics beginning to glow the same color as the flames begin feeding into the tomb. Slowly the stone and gold lid begins to slide itself towards us, opening the tomb with light shining from within until the lid falls to the ground with a thump.

"Here he is," I said with a very wide, toothy grin on my face, my soul burning with excitement as a large black mass suddenly jumped out of the opened sarcophagus and then land right in front of us, standing to his feet and letting out a rather hardy laugh.

"Hahaha! Glory be to Ra! I am free!" He called in the ancient Egyptian tongue, pretty happy about his release from his slumber, a way different reaction than I anticipated I must admit.

The muscular jackal stands at a whopping seven feet tall, wearing what looks like his trademark royal attire of an elegant gold and lapis headdress adorned his head, a very vibrant and colorful neckband with yellow striping and a triangular pattern with a blue and black color scheme. Below his chiseled belly and chest, he has a long knee-length kilt with hanging white and gray garbs on the sides and the front hanging from the kilt by the leather belt holding it firmly around his waist. His arms and legs are adorned by gold bands, including his wrists with leather sandals underneath his sharp-clawed feet.

“So...” Calvin broke the silence and got down onto his knees, bowing to the large jackal. “Is this the pharaoh Khufu?”

We all got down on our knees to bow before the pharaoh, seeing him smirk at us before he raises his right hand and turns his wrist upwards, commanding us to rise. I then step forward slowly, the pharaoh quirks a brow upon seeing me, but when I gaze up at his face, I realized something...

He looks just like the vision in my subconscious who rescued me from death battling Alecto, it felt like I was repeating that meetup without being on the brink of death this time.

“That face you have their boy...” Khufu spoke, getting down onto his knees so both I and he are at eye level, my emerald green eyes staring into his own of the same color. He seems to recognize me as someone dear to him from the way his eyes twinkle from staring into my own.

“...Cheops? Is that you?”

I could not believe what I was hearing, Khufu actually recognizes me? As his own son?? My mind was sent into panic mode trying to decrypt what was happening right in front of me, and suddenly a forgotten memory resurfaces inside my mind, a memory of that same vision I saw when I almost died, and without me having any control of my mouth, a single word from my ancient tongue is emitted that makes the pharaoh’s eyes widen as much as can be...

“Father...?”

I shut my muzzle tightly, but everyone behind me gasps with their jaws dropping to the floor, they could not believe what I just said, at least the three girls who bestow some understanding of the Egyptian language, not Calvin, as he’s more confused than shocked.

And suddenly, Khufu glomps me with his bulky arms wrapping around my back and squeezing me to his chest pretty tightly, easily lifting me off my feet as tears of joy stream down his cheeks.

“Okay, what the fuck is going on here?” Calvin interrupted, twitching his ears in confusion.

“Khufu...” I reply. “Is my father.”

Chapter 4

Calvin's jaw dropped to the floor with the other girls upon realizing what I clearly said. "Wha— Hold on a second here. You're telling me you're the son of the legendary pharaoh Khufu?!"

I and Khufu simply give a mild nod to Calvin.

"Apparently," I replied, looking over towards my father and then back to the corgi, Malana stands to her feet and approaches Khufu, I could tell she was a little intimidated by his body build and impressive height, but she still approaches with a brave face.

"And who must you be?" Khufu asked in his ancient tongue, twitching his long left ear curiously.

Malana stops in front of the buff pharaoh, still gazing along with his bulky features. "Malana." She said calmly, "Your son's wife."

I had to translate what Malana said for Khufu as one would expect from somebody that has been asleep for over 4,000 years, he doesn't know anything about the English language. Khufu's ears perk upwards once he heard the wife bit. In which Khufu hugs me again, this time a lot tighter than before, squeezing a good puff of air out of me like a windbag.

"My son is finally becoming a true man!" Khufu exclaims. "And you have made... A rather exotic choice marrying this.... 'thing.'"

"That would be what is called, an otter, father," I replied, gasping for air as he kept squeezing the air out of my lungs, however, he lets go of me so I don't pass out. Malana then pulls me close to her and the others behind us stand up and introduce themselves. Khufu had a laugh with Calvin being a shorter breed of canine which offended the Welsh corgi.

The rest of that day featured all of us exploring all around the temple's chambers, reading and translating the hieroglyphics that line the walls, pillars, and floors containing many tales of a young jackal, which is supposed to be me I guess, going on many adventures all across Egypt and some regions beyond, thousands of years ago. I, Leilani and Malana were in a smaller chamber together, still reading the many hieroglyphics on the walls.

"All of these 'drawings' certainly tell a story," Leilani said, taking a gander at the many pots and urns littering the floor. "Surprised you're not in the history books."

"Ahh, my father was in them, barely," I replied. "They only know his name and the fact he built the Great Pyramid that's behind our palace here. They don't know what he looked like, how he was perceived by our people, hell, they don't even know I exist."

"You'll probably be in them now that your father is awake and here with us." Malana chimed in, hugging me from behind while holding a kerosene lantern in her hand.

"I guess, yeah," I said. "But what will they think of both the pharaoh and his son awake from their 4,000+ year slumber and walking among the uh, mortals? Or the pharaoh's son killed a giant sea monster in the South Pacific and took a beautiful Polynesian otter as his prized bride?"

The two otter sisters giggled at that and Malana kisses my cheek, her soft hands gently caressing my scratched up face. I winced from the pain but it wasn't really that bad as it was initially, let that be a lesson for me to not give Malana a scare like that again.

"I'm sorry about what I did to your face, Cheops," Malana said. "It's just... I get so angry with people when they do something like that to me, and often times I hurt them pretty badly."

"Did your ex-boyfriend have something to do with that?"

"No, but he did fill my heart with anger when I saw his true side reveal itself, and I'm glad he's dead."

"It sickens me, someone betraying you over something so petty, but as you saw with Jamie, greed is a heavy burden. Actually, all the Deadly Sins are heavy burdens now that I think about it." Upon finishing that sentence, I realize calling fabulous gemstones, jewelry and other trinkets 'petty' would make me a bit of a hypocrite as the royalty are inherited all of those fine trinkets.

"Wait, but you're a prince, so aren't those 'petty' jewelry and other things inherited to you?" Malana cuts in.

“I just realized that now, yes,” I replied. “But unlike Jamie, I used that wealth to benefit my people and other allies neighboring our kingdoms, him, he just cared about himself and nobody else like you told me before, even dissing and taking advantage of his own girlfriend in order to do so.”

Malana nods her head in agreement and then she hugs me once more, her tail slowly coiling up around my own as she stares at me with those sparkling golden eyes, her lips curled into a blissful smile that is just so adorable I feel my heart pound with compassion and affection.

“Pardon me for butting in, but there’s something you two should see,” Leilani said while pointing at a specific hieroglyphics on the wall close to a couple of large urns with a variety of patterns and come in a rather rusty color pallet of browns and sandstone yellows. I turn my head around to gaze at the wall and so does Malana, then, standing up to my feet I get closer to better examine it.

The hieroglyphics depict the beginning of a young jackal’s life. The jackal was born within the palace of Giza, the prince child of a very famed woman, curvy and cloaked in a beautiful white dress with green and yellow highlights around the waist and above her belly was a white cloth covering up her breasts. Several blue stones which look like lapis lazuli are embedded into her headdress, her necklaces, her marriage ring, as well as her wrist and ankle bands. She even adorns blue lips and blue nails although she sports green eyes just like me, the ancient text carved into the stone wall reads “The Lady of Lapis,” appropriate for her given she adores the dark blue gemstones.

“What a remarkable woman,” Leilani said again. “She seems to really embrace beauty, and the people worshiped her like some kind of goddess according to these drawings.”

“I gotta ask you Cheops, do people like that woman always have high morality to your people like....” Malana’s words fall silent when she sees me on my knees near an adjacent wall connecting the hieroglyphics together. “Cheops...?” Her voice grew more concerned and she put her hand on my shoulder before looking up to see what caught most of my attention.

I couldn’t move, my eyes were fixed on a particular drawing depicting what is perhaps the most saddening image I have ever seen: That same woman in an open sarcophagus, with a very small young jackal in tears holding her hand. I could not look away from it no matter how hard I tried, tears were starting to form up in my eyes and then slowly roll down both of my cheeks, my throat choking up and my snout sniffing as this uncontrollable wave of sadness floods my emotion pool.

Then suddenly, a memory shrouds my mind, a memory of the same jackal from the hieroglyphics, possibly five years old or younger, out on the ancient streets of Giza with a large crowd of people gathered around the village square right outside the front entrance to the walls surrounding the palace. Khufu was there standing tall alongside a couple of men in black headdresses armed with bronze spears, possibly his personal bodyguards. At the center of the square sat The Lady of Lapis, resting inside the opened stone sarcophagus, her eyes shut and her arms positioned in an X formation. The villagers looked very sad to see her go, and Khufu has his head down with his eyes closed sharing the same emotion as everyone else, but not the young jackal. At first, he seemed confused for a short while as he thought the woman was just sleeping peacefully inside the sarcophagus, a very odd place as he mentioned to Khufu, but the great pharaoh said she was, however, she would not wake up again. The woman had passed away earlier that morning, and nobody in the palace knew exactly how it happened. Rumors of poison, cursed magic or even murder at the hands of someone inside the palace spread throughout the square, rumors that were growing more and more preposterous as the minutes ticked by. However, all of that was silenced when the soft sobs of the young jackal emitted from him, finally understanding the woman are deceased and will not reawaken, and without warning, he bellowed a sorrow-filled wailed with tears bursting from his eyes. The powerful cries could be heard throughout the whole village, and the young jackal made a dash through the crowds and towards the Nile River flowing past the western edge of Giza. He didn't stop until he reaches the bank of the river, almost tumbling into the very shallow water by the shore with his tears dripping into the sacred river.

“MOMMA!! MOOMMAAAAA!!!” The jackal wailed in the ancient tongue of the pharaohs, begging the gods for the woman to return to him as he really didn't want to lose her, but fate was never that kind, and the jackal felt alone, crying into the river as the memory fades and I return to reality, the crown of my head pressing firmly against the wall as I begin sobbing with my tears dripping onto the floor below me.

“M... Mother... Please.. *sniff* C-come back...” I mourned, gasping before sobbing a little louder than before, my hands clutching the sandy ground as Malana hugs me as tight as she can.

“Mother? Oh no...” Malana saw that look in my tear-filled eyes and knew it all too well, the same one she and Leilani had felt when they saw their beloved mother's necklace on the black seabed near the mouth of the sleeping Alecto. “So that's your mother in that coffin... Oh Cheops, I-I'm so sorry...!”

Leilani puts down her flaming torch on a nearby rack and rushes towards me to give me a supporting hug from one side with Malana on the other, trying their very best to soothe my senses, but I just kept on crying. My eyes were like open faucets pouring with water as my tears drip more and more on the soaked ground beneath me.

“It’s okay Cheops. Shhhh, I’m here now.” Malana whispered in my ear, her voice is very gentle and caring as she caresses my right cheek with her clawed thumb and wipes away the tears in my eyes. She then scoots herself over some and her and face to face, looking at each other in the eye. “Let me hold you in my arms, just as you did with me when we found our mother’s necklace many months ago. Even the strongest of warriors can mourn for those they care for the most, just like our mother and now yours.” She gives my soaked cheek a light kiss and then my lips, holding me close enough so that her breasts would squish against my chest a little bit.

My sobbing slows down now that I’m in the warm embrace of my beloved otter wife and her sister on the opposite side of me and at last, my final tear shed and Malana wiped away the remains watering up in my eyes. “Thank you Malana.”

I stand back up to my feet and take one final look at that hieroglyphic that put sorrow into my soul before turning away from it, spotting something poking out of the sandy floor, something glittering in the torchlight and silver-colored. Stepping closer to examine the mysterious object, I slowly pull it up out of the sand to reveal a rather elegant neckband with silver wings wrapping around each other at the back as well as a necklace with a lapis lazuli Ankh at the end with beads of the same gemstone covering a good portion of the string holding it all together. I knew exactly what it was.

“Oh, I remember this... This was the neckband and necklace I adorned in honor of my mother, having the same lapis lazuli gems worked into it just like what she did to her attire. My father made this for me so I could never forget the more treasured memories of my childhood.” I explained, undoing the back hooks and then slipping on the neckband and necklace, reattaching the back hooks afterward.

“So you truly are an over 4,000-year-old monarch,” Malana said, examining a rather gorgeous ring, made from the same material as the neckband.

“Hold on, let me see that Malana.” I take the ring out of her hands and examine it closely, the ring in question had two jackal heads are carved into the material facing each other with a scarab in the center separating them, the scarab’s shell is split into two halves, one is a lapis stone, and on the other an Amber, signifying the marriage of two beings. Khufu’s favorite gem is amber so this must be my mother’s marriage ring, and that makes her his wife and queen.

“Ohh, I think my father will be crying if he sees me wearing this neckband and holding that ring in our hands,” I said, but by sheer bad luck, my father was right behind me when I said that at that moment, tears were already streaming down his cheeks, but he didn’t break down. Instead, he got down onto his knees in front of me, taking the ring out of my hands.

“How long have you been standing there Father?” I ask, dropping my long ears downwards while gazing at him.

“Long enough,” My father replied, stepping towards the hieroglyphic of my mother and father together with my newborn self in her arms. “Your mother was a remarkable woman my son. I miss her as much as you do, and I too desire for her to return from the rye fields in the heavens. For just one day.”

“I have these to remember her by, father. As much as they fill me with sorrows and sadness, they embody a memory I cannot forget and must prosper.” I said to the pharaoh, looking down at my mother’s ring and then back towards Malana, who still kept me close by wrapping her arms in front of my neck. “And I believe she will be so happy to see her ring passed down to my beloved Malana, a strong, and caring woman hailing from an exotic land.”

Khufu lowered his head and then removed his gold and sapphire headdress, revealing his long, straight, jet black hair that extends all the way down to his broad shoulders. His long ears twitch a few times, he was neither angry nor sad, but just a simple smile. He steps back outside the room, not saying another word, I took this as a queue to head back outside the temple and return to camp, all of us remaining inside the temple gather some souvenirs to take back and then head out from the hidden chambers beneath the throne and back the same way we came in.

That night, there was a huge party being thrown at the campgrounds, there were lots of lights glowing from kerosene and battery-powered lanterns, songs being sung from other explorers, and the clattering of glass booze bottles can also be heard on occasion. It was a major celebration of Khufu’s long-awaited discovery and everyone at the campsite was singing their praises with this monumental historical event. Calvin couldn’t be any happier and I wouldn’t blame him. He and I made history together, finding the pharaoh that was once thought to be forever lost in time, with my wife, her sister, and her best friend all pitching in to help out as well.

Me, Khufu and Calvin sat around a large campfire sitting on large logs with the rest of the explorers and explorers surrounding us. I’m holding Malana in my arms, having her straddle my lap while she adorns an elegant looking, bright blue dress that fit snug around her whole body, she also had her hair tied into a bun, no jewelry on or any footwear for that matter.

“I can’t believe it, we actually made our way into the history books,” I said to Calvin, taking a swig of my water canteen and then setting it down on the sandy ground. “The people who found the most famous pharaoh in the world! My father, Khufu Longfang.”

”Yeah, that really caught us off guard, ” replied Calvin. ”Not only is Khufu being written into them but you also! With you being the son of the pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid of Giza here will score extra points and both of you are alive able to interact and fit in with modern society.”

Malana giggled and gave my lips a kiss before she slides off my lap and then walks away, but not without turning around to give me a sly grin and motioning me to follow her.

”Hehe, I think your wife wants some private time with you Cheops.” Calvin chimed in a bit of a teasing tone. ”You should go then, you earned all this.”

”Thank you!” I replied. I take one more sip of my canteen, then I stand up to my feet and follow Malana.

The campsite itself sits at the foot of the buried palace, next to that is one of many canals that were dug to allow the boats carrying workers and the very heavy stones needed to build all three of the giant pyramids, as well as my family’s palace thousands of years ago. The canals were very wide and pretty deep, makes sense as they didn’t want any boats carrying the massive blocks of cut limestone to strike the bottom of the canals and sink. I’m more surprised that some of these canals are still around, being fed by the Nile River just about a couple of miles away.

Malana had already undressed and began to step into the canal, the cold water hiding her features the deeper she goes. She stood around four feet deep in the water, her bare breasts just barely submerging with the waterline just above her chiseled belly.

I was in no hurry to undress, removing my pants and then setting them in the pile of clothes where her dress sits, giving Malana a teasing flex of both of my admirably sized biceps while showcasing my nude assets. Of course, because of my almost pitch black fur, I can be barely seen in the dark, but with the bright first quarter moon and glittering stars shining above, it did provide enough light so she can see me.

”Mmmm~ You always look so amazing without any clothing.” Malana cooed. ”I’m so glad I allowed such a handsome, caring and big-hearted man like you into my own heart, and I’ll keep it that way.”

I then step towards my beloved otter wife, feeling the cold water rise up my lower legs, knees and then halfway up my thighs with the partially sheathed tip of my flaccid penis sometimes kissing the crests of the tiny waves emitting from both of us. Getting close enough, she grabs me by the forearms and pulls me closer to her, her hands sliding up my upper arms and onto my somewhat chiseled chest, tenderly rubbing my pecs and the upper portions of my belly.

”And I’m the luckiest man in the world to fall in love with and marry the toughest and most glamorous tribal otter girl with the heart of a true warrior. And no treasure, including black pearls, could ever, ever replace your heart when it beats so strongly for me.”

Malana suddenly jumps into my arms while letting out a louder coo, her legs wrapping around my lower torso with her thighs squeezing at my hips. Meanwhile, her arms wrap behind my neck so she can be at eye level with me, tears with the mixed emotions of joy, affection, and compassion were streaming down her cheeks with a wide smile stretching across her short muzzle.

”That’s the sweetest thing I have ever heard someone say to me Cheops~,” She said with a loud purr, her grip on both my hips and behind my neck and shoulders gets tighter as she pulls herself closer, our noses just inches away from each other. “My heart will forever be yours~” With her saying that phrase in her Polynesian tongue, she pushes her head forward to smooch my lips, closing her eyes as she kept on pushing her head towards me to deepen the kiss.

I then return them, practically both of us making out and smooching with the soft moans and huffs emitting from both of us. The canal as well as the Nile River that feeds it begins to fill with the feelings of love and affection, spreading rapidly as we kiss each other on the cheeks, necks and our lips while both of our tongues toy with each other in our mouths, our hot breath warming up both of our faces and upper bodies as I lower my head down and lick the crevasse in between Malana’s wonderfully perky breasts.

My heart beats rapidly within my chest as all this goes on, something that hasn’t happened in a long time since losing my virginity to her months ago, it was filled with desire and affection for the most beloved treasure that I have in my arms. Someone whose eyes shine and shimmer like the finest gold, her body sculpted with beauty in mind, something even Bastet would be jealous of, and of course, a heart that is so pure, no man, no god could ever replicate it in another being, that’s Malana, the woman I love the most in the world.

”They say love is the most powerful gift any mortal or god can receive, ” said a mysterious voice that gave me such a fright from behind. Both me and Malana immediately sink into the water to hide from the perverted onlooker, both of us turning red in the face with embarrassment.

”Who said that?” I demanded, ”Show yourself, you Peeping Tom!”

No response as nobody was present, but something was quickly gliding through the water, leaving a very small wake behind it. It got about almost two feet away from us until it revealed itself by breaking the surface. What came out gave us another shock, a rather chubby but tall crocodile with green and blue scales that form a water-like pattern all over his body similar to a tattoo. He's naked as can be except some jewelry like armbands, a colorful neck and with a matching red and blue stripe pattern, and a blue cloth headdress with a very strange looking crown piece. Two pillars of gold that look like feathers stand atop with a ruby sun-disk at the base of both of them with two emerald outcrops stringing out of the center disk in the wave on both sides. Seeing that headpiece, I knew exactly who the pervert was. The guardian of the Nile River himself, Sobek.

"S-Sobek?!" I gasp out loud. "What are you doing here?"

"Is that any way to greet a god?" Sobek huffed, crossing his thick arms. "And choose your words carefully, I was only investigating the scent of love that is filling my river."

"Wait, so you're the legendary guardian of the Nile River my husband told me about?" Malana asked, letting go of me so she can use both of her arms to cover-up both of her exposed assets.

"Of course my dear," Sobek chuckled. "I am Sobek, the guardian of the Nile River. I simply control the waters of the river and the fertility of the soil along its banks. All of those myths and legends you people are discovering are indeed real, so I exist, as well as my godly family that watches you from both the heavens and the depths of Duat." Sobek leans his head forward upon spotting my mother's silver neckband and a necklace around my neck, quirking a brow as he examines me closely. "Say jackal, where did you get that neckband?" he asks. "I have not seen someone wear that since..." He pauses for a moment, and his eyes suddenly widen with a gasp escaping from his long snout and jaws. "Oh! Cheops!" he exclaims, rushing towards me and glomping me, somehow his hug was tighter than the hug my father has given me previously. "By the gods it really is you! It is so good to see you again after over 4,000 years!"

"I... Can't breathe...!" I wheezed, trying to break free from the croc god's tight grip. "Let me... Go!"

Sobek, as if he was being commanded immediately let me go and I heave my lungs for a good portion of air. "Forgive me, pharaoh prince, it has been far too long since I have seen you."

"You know me?" I said, still catching my breath after being bear-hugged by the Nile Guardian of all beings.

“Of course I know you Cheops, I have known you since you were a child. I even remember the day you came rushing to me, filling my river with your tears, begging me to bring your mother back since you definitely did not want her to embark on her journey to the Afterlife.” Sobek explained, although his words then grow silent as his smile soon changed to a frown upon gazing at the look of confusion on my own face. “Why... You do not remember... Do you?”

I stood silent, how did I forget a crucial piece of my past when my father still has all his? Come to think of it, maybe he lost some of his, too. Either way, I’m still baffled that the god of fertility in man and crops and the guardian of the Nile itself of all people said this to me, and I as look at Sobek’s depressed face, he feels really bad about it.

”Poor mortal.” Sobek uttered, having his large scaly hand rub over my forehead gently, the underbelly in his palms being softer than the rough outer scales covering his fat body. ”Not all the news is bad, however, I can feel your mind is slowly regaining these memories of the past.”

”Oh that’s good!” Malana chimed cheerfully. ”So, how long does it usually take for someone to regain their past memories, I want to know so much about it!”

Sobek had to think for a moment, his hand now holding up his lower jaw with two fingers. ”I am. Uncertain,” he said. ”It could be either a few days or more than a few years. He and his father are a unique case that even we gods ourselves are uncertain of.”

Malana’s ears flattened a little bit upon hearing that, looking glum. ”Oh, I see.” she said.

Sobek just nodded and sunk deeper into the water, but before disappearing, he holds put his hand, holding what looks like a glass vial with a very strange glowing blue liquid corked inside. ”I believe this will aid you in gaining your memories a little quicker?”

I hesitate at first, thinking that something horrible could come out of drinking something like that, however, it looks like the same stuff that poured into Khufu’s sarcophagus before he awakened from his slumber. I take the vial from Sobek, pull the cork out with a pop and pour the glowing liquids down into my throat with a single swallow. Sobek just grinned to me seeing me drink the liquid, not in a malicious manner of course.

”That should help you regain more of your memories, ” Sobek spoke once more. ”And with that, I must depart, I hope to see you again soon my pharaoh prince. Oh, and for you and your lady, hehe, try not to spill too much of your fertile seed in my river if you decide to mate.” he teased before jetting himself away, leaving a wake and a hearty laugh behind him before fully submerging into the deep canal without a trace. All we were left to do was look at each other and stand to our feet, exposing our naked bodies to each other again.

“Do you um, still want to make love even with being interrupted?” Malana asked, reaching her hand down to fondle my full, seed-filled balls in a playful manner.

”I suppose we still can, after all, I feel like I’m all pent up from not making love in months now I think.” I confessed, reaching my hand down towards her right thigh to rub at her nether lips and squeeze at one of her butt cheeks.

Malana let out a coo and she got behind me, still toying with my family jewels but her other hand grasps my flaccid, black penis and rubs it playfully, going at a slow pace as it begins growing.

”Mmmmmm, I missed playing with your manhood, it’s just so big I can’t even control myself sometimes.” she cooed, giving my dick a firm yet playful squeeze.

”Is that why you were talking in your sleep when we were on the boat traveling from Bora Bora? Because you couldn’t get enough of me?” I give her a cheeky grin and turn around to face her, giving her ass a playful smack, letting go of her wet, dripping pussy in the process. ”I knew you were rough and tough with a sweet and savory soft side, but I didn’t know you can be so naughty as well~”

That basically confirms that she has been thinking about me a lot during our travels, well, more specifically having dreams of me mating with her like when I lost my virginity to her months ago. On occasion, while onboard the ship I could smell the scent of someone’s sex filling the room we were staying in, now I know it was from my wife masturbating in her hammock, which explains why the crew kept finding wet spots in the fabric whenever it was sent to get washed.

Malana then throws me over her shoulder and into the water with a great splash, submerged about four feet within the eight-foot deep canal, she wastes no time grabbing me and giving me a big smooch on the lips, primarily puffing air into my lungs. Air bubbles were everywhere with her clinging to me and kissing me like mad, my dick’s fully erect and throbbing beneath her when she coils her tail around my shaft and giving it another squeeze. She then pulls me back up towards the surface and has me on my back on the soft shore, a naughty grin stretches across her muzzle and she spreads her folds to me, allowing her nectar to drip onto my pelvis.

”I want you in me again~” She moaned, turning around so her rear end faces me, shaking it with her butt cheeks jiggling and bouncing freely to entice me even further. She then slams her ass right into my face, sitting on me while she begins to kiss and lick the fat onyx-colored knob partially hidden by the foreskin. ”You are so irresistible to me Cheops, your scent draws me in like moths drawn to a flame, the aroma of your manhood is just, Ooohhhh~” She moans out and then gives the tip of my cock a big smooch and then a lick from the very base all the way up to the somewhat covered knob, pulling the foreskin back to fully expose it to her tongue and lips briefly.

It's very clear she wants me so badly, pressing her quivering crotch right up against my nose and muzzle, grinding her pelvis against me while she let out a lust-filled moan. I begin to lick at her sex, my tongue swirling around her moist folds and slowly pushing inside, licking the fleshy, nectar-rich inner walls while she is quickly driving her wild with her moans and pants getting even louder.

Malana begins bouncing her hips right on top of my face, grinding her pelvis my muzzle even harder now. At one point, my muzzle sinks deep inside her moist vagina, her internal walls clenching tightly around my nose as her internals tried pulling it deeper inside. That made her howl with pleasure and bliss, at least for herself, meanwhile, I was quickly losing air and I had to try to pull myself free, or else I'm gonna end up passing out in her from a lack of air. With one firm tug, I pull my muzzle out of her pussy with a wet pop, strings of her sexual nectar bridging her crotch and my nose before licking my lips to get a taste of her sweet essence.

Her response was to flip herself over so she's facing me, climbing on top of me with both her hands grabbing at my wrists, and pinning me down onto the sandy ground. She gave me that same nasty, toothy grin she since the first time we had sex long ago. The only sounds that broke that silence were our hot moans and the light splashing of the very shallow water I'm laying in.

"Heehee, now how about I give my royal husband the reward he deserves for finding his father~," She said with a teasing, sultry tone and a giggle. She begins grinding her hips and her delightful booty against my penis, making sure I'm always hard, I even already have precum glistening at the tip of my rod and drooling down the belly and then onto my heavy family jewels. But before she could begin to ready herself my positioning my loins so she could easily lower down on top of me, I realize this is my chance for a little table-turning. And sure enough, I suddenly grab her by his waist and belly and then rotate out bodies so I end up on top of her and she's at the bottom. This time it's me that's pinning the warrior otter down to the ground, growling and snarling. "Wha— what are you doing? It's supposed to be me on top of you!"

I just lean my head forward so I could playfully just whisper in her left ear. "It's my turn~"

I don't even hesitate with shoving my cock right inside Malana's incredibly needy pussy, bucking my hips forward and back to pump my shaft in and out of her at a moderate pace. She grabs a hold of my shoulders upon letting out a loud moan, her sharp nails digging into my short black fur and then my skin underneath it. Her thighs clutch my waist tightly with her legs wrapping around my lower back, squeezing me like a vice.

Despite her efforts to regain control, I continue slamming myself into her, my erection keeps going harder, faster and deeper inside the wonderful sea otter's pussy, precum oozing inside her fleshy chambers, she was howling and moaning from how roughly I was dominating her, if I keep this up, I might get her to admit that she has finally met her match.

“Oohhh fuck!!” she cried out, panting and moaning as she keeps trying to hold herself together with my dick hammering her lush breeding tunnel. I could feel her walls trying to squeeze my cock, like a boa constrictor, but I was not ready to orgasm just yet. Now that I know what I’m doing, I continue to go faster and harder inside her, I was heavy balls slapping at her entrance and causing them to churn.

I lean forward so my head’s almost aligned with hers, both of us huffing, panting and moaning in each others’ ears. My dick meanwhile keeps on hammering her internal chambers with the tip knocking on her cervical door, I think I never got past that point last time, then again it’s been months since. ”Malana..! I feel like... I-I’m gonna!” I grunted and gritted my teeth, my body beginning to shiver and shake as my orgasm finally approaches.

Malana, on the other hand, was trembling and tensing up from how hard I’m breeding her lovely pussy, ”BREED ME!!” she yelled with a loud, orgasmic howl following behind it, her orgasm rattles her body with her fluids swallowing my shaft, prompting me to unleash my own. Bellowing a howl also, I blow my huge load right inside my dear Malana’s breeding tunnel just like she wanted, my seed floods her chambers rather quickly with over ten, thick ropes of canine seed being pumped into her. I could see her belly beginning to bulge a slight bit and when the very last drop of my seed was pumped into her, I very slowly pull out of her, leaving behind a fantastic looking creampie with our excess mixed cum oozing out from her folds.

I let go of Malana and she gives me a smile, still having that naughty grin on her face while sliding her finger along my cum-coated cock from base to tip, just for her to pull it close to her mouth and lick the seed off from it. She then pulls me down towards her, squishing her boobs right up against my chest before smooching my lips once more, she’s a really good kisser I must admit.

”Ohhh, I needed that.” she panted, her hands clasping my cheeks with her golden eyes gazing into my own emerald green ones. ”And you overpowered me as well, were you always this rough in your time?”

”I mean, this isn’t my first time mating with you so I guess it just came to me.” I said. ”However it sounds like you really enjoyed having your man pin you down and rough you up, just like you did to me the first time.”

Malana just giggled and kissed me again, her tail swatting at my rear end causing me to let out a squeal and blush pretty hard. ”And you’re still the shy and sweet boy that still has a lot to learn about me~” she teased, standing up to her feet and then pulling me into the water so both of us could clean up the mess we made.

I’m really hoping the guys back up at the party didn’t hear us going at it because we were probably loud enough to wake my ancestors and the pharaohs that succeeded me, Sobek probably stuck around and watched us even, masturbating to our love-making.

Actually, maybe I should tell Calvin and the crew all about our fun, I mean, Leilani and Kalea, too! They seemed to enjoy the tale when I first had sex with Malana, and I learned how rough and naughty she can be when put in the right mood. This time I was the one on top and she loved it, all the same, I'm keeping that in mind for sure. For right now, I'm going to enjoy the rest of the night swimming and sleep under the stars after stargazing, all with my the most beautiful otter in the world, Malana~

Chapter 5

Malana and I fell asleep in each others' arms after what seemed like hours of gazing up at the bright stars. She snuggles up on top of me with her head gently resting on top of my chest as she has her arms wrapped around my torso. The last thing she said to me before passing out "Wake me when the sun rises." Of course, both of us slept like two logs washed up on the riverbank, and when I woke up the next day, it was already past sunrise. I really didn't want to move and wake up Malana, she's still snoozing peacefully on top of me. However, in due time, she wakes up as well and gives me a morning smooch.

"Is it sunrise Cheops?" She asks, rubbing her eyes and then stretching her arms upwards to let out a cute and loud yawn.

"Past that actually." I reply, looking up at the bright morning sky before pulling myself out from under her and then fetching my clothes out of the pile of discarded ones where Malana's dress sits.

"Oh shit!" She exclaims, immediately grabbing her dress and sliding it on to cover her birthday suit. "We gotta get back to the camp, they're probably worried about us being gone for so long."

I slide on my own clothes and both me and Malana make a dash for the camp, luckily at this hour the sands of the desert are not that hot since me and she were both barefoot. In just five minutes, both of us make it to the main British camp right outside the buried palace, out of breath and exhausted.

Calvin was the first person to greet us. "Oh, there you two are!" He said, taking a gander of our wrinkled up clothes as well as Malana's messed up bed hair. "Looks like you, two had lots of fun last night."

I gulped. "Wait... Y-you actually heard us... Making love?" I ask, looking back at Malana and then back to Calvin.

"We all did sound like you were really going at it. I know it's very rude to spy, but heh, I feel like it was worth it." Calvin snickered.

Both I and Malana's faces turn bright red, Calvin and the other explorers laughed and chuckled and I can even hear Leilani and Kalea who were nearby giggling as well.

"I must admit, from how it all sounded, I think you two were fighting for dominance, too." Calvin added. "Who would have thought an over 4,000-year-old jackal could dominate a tough warrior otter from the other side of the world?"

Just then, I saw Khufu exited his tent after shortly waking up, was he laughing? Oh no, he was feeling a little bitter from the look in his eyes. But his mood eased upon seeing me again.

"Ah, my son, have you enjoyed your time with your beloved?" He asks, speaking in the native tongue.

"I have Father, " I answer, still red in the face with embarrassment. "Did you hear what I and my wife were doing at one of the canals?"

Now it was Khufu's turn to have a laugh, a very hearty one just like the one he gave out when we released him after thousands of years.

"You have made enough noise to wake our ancestors, however, I believe they were angered no longer when they only saw it was you two." Khufu then hugs me and he gives a toothy grin to Malana. "I even bet the gods themselves were enamored by your performance."

"Speaking of, I have met Sobek last night as well."

My father's ears perk upwards and his eyebrows quirk upwards with his eyes widening.

"You met Sobek?? By the gods, you must have drawn a crowd of souls with you losing your virginity, and even the gods themselves sought an audience with you!"

"Actually father, this is my second time, the first was when I was at the island where my wife is from. She um, pinned me to the ground and had her way." I said, tugging the waistband of my pants to peek at my flaccid penis, unintentionally flashing it to Malana who licked her lips and then teasingly cupped at my bulge with a giggle.

Khufu snickered and he playfully pushed a fist against my left arm, a very light punch that didn't hurt all that much. "My son has finally come to be a full man, a man with an exotic taste for love and affection."

I couldn't help but chuckle at that and I hugged my father and gave him a pat on the back, with him being taller than me by over a foot in height, I had to reach pretty far just to wrap my arms behind his back.

"She is certainly a thing of beauty, all with that fiery heart of a warrior that is fit and strong, like the ones in all of our ancestors, myself, and you, boy."

Malana blushed from Khufu's kind words, she has a basic understanding of the ancient Egyptian language, along with Leilani and Kalea. Throughout the month traveling across the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans before arriving back home in Egypt, I have been teaching them how to speak in Egyptian, showing them how to read and write in hieroglyphics. Oddly enough, that was all I can remember of my heritage besides naming all the gods in our civilization's mythology, everything else was clouded, I couldn't remember past them.

"I sense you taught your beloved your tongue and writings as well?" Khufu asked.

"Indeed I have," I replied. "They were incredibly quick learners, always eager to learn more."

Just then, Calvin comes back out from the main tent and with him, another surprise awaited, right there beside him was a certain lioness I have met in a healer's tent back in the city days ago, Hekusa, the Healer of Sands.

"Pardon me, but uh, I want to introduce you all to somebody I met during the party last night."

"I already know one of you," Hekusa cut in, locking her eyes onto me before turning her head towards my father, slowly approaching him.

"Oh, so you know my father, too?" I ask her.

Her eyes lock onto my father's, she stands there for a brief moment, and what she did next made everyone gasp in shock and disbelief. She straight up slapped my father right across the face with all her might, my poor father winces from the pain and he got down on one knee and then got back up to his feet.

"You call yourself an honorable father? I should have taken him for my own, he would have a better fate than the one you gave him!" She hissed, she then spits in Khufu's face which followed another gasp coming from us. My father is someone no person would dare want to upset, as he is short-tempered which can usually end with the perpetrator's death. However, to

my shock, he just takes it and does nothing except say: "It is nice seeing you again... Sekhmet..."

Our jaws drop to the floor and a gasp escaped our open mouths right as Khufu revealed Heksuka's true name, but Calvin, he probably was the most shocked of all.

"Wait... S-Sekhmet?" Calvin sputtered. "THE goddess Sekhmet?!"

The corgi couldn't believe it, seeing an actual god (goddess in this case) walking amongst the mortals. I and Malana met Sobek last night so that doesn't really surprise me, but to him, it was a whole new experience. At the same time, it makes me wonder who else is staying with the mortals and not up in the heavens looking down.

Sekhmet sighed, turning around to approach me, putting her hand on my shoulder. "Yes, I am the goddess Sekhmet, the protector of the pharaoh and goddess of medicine. I have watched you grow up to be a powerful warrior prince, and I have been with you through all the events of your life."

"Even when I left Egypt, went to Bora Bora, and Europe back during the Great War?" I asked the lioness goddess.

"Even those," she answered, her tone was more caring than earlier. "And I am glad you have returned home."

I think a few memories of Sekhmet came back to me at this point, seeing relatively short flashbacks of Sekhmet being there for me through certain portions of my life, not all of them as they were still clouded. They weren't much, but I can say that blue stuff Sobek gave me is working, even though the process is slow at first.

Just then, I spot something slithering along the hot sands a good distance away, upon closer expectation, I see an Egyptian cobra with a thick black stripe running horizontally along its underbelly and the lower portions of its hood, towards the center sections of the hood, two black dots contrast the pale yellow and light brown scales covering its body, shaped like eyes.

"W-what is that?" I shuddered as I watch the cobra slither closer and closer, the girls back away from the cobra as it slithers closer and closer to all of us. And then the snake stops and it nods its head in one direction and it points towards that same direction.

"...It seems it wants us to follow it." Khufu cut in, looking in the same direction of where the snake is looking. "I wonder why..."

“Do not follow it!” warned Sekhmet.

The snake then begins to slither in the direction it's looking at, all of us stare at it for a while until I turn my head towards Calvin. “Hey Calvin, aren't we going to follow that snake?”

“Why should we?” He asked back, giving me a confused look. “You heard your um, ‘nanny goddess,’ we shouldn't follow it just like she said.”

However, with that remark, Sekhmet felt insulted with being called a ‘nanny,’ so she gave Calvin a dirty look with a menacing growl.

“Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to call you that my goddess.” Calvin whimpered.

“I still need answers to my past,” I answered finally, “Perhaps that snake will lead me someplace to regain them.”

“Answers that you might not find with that wretched beast.” retorted Sekhmet. “The only thing you will find is nothing but pain.”

“How can you be so sure?”

Sekhmet froze and sighed, pinching the bridge of her feline muzzle with two fingers in disgust. “You are just as arrogant as your father... You disappoint me after all I have done to protect you.” She said, and she turned around and just left, fuming and not saying another word.

”Welp, you just pissed off a god.” Calvin broke the silence, giving me a dirty look.

”She lied to me when I first asked about my past, saying the visions I had were from the Great War, nothing more.” I muttered.

”What visions?” asked Calvin and Malana.

”...Nevermind...” I turn away from the group and head towards the main tents, telling the crew we're heading out again, following that snake that has beckoned me to follow, deep down, however, my instincts were telling me this might not be a wise course of action, but I ignored them and set off with the team to follow the snake wherever it may lead.

For the next few days, the camp caravan travels to the more uncharted regions of the Sahara Desert, following alongside the Nile for awhile before deviating from it. We pass rocky plateaus

that pierce the sky, cross dunes of endless sand and getting lucky with finding a small oasis to restock on the water a few times. The snake despite all this keeps going, going and going and going for miles, and about three days later, the snake led us to the ruins of an abandoned temple. The temple itself happens to be pretty large and carved into the foot of a rocky sandstone mountain, well, not a mountain exactly, more like a massive pillar of rock jutting out of the sand. Several pillars line the entranceway with a sand-covered pathway trailing all the way to the temple entrance, with a lot of snakes and serpents carved into each pillar as well as a lot of the main temple face. The actual entrance of the temple has a lot of hieroglyphics depicting several snakes and the lion goddess known as the Market. Maftet is a lesser-known goddess that is the protector of the pharaoh as she protects them from snake bites and scorpion stings, she even protected Ra himself as those two ailments are some of the sun god's weaknesses.

Me, the girls and the rest of the crew set up camp just a few hundred feet away from the start of the pathway leading to the temple. Once camp was set up after a few hours, we all make our way towards the temple, following the cobra as it slithers towards the entrance. Sliding up a flight of stairs with all of us following behind it, the cobra reaches the snakehead entrance and works its way into a snake-sized hole on one end of a stone door. The door was carved with several snakes forming some kind of lock, with the cobra slithering up the center, it pushes the stone snake locks out of the way until the door finally begins to slide itself open, light pours into the darkness of the temple, lighting only a portion of the dark entrance hall. Calvin and I look at each other and then step inside, lighting up a few torches with everyone following behind us.

"So tell me, why did that snake lead us all the way out here?" Calvin asked as he picks up a couple of artifacts off the floor.

"I only did what the snake wanted me to be here," I replied. "But it must be a good reason, even if it is random."

"Yeah, but didn't Sekhmet tell you not to follow the snake? Sure, this snake might be quite important in some regard, but whatever that purpose may be, there must be a reason why a god refused you to go out with it, Cheops."

"She lied to me is what happened, so I'm gonna search for answers that will resurrect my true past, not this lie Sekhmet has kept behind her back."

"Even if they could be horrible?"

"I'm willing to risk it. And another thing, since when did you learn how to understand my people's language, Calvin?"

"I mean, I picked up on a little bit of it during the party, your um, father taught me some I mean. He's a really nice guy, still can't believe the pharaoh's actually your father."

"Yeah, and I'm so glad I get to see him again." Unfortunately, our conversation was cut short when a loud hiss erupts from the deeper chambers of the temple with a booming, sinister voice following in-suit

"Who sssssseeks me...?" The voice hissed, pausing for a brief moment

before speaking again. "I have the ssssscents of you, lotsssss of you, tender, divine flesh... All perfect for a feast...!"

"W-what was that we just heard?" Calvin whimpered, his legs were shaking as fear dominated his senses.

"I don't know what that was, but it sounded like a snake." I simply answer, slowly stepping forward, venturing deeper into the chambers.

Before I could say anything else, a few statues of the heads of cobra further along our path began to rumble, their bottom jaws lowering down, tearing the cobwebs to have a green, glowing substance pouring out from all of them. The liquid is being channeled through sills in the floor, lighting up the hallway with the liquid bubbling up some of the pillars supporting the roof of the chamber and lighting large metal torches with a green flame.

"So... What's being pumped out of those statues?" Malana asked as she and her sister Leilani watch the strange fluid flow down the sills, lighting more torches as it keeps going down the line. "Is it some kind of water?"

Ascent then fills the room, making catch a good whiff of it. I recognize it almost immediately before turning my head back towards everyone behind me. "Snake venom." I said sternly. "No one touches it!"

Everyone backed away from the pools of venom, the sills now forming a ring towards the end of the hall. In the center, there happens to be a large cobra statue that looks like it's about to strike something from the way it bows its neck in a curvy shape. With all the snake venom pouring into several holes in the floor, the main statue in the center shook violently until its eyes began glowing with emerald color. Just then the circular floor surrounding the statue lower downwards, each segment forming stairs that lead deeper into the chambers.

“Whatever this thing is, it wants us closer,” Calvin said. “Could be some kind of snake for all we know.”

“I mean, reading the hieroglyphics on some of these walls, my people called this place... The City of Snakes?” I replied.

“City of Snakes? No wonder... You know.” Calvin then went silent as all the decor being themed to snakes was pretty obvious, but what isn’t obvious is that voice I heard earlier.

My thoughts were clouded as we all walked down each segment of the stone staircase, spiraling down deeper and deeper inside the temple, slowly being swallowed by darkness. The only sources of light being the torches we’re all carrying, it wasn’t much though as the rest of the chamber was shrouded in the pitch black.

”This temple’s pretty huge, but who would want to live in something like this?” Leilani asked as she took her torch shine light on the floor to see.

”These temples are not for someone to live in, they’re places of worship typically, many for gods.” I reply.

”My people never built temples for our sea goddess.” She said, looking a little glum with Malana reaching her hand out to rub her dear sister’s shoulder.

”I guess when we head back to Bora Bora, perhaps you can convince your father to build one for her, I’m sure she’d love that. Or, maybe when you become chieftain, that can be the first thing you do, think of it as a ‘thank you’ gift for the sea goddess for letting you take your father’s throne.”

”Oh yes, I should do that, then!” Leilani approaches me and gave me a hug. ”And the second thing I should do is build a memorial of David, to honor the love of my life that was torn from me...”

”Hey you two, ” interrupted Calvin. ”There’s something you guys need to see.”

Leilani and I look towards the corgi as he gazes at what he wanted all of us to see, what we saw was horrible. A massive snakeskin belonging to a cobra of sorts, it’s huge enough to swallow someone, no, multiple people whole.

”It’s a snakeskin, a very, very large one.” I said. ”I’m starting to think I know who this temple belongs too...”

I heard Kalea scream as she found something as well, reacting quickly, I point the torch towards her and I almost gagged at what I saw. Piles, upon piles of skeletons with skulls belonging to a

wide range of animals. There were thousands of them, all over the floors and some of them on the pillared walls. Some of the skeletons were in armor, some not, all of them had swords, shields, spears and other weapons possibly dating back to my time.

”W-what happened here??” Kalea shuddered.

”I think... These are all warriors from my time, all sent to seek whatever is in here, or kill something that haunts this temple, and seeing that snakeskin, all these deceased people definitely were sent to kill the giant snake.” I explain, examining the large fangs left on the snakeskin. I honestly wish my father came with us, but he refused, he’d rather stay and try to adapt to the new world, his loss I guess. Just then the voice rattle through the chambers again:

“I can sense fear overtaking your ssssensesssss, are you afraid of me...?”

“Show yourself!” I demanded, looking around the room again, but there was nothing besides me and the rest of the group.

“You have no idea what you are getting into, boy...”

“Face us, coward!” Malana shouted, grabbing hold of a nearby spear she found off the floor of the chamber, readying herself in case anything decided to lash at us.

The voice only laughed with a heavy snake hiss.

“So eager, yet so naïve... Relax... Soon enough it will be our time to play...”

A loud thump was heard with an accompanying rumble shaking the entire chamber, dust and sand fell from the cracks in the ceiling.

“That didn’t sound good...” I said meekly.

And before I could say anything else, the floor cracked underneath me and Malana’s feet, collapsing underneath and sending us into the darkness below. We both screamed as we plummeted into the unknown.

“CHEOPS!! MALANA!!” Calvin called, he knew a torch down into one of the two holes in the floor, meanwhile, me and Malana land on the sandy floor with a thud with the torch perfectly burrowing the bottom piece into the sand with the flame still burning.

“W-where are we...?” Malana asked, lifting herself off the floor and feeling all over her body to see if she was hurt.

I do the same but as I try to grab something to steady myself, I felt something solid towards my right it felt like... Scales? I immediately back myself away from it and grab the torch to reveal what exactly I touched, and indeed it was scaly, a segment of a massive snake with tan, yellow-colored scales with a black track pattern running along the entire length of the body.

A ghostly moan fills the chamber and the body segment in torchlight began moving, that voice filling the temple interior once more.

”Well, how nice of you to drop in, it was time you and I meet face to face...”

”Who are you?” I demanded, looking into the darkness.

A rattling sound fills the room as the massive snake body illuminated begins to shift and move, the ground shakes a little as the body moves. Malana keeps her spear drawn as a reptilian growl replaces the sounds of the rattle, and there, in a dark section of the chamber, six glowing white eyes peer from the darkness, and then, six much larger eyes that are amber in color, all with reptilian pupils peering down at both of us. And then, it revealed itself, a gargantuan cobra that easily tops a five-story building from the head down to a segment of its body first touching the floor. There’s a black band along the bottom of it’s hood as a real Egyptian cobra, but the hood is much more scaly with several spines protruding from it. We were overwhelmed by the sheer size of the creature, now seeing the head, it has to no doubt, be at least 1,600 feet long! Wide as a Redwood tree just like one of the many tentacles off of the deceased Alecto, no, wider than that.

”Now you see me, for I am Apep, the snake god, of chaos!”

”A-Apep? The snake god of, c-chaos??” Malana shivered, she dropped her spear onto the ground and get down into the ground, shaking in pure terror. Apep just laughed seeing her collapse in fear, his laugh echoed through the chamber halls causing some more dust to fall onto the ground.

”Look at your girl, she is just a scared child when facing fear and death right in the eyes. You call yourself a warrior?”

”Do not talk to my wife like that!” I snapped.

”I feast on the fear of mortals, however, she is not who I seek...” Apep hissed, turning his head towards me, looming closer and closer to me until I could feel the beast god’s hot breath heaving onto me, his giant forked snake tongue flicking about as it catches my scent.

“You, on the other hand, you reek with power, there must be something special about you after all...”

”I have done you no wrong Apep!” I shouted. But that probably wasn’t what Apep wanted to hear, as he suddenly shifted his body and coiled his rattle tail around my body, already feeling his scaly body constrict around my arms, torso, hips, and legs like getting caught in a vice. It was here that burning pain in my arms from a few nights ago came back, but this time, my arms started smoking as if my arms were baking in sizzling in a frying pan.

”Cheops, your arms!” Malana cried, trying desperately to climb up Apep’s coils to try to pull me out of the cobra god’s very tight grip, but to no avail as the searing pain from my arms literally burning I couldn’t do anything. I looked down at my arms and I bellowed a blood-curdling shriek, I could no longer hold back the pain, and in the burning flesh in my arms, I discovered the burns we’re forming into a pattern with bits of my fur incinerating to a crisp and the flesh underneath melted and charred, glowing a hot bright red with yellows and oranges mixed in. The pattern takes shape more and more, and the pain continues to increase, now the scars forming on my arms looked like... Chains?? Barbed ones at that, they were wrapped all around both of my forearms with heavy smoke pouring from the burning scars.

Malana turned her head towards the behemoth cobra. “Stop this Apep, you’re hurting him!” she begged, hesitant to try and grab my arms to pull me out from Apep’s grip, because either she might get burned from my scars or cause even more harm to me

The burning scars on my arms weren't the only thing being revealed, the lapis stones in my neckband began to glow as well, emitting three bright blue lights from underneath my tan T-Shirt.

Apep was surprised at this strange reaction, and he let out a loud gasp before leaning his head closer to me, gazing at me with his six glowing eyes.

“Wha— This cannot be... That neckband... The scars that burn in your arms...”

Apep's eyes brightened and a wicked smile stretched across his face. ”At long last, we have finally found you, GHOST OF THE SAHARA!!”

My ears perked as high as can be, hearing that name from the mouth of the snake god of chaos, but my soul started to burn inside my chest at the same time, maybe I had a history with that name when I was alive thousands of years ago. Apep's grip grew much tighter around my body as his coils tightened, trying to crush me.

”W-what are you talking about..!? 'Ghost of the Sahara..?'” I choked out from Apep's vice grip coils still gradually tightening.

”You have no idea how long we have searched for you, thousands of years, and now, here you are, just for Lord An--”

Apep yelped and he quickly released me as he felt a sharp sting in his tail, I gasp for air and fall into a large pile of sand beneath the snake god's tail, from here I can see who caused him to let go of me, it was Malana! She stabbed him with the spear she picked up earlier, the sharp tip easily penetrated through one of the many grooves in the snake's scales and burrowed deep in the flesh.

Apep thrashed around from the pain, slamming his tail into Malana and sending her to collide with a stone pillar back first. From the sound of the impact, it must have hurt her pretty badly.

"Malana! You okay?" I shouted, rushing towards her until Apep slammed his tail right in front of me, stopping me dead in my tracks. She gets back up on her feet, using the pillar for support, her eyes locked onto the snake god as he let out an angry hiss.

"You little bitch!" Apep growled.

Apep stood up and curled his head portion inwards, and then arches forward, two sets of three spikes burst from his sides where his hood meets his long torso, blood oozing from them afterward. However he didn't stop there, those spikes continued to push outwards, his scales and flesh starting to split from his body, I could even see his muscles and tendons tearing as those spikes pushed out. Apep growled and sneered from the pain as the splits went further down his body, the torn portions bending outwards with joints towards the middle. Wait, are those, *arms??* Those pieces of flesh are indeed arms, and the flesh connecting the three spikes on each side are actually clawed fingers, more blood was pouring from the torn ligaments with thick strings of muscle and nerve tissue still attached to the main body.

I and Malana witnessed it all in horror, fear had overtaken all our senses and both of us knew it was time to run. Apep turned his attention back to us with his new arms grabbing onto two pillars.

"I will not tolerate this insolence, you will not leave my temple alive!" Apep then bellowed out an earsplitting, earth-shattering roar that shook the temple, his open mouth revealing to have full rows of teeth along with his long, venom laced fangs. He even has a second set of jaws towards the entrance of his throat, most likely to aid in catching prey.

Malana screamed with pure terror and she made a run for it passed me, grabbing my hand to essentially drag me away from Apep, prompting me to run with her towards a small corridor

linking the main chamber room. There was no time for either of us to think as our Fight or Flight responses took full control of our bodies, dashing from one hallway to the next desperately trying to find a way out. A loud crash sounded and I could see Apep smashing through the smaller corridor, slithering towards us with great speed. Heading up towards a couple of flights of stairs and another hallway, we end up on the upper floor where Calvin, Leilani, Kalea, and the rest of our team was trying to send a rope down one of the large holes in the floor. Calvin was surprised to see us whizz past him without saying a single word, that is until the floor started to crack and fissure, now everyone was running away as fast as their legs would let them. Apep burst through the floor with another roar and he lunged for a few of our crew-mates, grabbing them with his fleshy hands and swallowing them whole with a sickening crunch of his jaws. Into the chamber of the many snakeheads and the two rivers of potent venom, Malana stopped for a brief moment to grab another spear from another corpse of a fallen warrior, this time dipping the spear tip into the venom river to lace it.

”What are you doing Malana?” I asked. ”We gotta get out of here!”

”Not without one last fight!” She snapped, standing her ground with the spear drawn. There slithering his way through the chamber was Apep, hissing loudly and baring his razor-sharp teeth and fangs. Malana charges at the massive snake, letting out a warrior’s cry before leaping off a step and into the air, her venom-laced spear pointing towards him before she threw it at him. Unfortunately, the spear got impaled into scaly skin but she missed the grooves so it didn’t penetrate past them, in other words, no harm was done to Apep, however, the snake god grabbed Malana with one of his arms, slamming her into the wall and letting go, the force of the impact left her unconscious but she fell to the ground right near one of the venom rivers, her right hand dipped into the potent pool for a brief second before hovering over it.

This was the worst possible thing that could happen as that venom doesn’t need an open wound to infect a victim. I quickly rush towards her and pick her up off the floor, rushing her towards the exit of the temple, but not before one last attack from Apep, and that was something I was not expecting from the snake god of chaos. With one mighty roar, he unleashes an immense torrent of purple flames out from his mouth, quickly filling the chamber behind me as the entrance grew closer and closer.

At last, I jumped out of the entryway with the flames flaring from the temple entrance just a few inches away from burning the fur on my back to a crisp. I made it out with Calvin, Leilani, Kalea and a few other survivors scrambling to repack the temporary camps and hightail it out of here. I was still holding my unconscious wife in my arms.

”My wife has fallen ill!” I shouted. Leilani and Kalea rushed to me to help me carry her away from the temple.

”Her hand got dipped in the venom pools when Apep attacked her!”

"What's gonna happen to my sister?" Leilani cried, clutching her sister's upper torso tightly.

"This venom doesn't need an open wound to infect a victim, it's powerful enough to cause her heart to literally melt inside the body, so..." I paused with tears starting to stream down my cheeks. "She only has hours to live... Before the venom reaches it... I'm so sorry..."

Leilani instantly broke down in tears, holding the unconscious Malana closely, Kalea did the same, and I just turned around and walked away, feelings of regret and despair filling my emotion pool. I basically killed my wife in search of answers for my past, I really should have listened to Sekhmet after all. I collapse onto my knees, sobbing before slamming both of my fists into the sand in pure frustration. Without warning, the sands in front of me begin to swirl and spiral, spinning faster and faster with a blue glow emitting from the epicenter, and then the light pulsed, forming a crater in the sand, sucking in some of the loose sand.

Leilani approached me from behind to gaze at what just appeared in front of me. "What did you just do?"

"I don't know," I answered. "I think... I summoned a portal...?"

"Portal? Wait, there's a chance we can save my sister!" She exclaimed, motioning Kalea to carry Malana and approach the 'portal.' The sand crater grew bigger now as the vortex grew stronger, and it swallowed me into the bright light in the center. I was only inside it for a brief second and then I was thrown out of it, sending me hurtling forward and crashing into the sand with a heavy thud. I pull myself up from the sand to see where I ended up with the three otter girls popping out of the portal behind me, and then Calvin and the other survivors before the portal closed up. We were back at the main campsite in Giza! And there standing a few feet away from me with his arms crossed, was my father Khufu.

"There you are my son, back already from your quest?" He asked, looking content at first until he saw Malana in Kalea's arms, starting to turn pale from the venom coursing through her body.

"B-by the gods, what has happened??"

"My wife has fallen ill father!" I cried.

Khufu quickly picked up Malana out of Kalea's hands. "We have to seek Sekhmet, only she can save her!"

That's when I remembered that tent she has in the market place, the same one where I first met her days ago, I hope she's still there.

"Father, I know where Sekhmet stays, there is a mystic tent in the market place, we need to head there now!"

I break for the village with my father and the other two girls trailing behind me, frantically running through every street corner passing many civilians until finding Sekhmet's tent in one corner of an alleyway, just like before.

"Sekhmet!" I called in my native tongue upon reaching the entrance. "I seek your aid, it is an emergency!"

"And why should I help you?" she growled from inside the tent. "You did not listen to me when I warned you about that damned snake!"

"My wife has fallen ill!" I cried out. "Please, you have to help me! I cannot lose her!"

There was silence for a minute, and at last, she opened the entrance flap, helping us guide Malana inside.

"Alright, bring her in, bring her in!" Sekhmet commanded, helping us set Malana down gently on a stone altar, Leilani stayed with her sister, grasping her limp hand tightly.

"Tell me what happened Cheops." Sekhmet said.

"That snake you told me to stay away from led me to Apep, me and Malana got away but Apep knocked her unconscious, and her hand got dipped into the river of venom..." I explained, trying desperately not to break down in tears as I recited what exactly unfolded.

Sekhmet stood there for a moment, not saying a word. She then looked at both of my arms, now charred with the marks of chains, and from the look on her face she felt frightened, and so did Khufu, something tells me they know something about it.

"In order to heal your wife from Apep's venom... You need to seek the Feather of Truth. Deep within the depths of Duat..." Sekhmet said finally.

Duat? The realm of the dead?? My eyes went as wide as can be and I felt my heart sink to my stomach.

"How will I get there? I cannot die just to save my beloved, I both of us to live!" I beckoned the lioness goddess.

"In the Valley of the Kings, up the Nile south of here, there is a portal that opens the gates between the realm of the mortals, and the realm of the dead when the sun lines up with the portal entrance within the temple it houses." Sekhmet explains, keeping her composure while my senses were going completely out of control with fear and anxiety overtaking them.

"However, you need to be dead in order to pass through those gates. There is a way past this... And it involves removing your heart, the container of one's soul."

My heart dropped to the floor when I heard that, beating rapidly with my face turning blue from my blood running cold. Kalea and Leilani hugged me, so did my father to try and keep my calm.

"If that's what it takes to save my sister, then you should do it." Leilani said. "And... Can you remove my sister's heart, too?"

"I suppose I can," Sekhmet replied. "It will give Cheops more time to find the Feather of Truth."

Sekhmet's hand begins glowing as she plants her palm on Malana's chest, the glowing aura surrounding it caused Sekhmet's hand to sink inside Malana's chest, and seconds later, her hand pulls back out holding the otter's still-beating heart in her hand. Leilani and Kalea gagged and turned away upon seeing it, but I kept staring, hoping for her survival. Sekhmet's magic had coated Malana's heart in a crystal-like casing surrounding it, like some kind of container to protect it. The lioness goddess then sets the heart in a small box before turning towards me and motioning her hand towards her, telling me to come closer to her.

I was scared beyond belief, but I put on a brave face and she does the same thing, sinking her hand into my chest and pulling out my heart. It wasn't painful at all, in fact, I didn't feel anything. My heart then gets coated in the same crystal material before Sekhmet sets it into another box. Leilani and Kalea had already run out of the tent on the brink of vomiting.

"There, now you can enter the portal to Duat." Sekhmet said.

"And for weapons?" asked Calvin who just stepped into the tent to see what was going on and immediately he gagged when he saw the two beating hearts inside the two small boxes.

"Mortal weapons like your um... 'gun, things, ' will not effective in the Underworld."
Sekhmet then sighed, looking at Khufu before closing her eyes. "You will need to find something else..."

Khufu, who knew that look from Sekhmet, shut his eyes, too, letting out a deep sigh.

"...Then we must return home..."

Chapter 6

Khufu turned his head to look at me, his large hand lifting my left forearm to examine those chain-shaped scars left on my arms and back to Sekhmet. Kalea and Leilani were shocked seeing them, they lifted my other arm to gaze upon them, I winced and gritted my teeth as the scars were still fresh since my encounter with Apep earlier.

“Cheops... What happened in that temple?” Kalea asked with a worried whimper.

“This was not the fault of Apep,” Khufu answered. “This was from a past me and Sekhmet have sworn to forget...”

“Is that why Sekhmet lied to me..?” I asked my father.

“I have warned you the past you seek to rectify will only bring you nothing but pain.” Sekhmet remarked, crossing her arms and letting out a deep sigh. “But now, it is the only way to save your wife.”

I collapsed onto the floor, tears were already streaming down my cheeks as the thoughts of losing her cloud my mind, it was my fault this happened, my fault for putting her in this fatal dilemma. If this was worth finding out about my past, I shouldn't have pursued it. I should have listened to Sekhmet.

“Come with us, my son.” Khufu said, holding me close and wiping my tears away before helping me up to my feet. “Sekhmet and I will awaken the memories that have been lost.”

Sekhmet then turned towards Calvin, Kalea, and Leilani. “You three must stay here and keep an eye on Malana, I will be back shortly.”

The two otter girls gave the goddess a nod and they approached Malana, slowly turning paler as the venom lingers within her body.

I was escorted out of the tent with Khufu leading me out into the streets, and Sekhmet beside me, heading back towards our sand concealed temple. The weather begins turning for the worse at the point, one side of the sky is clear and then on the other is an ominous, massive wall of black

clouds looming towards Giza with the faint rumbles of thunder in the distance, slowly swallowing the bright sun within its wake. Perhaps this would be a sign of what my true past might ensue, and the thoughts of what exactly my past could be growing more and more sinister as we keep on walking.

A couple of raindrops dripped onto me and the dirt mixed sand road beneath my feet, a light drizzle at first but grew heavier as minutes past. The thunder sounded closer now with lightning flashing in the distance.

"It seems Set senses what is to come of this." Khufu commented, gazing up at the darkened atmosphere above.

"Or our hands in reawakening Cheops' true self when we have sworn against it for the good of mankind and the other gods." Sekhmet added, putting her hand on my shoulder and giving it a comforting rub. "I only hope he is ready for it."

From the corner of my eye, something glowing in the alleyway grabbed my attention. I stopped and went back a few steps to see what exactly what it was, only to see nothing. Am I starting to hallucinate now? I pressed on and right in front of my face was a jackal woman, transparent like a ghost. The ghost of said jackal woman had long hair that stretches past her shoulders, decorated with all sorts of chains of gold, arranged like some kind of net. Perhaps she's some kind of royal because her attire is of a similar style to my mother's, however, her dress and top were a bright blue color with white highlights and thin stripes running the whole length of the dress, plus it was cut so her right leg was covered but her left one was exposed up to the hip, she was barefoot as well. Seeing the ghostly figure made me jump with a scream and fall back and land on the ground with a thud. The spirit kept on staring at me, but at least I got a good look at her before she slowly disappears and Sekhmet pulls me off the ground.

"You saw her, too?" Sekhmet asked, looking at me with a stern look.

"I-I did, who is she??" I shuddered, but she didn't answer. We just kept on going, leaving me to wonder who that ghostly jackal was. The sand sunken palace is now in view, as well as the main campsites that are still up despite the incoming storms. Upon setting foot on the main pathway leading to the balcony entrance on the second floor, I look up at the clouds again, and what I saw made me shiver, the sky went from black to blood red. The lightning grew more intense and the rain poured down harder as we climb into the balcony entrance and step inside the dry bedroom chambers.

"Not much further now." Khufu said once again, leading me down several corridors to the chamber below the main throne once more, the blue flamed torches lining the chamber we're still

lit since the first time I came down here and scared Malana just for fun. Instead of taking me to the chambers that honored my deceased and beloved mother, he takes me to a dead-end with a sandstone wall blocks the way.

"Through here, is where I kept your past hidden from the others." Khufu slides a slab of stone on the wall aside to reveal another slot similar to the ones used with the hourglass I still have packed away inside a satchel I kept in my tent outside. But this one was different, it wasn't shaped like an hourglass, but a torch. Khufu closes his eyes and holds out his hand towards that touch, a tiny blue flame flares from his fingertips and then travels towards the torch, igniting it instantly. This causes the other wall to sink inwards and the down towards the floor, revealing a hidden passage leading a deeper chamber within the temple.

"I guess my palace has a lot of surprises yet to be rediscovered." I said before stepping past the sunken stone door and venturing through the chamber. It quickly grew dark stepping just a few feet into the chamber, the only light source happened to be a large torch in the center of an altar, and they're sitting on top of the stone, happened to be a fabric wrap containing something within them.

"There, come from my son." Khufu escorts me up the stone steps all the up to the top of the altar, having me look down at the cloth wrap resting on the altar covered to the brim with cobwebs and dust.

"Everything about your true nature is within this wrap," Khufu declared. "The keys to the past that has been locked away from you for so long."

"What is underneath it?" I ask my father, suddenly my arms started burning once again, slamming my forearms onto the altar, gritting my teeth and grunting loudly from the intense pain. The cloth wrap shuddered and shook and protruding through the folds on two ends is what looked like two black ropes of barbed thorns, made from this strange glass-like material. They instantly wrap themselves around both of my arms, aligned perfectly with the scars before those barbs penetrate the skin and sink deep in my flesh. I bellowed a blood-curdling shriek and thrashed my body around, trying to pry the thorns off me, but that only caused them to flare up with bright blue flames, the black glass glowing bright yellow, red and white as they sear to the flesh, fusing to my arms.

I had never felt pain so severe in a very long time, but this definitely takes the ranks of being the most pain I ever felt in my entire life, I'm crying out and screaming at the very top of my lungs as the burning pain showed no signs of stopping. The cloth wrap burst into flames in front of me to reveal what was underneath them, the weapons from the horrifying visions, a pair of black, silver-trimmed khopeshes, The hilts were made of gold, shaped into jackal skulls complete with the long ears, and the teeth holding the blades in place are a bronze color. On the black blades themselves, there were glowing blue markings arranged in an exotic pattern stretching from the tang all the way to the hooked tips of each blade. The silver edges of both blades were serrated at the top front, useful for disarming. The blades hook sharply with another set of serrated bits protruding from the bottom towards the front edge. The eye sockets in the hilts glowed with tiny blue specks like the wispy embers in a candle flame.

I turn myself around away from the altar to gaze at my father and Sekhmet, still feeling the pain of having these khopeshes permanently attached to my arms with thorns, bringing tears to my eyes. And then, I turn back towards the altar and right on the other side, I saw the ghost woman again, looking at me dead in the eyes within her cold, soulless stare. The whispers of terrified souls fill my ears to the brim, but I couldn't lift my own arms up to cover my ears as the burning pain hasn't receded. Ultimately, one ghostly voice prevailed from the others, and it might have belonged to this spirit that just met.

"Who are you?" I demanded

The phantom didn't answer, but instead, let out this ghostly moan before her eye sockets went completely black.

"There is nowhere you can hide, Cheops..." The ghost began, stepping (or rather floating) closer to me around the altar, looking down at me as if I'm being looked down upon like a criminal condemned to eternal torture.

"Put as much distance from you and the truth as you want... It changes nothing..."

She paused again, her tone getting increasingly bitter as she keeps circling around me, keeping her gaze locked onto me. I can hear the thunder from outside, growing more and more intense as the strikes come closer to the temple despite being partially underground.

"Pretend to be everything you are not..." She stops on the other side of the altar. "Teacher... Pharaoh..." There was a long pause, and suddenly she lunges at me, her body phasing through the altar to grab me by the throat with those hollow eyes staring right into the whites of my own.

“HUSBAND.” She yelled a loud clap of thunder followed suit as her echo rattled the dark chamber, the flame in the center of the altar went out with a gust of wind, being swallowed by total darkness. At this point I am so scared, that I could probably feel my own canine teeth starting to ache from chattering so hard, this rogue spirit seriously has a bone to pick with me, what did I even do to have her hate me this much? And did she call me ‘husband?’ I don’t know who this woman is, and I don’t even remember marrying her first.

My heart was about to bust out of my chest from beating so fast and so hard in terror, my breath growing heavier with each passing second as I’m surrounded in darkness, trying to pry the spirit’s hand off of my neck, but to no avail.

“L-let go of me!” I cried out, her grip now getting tighter around my neck the more I struggled.

“...But there is one unavoidable truth you will never escape...” The spirit snarled and snapped her fingers.

Flames reignited on the walls of the chamber, one pair lighting up on the left side, revealing ancient hieroglyphics depicting a young adult jackal obtaining the khopeshes that have been bound to me.

“You cannot change...” The ghost continued, snapping her fingers again to cause another pair of flames to ignite on the right side of the room, revealing another set of hieroglyphic, this one depicting the same jackal brutally killing a presumably innocent hyena man, his blood and guts pouring from the gash in his stomach with one khopesh digging deep into the flesh, the other hand has the other one right up against the hyena’s neck, slicing it open.

“You will always be...” The ghost pauses once more before revealing the last wall between the other two with another pair of flames.

“...A MONSTER...”

She lets go of me, letting me witness the horror that was the last hieroglyphic on the last wall. It made my blood run cold and my spine quiver as it depicted the jackal now screaming into the sky, blood dripping from both khopeshes standing on top of a large pile of corpses, the one's he presumably killed. It was larger than the other two so I could make out the details. The jackal's topless, for the most part, leaning towards an average build with some muscle, wearing a bloodstained white knee-length kilt with a leather belt securing it to his waist, a blue and silver neckband-- I let out a loud gasp upon seeing my mother’s neckband around the neck and shoulders of the cold-blooded killer, my blood running colder now. *Wait, it can't be... That's me!!!*

I did all this?! I screamed within my mind. I refused to believe this at first, my senses went full panic mode, actually going through the process of a total mental breakdown. The khopeshes in my hands glowed and then are engulfed in dark blue flames, this burns off the rust and corrosion, leaving the serrated blades in peak condition as if they have just been forged. And just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, the real painful truth strikes me with tidal waves of memories, horrible ones flooding my mind. The memories of me from my native time, flashes of a young jackal slaughtering thousands of innocents, enemies and one woman, the very same one I fell to my knees too when I first had that nightmare the day after I arrived here. It felt like my mind was shredding to pieces with no signs of stopping as the sinister reality of my past surfaces in perfect clarity.

So this was what Sekhmet was talking about, finding the truth to my past will bring nothing but pain and suffering. And she was right after all, and now my soul is permanently scarred as the sinister half of me finally reunites with my positive half. I'm left with my heart racing and my breath growing exceedingly heavy, the feelings of dread and despair swallowing my mind as my other emotions try to fight them and keep me from going into madness.

Sekhmet's voice spoke up behind me, I quickly turned around to see her, she's not showing any anger or sadness but smiled with sympathy. "This path can be changed, Cheops." She said calmly. "Do not listen to her and be afraid, now that you know the full, vile truth. It has been thousands of years since all this has happened, this is a new era for you, and your father, to start again." She approaches me and pulls me into a light hug, however, I push her away from me, my mood quickly shifting to suspicion.

"First you harshly insulted me for trying to uncover the truth, insulted my father for whatever he did, and now you seek to help me change my future to avoid a repeat of the past? What has brought about this change?" I ask her skeptically, crossing both of my arms.

"From how you came to me, begging to save your new wife, I saw a truth I did not before." She replied. "You still have a pure heart locked inside the body of a killer."

She pauses for a moment, letting out a sigh before speaking again. "Yes, I have scolded you and your father, however, I am still the Pharaoh's Protector. And it is my duty to keep you two safe and strong."

I turn towards the exit of the chamber, wielding the flaming khopeshes in my hand. "And to repay your efforts Sekhmet... I need to undo the sins of my past and make things right so they never repeat again. I will be a so-called monster no longer!"

Heaving my chest and letting out a deep breath, I step down the stone stairs of the altar, pushing past both my father, Sekhmet, and the jackal woman's ghost that appears in front of me, and then disappears after passing through her. My path was now clear to me now that my memories of the past have returned, I will save my wife and also, undo all of the sins I have wrought.

Making my way out of the chambers, I leave the palace with my two khopeshes clinging to my back with the straps I have tied together using my satchel. I ditched my modern clothes for a more, traditional look, wearing a similar attire my father has, only instead of the pharaoh's typical gold and lapis stripe headdress, I got a white cotton one with the gold highlights similar to it. Usually, this is what the heirs to the throne wear when they are in the age bracket to succeed the previous pharaoh.

Before heading off to the Valley of the Kings, I stop by Sekhmet's tent to check on Malana, and thankfully to me, everyone else was still there to greet me.

"Woah! Hey! You're rocking yourself a new look there Cheops!" Calvin called, coming rushing to me alongside Kalea and Leilani, all gasping and gazing upon my new attire as well as the two weapons I have holstered on my back satchel strap.

"Holy shit...! W-what are those..!" He cried, trotting in circles around me to get a better look at my outfit and my new weapons. "You know, I and my team excavated all sorts of artifacts your people kept in your temples, trust me, I know from quality." He points towards the khopeshes on my back. "But for them... Those are special."

"T-they're scary looking." Kalea remarked, hesitating to have her hand touch one of the blades. "Yet so enchanting, they must be some kind of family heirloom!"

"No!" I loudly snapped, everyone jumped back with a flinch. "..Nor will they ever be..."

I look over towards the unconscious Malana and step towards her. Very gently rubbing my fingers along her pale cheek before giving it a kiss. "I am, so sorry I put you through this..." I bemoaned. "But I promise you, I will make it right." I pass my unconscious wife and then take a peek inside the small box containing her still-beating heart, only to close it again, breathing a long sigh. "I'm sorry." I said again.

Turning my attention back towards the tent opening, I step back outside, leaving everyone behind once more. Heading to the docks to catch a ferry to take me to the Valley of the Kings tens of miles south of Giza.

The journey by boat on the Nile River took several days, passing a couple of small boats and other ferries frequently, drifting south against the river's tough currents while sailing upriver. To think I'd see Sobek again so he can be my guide on this journey, unfortunately, he was nowhere to be seen, so I'm basically on my own, more so than I have been already. Nevertheless, the Valley of the Kings came into view, a large canyon filled with several tombs of pharaohs I did not recognize, statues of gods and the pharaohs who were buried here, and smaller temples populate the valley with massive dunes of sand and mud occupying many spots along the rocky walls. The morning sun shined brightly with rays penetrating the light scattering clouds as if Ra is digging through the clouds so his light can shine on the land below.

Remembering Sekhmet's instructions, I step off the ferry and search for the main temple that houses the portal to Duat, going through the smaller tombs simply to find clues that I might find useful on my travels while trying not to disturb the deceased too much. A lot of them only described brief summaries of the life of each pharaoh tomb I explored, I guess sometime after my father's reign, my people stopped building pyramids to bury their dead royalty, that's all I got from exploring about twenty tombs in the valley so far. In my time, the pyramids served as a gateway to the Trials of the Afterlife. When someone dies, they must partake in a series of challenges before they can ascend to the heavens and earn an audience with the gods high up in the sky. It wasn't exclusive to the pharaohs, however, commoners had to go through the same trials when they depart. The pharaohs and the higher-ups had an easier time, but it's still quite a challenge for the soul, even if they're buried in a tall pyramid with a shorter, less dangerous route through them.

In one of the crypts, I find a strange artifact that looks like some kind of golden container, shaped like a hexagon. By turning one end of the mysterious artifact, the six sides on the other open up quite a bit of spring to them, revealing some kind of key slot hidden inside it. This must be pretty important, but why is it in one of these smaller tombs? I asked myself. I put my assumptions aside and make for the main temple that is at the end of the valley, compared to the other tombs and smaller temples, this one is huge, with statues of from I can tell of Osiris and his wife Isis, along with statues of Horus and Anubis towards the back of the temple jutting out of the cliff, facing away from each other.

I strut up the sandstone steps and slowly step inside the temple, the structure layout has two floors, with statues of the gods that thrive in Duat lining the outer walls acting as pillars holding up the rest of the structure. Some portions of the temple have collapsed over time, forming holes in the ceiling and the walls, providing generous amounts of light from outside so no torches are required. The second floor is mostly flat but it houses a large gate-like archway, not made of sandstone, but some more exotic materials that look like marble, but there is some limestone and other elements worked into the structure, this is to be the portal to Duat. Towards the bottom there are two circular carvings on each side of the large square opening in the center of the structure, one side features that same hexagonal artifact I found in one of the small tombs earlier, maybe that's where it's supposed to go to unlock something.

“Okay, all I need to do is plug this thing in and the portal opens? Can’t be simpler than that.” I remarked to myself as I head up towards the gate, opening the artifact up by rotating one end.

“Alright, here goes nothing!”

I plug the artifact into the empty slot on the left side, giving it a twist for good measure with a responding clicking noise, doing the same for the other side and... Nothing happened.

Hm, well that was disappointing. I thought, but then I remembered Sekhmet saying that the sun has to align with it, so perhaps that’s what’s missing. From what I can tell, the gate’s facing the sun which is behind me, the exit of the temple as well as a head statue of Anubis I somehow didn’t notice, with the sun’s ray peering through them. The two rays beamed directly onto the two sides of the gate, slowly sinking lower as the sun gradually rises. From the distance between the rays and the two keys, it’ll probably be two minutes until they meet and the portal opens. At this point, I thought about Malana, what will she say to me after I cure her of the venom that courses through her veins? Will she see me as a hero for saving her? Or a monster who put her life in critical danger because of my foolish, ambitious actions? Whatever the results maybe, I can’t be certain on which outcome would be more likely.

I didn’t have to think for long, as the sun’s rays peering from the Anubis statue on the wall have finally lined up with the two key artifacts, immediately following with a rumble coming from the gate housing the portal. Hieroglyphics carved into the stone glowed with a sandy yellow color, starting from the bottom of the structure where the keys are placed, working their way up and then finally meeting at the crest. The air in the center arc of the structure begins distorting into a ring shape, sparking with flashes of electricity out of a tesla coil out from multiple angles, green in color with a bright light peering out of the center of the ring, until at last, the large portal opens, similar in shape to the one that took me back to Giza from Apep’s temple, but not swirling with sand, but this green mist surrounding the outer rim of it. Now, this is must be the actual portal to Duat.

Slowly I approach the rift, stepping inside for its light to instantly swallow me whole, everything flashed white for a brief second and then darkened to a dark green spiral of thundering clouds. I watched the glowing entrance disappear into the distance behind me, before suddenly my body disintegrates into grains of sand, traveling further into the bowels of the mystical tunnel. Another light peers in front of me, trailing incredibly fast and enveloping the grains, reassembling my body before evicting me out of the portal. I was thrown with a great force, landing with a thud on a stone floor and sliding a few feet forward, I heaved myself upwards go get a look at the new territory I entered, being greeted by the eerie ruins of an ancient city, the ground incredibly jagged and split to reveal the dark green glowing chasms below.

The ancient city has lots of ruined buildings with nothing but some of the pillars that supported them intact, and the only things populating its broken down streets are souls of the damned, heading for their many trials of the Afterlife before being accepted to them.

”So this is Duat, the realm of the Dead.” I contemplated to myself, examining a nearby shattered urn. To find the Feather of Truth, I might need to find the Palace of Osiris, where the ruler of the Underworld once held his reign keeping the Dead on a steady course towards the Afterlife, and monitoring their trials while doing so. Shouldn’t be too hard to find in this realm...right?

My search begins through the ancient city, following the wandering souls making their way through it and up towards the jagged cliffs higher above. Navigating across the many pits and chasms littering the many paths the souls drift over, while I had to take alternative routes, using both of my khopeshes to grapple onto a couple of ruined pillars and destroyed ruins, flinging myself up towards the cliffs and then climb up the steep, rocky faces. I couldn’t tell time anymore in this new environment, but I swear I have been climbing for many hours until at last, I reached the top. Out of breath and feeling a little dehydrated, I drag myself over the cliff on a small, flat plateau to rest before continuing any further. This allowed me to replenish some of my strength and vitality by sipping at the water in my canteen, and then taking a seat at the edge of the plateau, gazing at what lays before me: a jagged ravine with plumes of souls glooming through the massive cracks of the ash-gray earth.

On the other side of the vast ravine, a large palace looms in the distance at the end of the twisting, contorting cave networks that make up the foundations of the Underworld, a palace supported by many large pillars with statues of many gods carved into them, the notable statues being those of Horus, Anubis, Osiris, Isis, Set, and many others I couldn’t make out because of how far away the palace was. Either way, I was making progress to my goal, one step at a time. Further down the pathways, there are very decayed stone bridges stretching across a giant chasm that appeared to be bottomless under the plumes of green, linking the edges of the crevice together, barely.

A somber, sorrow-filled melody begins to echo throughout the realm, the voice belonging to a woman filled with grief, easily overpowering the whispers and wails of the other souls throughout Duat. My long ears perk and twitch as I turn my head in all directions to find out where the sound was coming from, but there was no one insight, and the woman’s song continued on. That voice sounds awfully like that woman’s ghost I’ve seen twice before, stalking me and revealed a past I have not remembered and my father tried his damndest to hide from me, could it be the same one? My mind was getting cloudy again, my brain being rained on with thoughts about the identity of this one woman, and her motives to showing me my dark side previously thought to be locked away. Nevertheless, I leave my resting area to continue the search for the Feather of Truth, but trying to figure out the identity of the woman was still on my mind.

Navigating across the chasms proved to be incredibly tricky as the hazards of crumbling pieces of the bridges became rampant, one bridge collapsed the very moment I set foot on it, leaving me to scurry to the other side or else I'd go down with the bridge, into the bottomless abyss below. I succeed in making it across, unfortunately with no way to return safely, leaving me stranded on a cliff with the distant palace in front of me. The cries of the tormented souls grow louder and more severe the closer I get towards it, with more plumes of dark green mist sprouting from the ground and swirling about in twisting configurations before pouring into the smaller entrances towards the bottom base of the palace, which I can assume are awaiting their Final Judgement. Not much further to the palace now, as I'm running across the larger bridge leading to the large entrance on the very face of the cliff the entire structure sits on, and minutes later, I arrive at the massive gates. The giant metal doors seem to be permanently held open by chains to allow souls to pour into the palace with minimal resistance, which includes me as I step inside, suddenly getting knocked forward when an unfortunate soul collides with me on the way in.

With a loud thud, my body slams chest-first into the smooth stone floor from being shoved from behind by a lost soul. No sense of dignity for a pharaoh prince, even in the Underworld. I pouted within my thoughts. I pick myself up on my feet and follow the ghostly vortex deeper and deeper into the palace, winding through many hallways and empty rooms with hieroglyphics documenting the history of Duat, most notably the death of Osiris by the hands of Set, and Anubis takes the throne, becoming the new king of the Underworld.

At last, I reach the massive room at the end of all the twists and turns, circular in shape and mostly empty. The upper levels house a lot of throne-like seats surrounding the altar in the center, and on a massive gold weight scale in the center of the room, used by Anubis himself, there was the glowing, shimmering MacGuffin I have been searching for, the legendary Feather of Truth, resting on one of the weight pans. The feather is enveloped in a glowing, blue aura while the feather itself is a much brighter cyan, sky blueish color. It sits perched on one of the large weight scales that determine the fates of souls who have completed most of the Trials of Duat, either granted passage to Aaru or have their hearts consumed by the ferocious beast, Ammit the Devourer if the scales do not balance. But hold on, where is the soul-eater? The large pit at the one end of the chamber where I assume the beast sat in is completely empty, with no sign of the beast, anywhere besides a large puddle of ancient, dried-up blood on one end of the pit entrance. Without much hesitation, I carefully reach my hand out for the feather, grabbing it and slowly pulling it out of the scale pan, trying to keep it as balanced as possible in case it's rigged to any traps, thankfully there isn't any so I breathed a sigh of relief and held the feather up in the air briefly.

I now possess the very object that can save the life of Malana, my face beamed with joy and I stuff the feather in my satchel. Hope has shined upon me with this big step towards curing her of the toxic venom of Apep, only for my mood to suddenly change upon realizing I don't really have a way of getting out of here since the portal I came in is blocked off by that one collapsed bridge. Welp, back to more exploring the palace to find another one, hopefully, one that's closer to Giza. I exit the Judgement Chamber and head back into the halls, searching high and low for an exit portal to take me back to the world of the living. There's a flight of stairs that leads to the second floor at the end of one hallway and I don't hesitate to take them, reading the hieroglyphics on the walls for any kind of clue to getting out of the Underworld. One, in particular, showcased Osiris' throne room which might be on the third floor of the palace where he once used to overlook all of Duat from the safety of his palace. The previous God of the Underworld had a strange sort of arch behind his throne, very similar to the gate I used to travel to the land of the dead back in the Valley of the Kings, that's gotta be another portal.

The eerie halls of the temple echo with the cries of lost, tormented souls twist and contort within the streams of spirits flowing into the palace from all directions. Without the Feather of Truth on Anubis' scale, no spirit could be judged and be cast to the heavens or the fiery bowels of Ammit, incredibly unusual unless the souls are assembling somewhere else within the palace, but I have no time to explore more, I must get back home and save Malana! At long last, I reach the throne room, very pristine in terms of condition, unlike other sections where masses of dust and cobwebs populated most of the interior structure. Lots of gold and silver have been worked into the room's architecture and the large throne in the center of the room certainly was no exception, and behind it was the arch-gate portal, my ticket out of here. There's just one problem, this portal doesn't have the carvings for the two activation keys nor a sun-like light source to activate the portal.

Perhaps there's an alternative method of activating this particular portal, maybe the Feather of Truth could do something about it? I pull the sacred feather out of my satchel and point the tip of the vane towards the portal, and the glowing piece of Maat, the Goddess of Truth begin to pulse and then it's light brightened considerably, and suddenly a cyan and white beam shot from the feather and cast into the empty space of the arch portal, twisting the light around a blue ball of energy until the dimension tears open and a blue portal appears instead of a green one. Without any hesitation, I rush into the portal and disappear.

My body disintegrates into grains of sand and travels seamlessly through the swirling and twisting void, like last time until I reassemble again just before exiting the portal. This time, however, I'm not thrown out of it and I step out without any issues. My new destination through this blue portal left me surrounded by a decently sized crowd of people, mostly men, and women, either tourists or historians, I can't honestly tell. They were all staring at me, like the audience in one of those Broadway stage shows.

It seems to me that I ended up in some kind of museum, there are glass cases containing old artifacts, stone tablets with carved and sometimes painted hieroglyphics, and many other archaeological treasures dug up from the surrounding area, and behind me was apparently an exit portal the research teams must-have unknowingly found and brought here. For what seemed like a full minute or more of dead silence, I broke it by feebly uttering,

”Am I interrupting something?”

Everyone looked at each other, then back to me, and then shrugged their shoulders in a synchronized manner.

”Cheops? Is that you?” A familiar voice calls from behind the crowds. Nudging and shuffling through them came the one Welsh corgi that put a smile on my face whenever I saw him.

”Ah, Cheops! There you are!” Calvin rushed up and grabbed my hand to shake it before he patted my back, which prompted me to do the same.

”Calvin, it’s good to see you again!” I said, looking down with a warm smile.

The corgi then tugs my arm a little hard, causing me to stumble forward before stepping my foot down before I could topple.

”There’s no time, we have to move, now!” Calvin exclaims while hurrying me out the main entrance of the building and then towards the town plaza. ”Malana’s condition is critical right now and she might die very soon!”

“How much time do we have left?” I asked, suddenly feeling incredibly worried now learning of my wife’s worsening condition.

”She’s very close! Just minutes away from death according to Sekhmet!”

I can feel tears already starting to stream down my cheeks as I suddenly ramp up my speed and make a b-line to Sekhmet’s tent. I nearly stumbled from trying to stop myself as soon as I got inside and nearly collided with one of the support struts holding up the tent. Sekhmet, Leilani, and Kalea were waiting for me, the two otters hugging me tightly and Sekhmet rushes to the other table to retrieve Malana’s still-beating heart, now black as coal.

That’s not all, to my absolute horror, I could see my dear Malana’s restless body on the table, and the horrible, sickening changes she went through while I was away. Her hands, feet, and tail are pitch black past elbows and knees, the rest of her body was chalk white with her nerves and veins black as night and showing through every part of her skin, easily showing through her fur as if her body was entangled in a spider web or a fishing net.

”Do you have the feather?” Sekhmet asked, setting Malana’s heart on her chest and stepping back to look at me.

I shivered and quaked, my hopes rapidly deteriorating as my tear-filled eyes got glued to Malana, my wife, frozen with these horrific changes that are pulled out from the most terrifying nightmares one’s imagination can bring. I lift my head up and shake my head to Sekhmet.

I know what I must do now.

I pulled the Feather of Truth out of my satchel and very carefully set it onto Malana’s heart, very gently press the sacred feather against the ebony organ with its pulses gradually slowing down. The feature glowed and enveloped the heart with a blue aura, slowly sinking back into her chest as the organ turns blue. Once the organ’s completely inside her, her nerves and her veins also turn blue starting from where her heart connects to them, and then ending at her limbs, tail, and finally her head. The blue color finally recedes and her fur color slowly returns to its original natural tan. I gently put my hands on her cheeks and bent down to gently press my forehead against hers, having my tears drip onto her face as I whimper.

”P-please... Don’t leave me...” I begged, sniffing.

Everything went quiet for a brief minute, everyone filled to the brim with anxiety with both Lani and Kalea shedding tears.

Malana’s eyes slowly open up, looking straight at me, tears were already starting to trail down her own cheeks. Before anyone else knew it, she suddenly lunged forward and pushed me down to the ground, her lips tightly locked on my own while she clings to my body as tightly as she could. The other two otters cheered and tightly hugged Malana as well, momentarily pulling me up to a tight group hug before my wife breaks her deep smooch.

”Thank you, for rescuing me!” Malana exclaims with a very delighted squeal.

”You’re welcome.” I simply replied, turning as red as a cherry from that kiss. ”You saved me from death two times in the past, seems like I returned the favor.”

Malana couldn’t be any happier to be in my arms again, her sister and their best friend couldn’t either.

”I’m so glad we’re all together again.” Leilani and Kalea chimed in unison.

Just then, Khufu came rushing into the tent, and so did Calvin, their faces beam upon seeing Malana alive and healthy once again.

”The Feather, it worked!” exclaimed Calvin. ”Malana’s okay now!”

"I am so glad your dear wife has been cured of her ailment!" Khufu declared in his ancient tongue. "You are becoming more like me, my son! I am proud of you."

I and the otter girls help each other to our feet, still hugging arm-in-arm before breaking away.

"Cheops, you are now a hero." Sekhmet addressed, but then she leans close to me whisper in my ear. "Perhaps I can forgive your past... 'Misdeeds' after all."

"I definitely owe you my thanks." I whispered back, and with that, the lion goddess then kisses my cheek and steps away. The happy reunion was short-lived as a sudden earthquake struck through the city, the ground cracked with geysers of sand shooting out from beneath.

"Oh shit! Now what?! Some sort of earthquake?!"

"It came from outside!" Calvin yelled. "Quickly, everyone outside!"

All of us scampered out of the tent and into the street to get a better view of what's happening outside. There's an ominous green light dominating the skyline, coming from a barren spot out into the desert, the dark clouds swirl and contort around the very top rim with fierce winds being sucked into it, like the portals I've traveled through earlier.

"What's happening out there?!" Malana shouted through the howling winds.

It didn't take long for the answer to reveal itself, as from that glowing ball of light half-submerged in the sandy ground, a colossal being rose from it, a black jackal like myself but more muscularly built with scars covering his body and glowing red eyes. His long and narrow ears have decayed a little bit with several holes formed in them. This giant jackal has to be about 70 feet tall at least, clad with a long kilt that drapes to one side, mostly covering one leg while having some coverage of the other side with a hanging cloth hiding the groin. He also wears leather open-toed sandals certainly look worse for wear. He's armed with a very large bow staff that eerily resembles that giant scale I found where the Feather of Truth once resided.

"W-what is that?!" Calvin squeaked, shivering with fear. "T-That thing's huge!!"

Me, Sekhmet and Khufu knew exactly who this behemoth being was, and we all synchronized with conjuring the dreaded name of the all too familiar deity in our ancient language:

"God of Judgement..."

End of Part I