

# ~ Sex, Wives and Misunderstandings ~

by Ali Vali

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**Disclaimers:** First of all bad history so if you want to stick to the facts read Shakespeare but if you think it would have been interesting to have Ramses be a woman and fall in love with a Hebrew slave you've come to the right place. The characters themselves might remind you of certain people depicted on television, but ignore that fact for it is merely a coincidence. If you decide to sue though know that I am a poor person not worth your time and effort.

Now for the sex part, if you find that a relationship between two women distasteful, what can I tell you, I don't. But seriously if you are underage and live someplace where that is not allowed move on, literally.

This is the continuing story of Ramses and Sarah so you might want to read the other two stories, [To Capture A Heart](#) and [Promise Me Forever](#), before tackling this one. There is a little violence, but it will make you cheer and applaud so you won't mind.

I want to send out a very special thank you to my beta reader Jaden Rose. You are a special lady and I want to thank you for all your help. Thanks go out to Becky, Mel and Judy for your great comments on the story.

I also want to thank all the great bards and readers who sent me all that great mail on the first two stories. It was much appreciated.

Now sit back, enjoy the story and if you have something wonderful to say about it write to me at [terrali20@yahoo.com](mailto:terrali20@yahoo.com). If you have nothing nice to say then be fore warned that I probably know more curse words than you do so don't tempt me.

Lastly I want to thank the love of my life. I'm proud of your accomplishments and I'm proud to have you love me.

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Nina walked into the dark room carrying a fussy baby. She had tried to keep the young prince quiet as long as possible, giving his parents a chance to sleep, but he would not be put off any longer. Almost four moons old, Ram was spoiled from the attention he got from everyone that had cause to come in contact with him. Ram and his brother, Hawk, were both favorites of the palace servants. But it was difficult to get either of their attention when the pharaoh was with them. Both little boys were infatuated with the tall king and it pleased Nina to see that Ramses found time for each.

Walking silently on bare feet across the black marble floor to Sarah's side of the bed, Nina tried to wake the queen without waking Ramses. "Highness, there is someone here who's hungry."

Sarah's eyes were open, having heard Ram from the outer room. Trying to untangle herself from the large body next to her so that she could sit up, Sarah found Ramses only tightened her hold. Whispering Sarah said, "Love, let go I have to feed the baby." Nina handed Ram over and looked away from the bed as to not embarrass the obviously naked queen. The last glimpse she did see was of Sarah placing the baby to her breast to suckle and the pharaoh's arm thrown across the queen's lap.

Placing Ram to her right breast first, Sarah watched him as she rubbed Ramses's head to try and keep her asleep. The relaxing fingers of her wife were losing their fight to the baby kicks Ramses was getting to the back of the neck from Ram.

"I am beginning to think there is some conspiracy against my getting any sleep," the deep voice rumbled. Upon hearing it, Ram pulled away from Sarah and started squealing trying to get Ramses's attention.

"He can't help it, my warrior, he loves his papa and he misses you," said Sarah. She tried to get the baby interested in eating again to no avail; there was only one thing Ram was interested in now. Not that she could blame him, Ramses held a special power over her too.

"Misses me? I was walking around with him just two candle marks ago." Ramses sat up a little to look at their son who was now smiling. Taking him from Sarah, Ramses sat up and reclined against the headboard of the bed. Sitting him so that he was lying back on her upraised knees, Ramses gave him what he wanted. "Son, let's you and me have a talk about these late night visits. Your mother tells me I can't send you back down the Nile to the city, so we're stuck with you."

"I would dread the fate of anyone that tried to take this baby anywhere, sire," teased Sarah. She snuggled up to Ramses and watched the baby wave his hands trying to keep the pharaoh's attention on him. The older he got the more he looked like Ramses. The dark black hair with the bright blue eyes told Sarah that no matter how long their lives would be, this baby and Hawk would carry on their legacies for seasons to come.

"That's true but he doesn't know that," whispered Ramses. Secretly she loved the fact that both boys loved spending time with her. At first she had doubts as to what type of parent she would be, but with help from Sarah it was getting easier. What Ramses didn't know was that everyone who saw her with the two boys knew her secret. It was difficult to hide the love on her face. "Go on now, son, finish your breakfast and let's see if we can sleep till the sun comes up at least."

Moving behind Sarah, Ramses put her chin on the small blonde's shoulder so she could watch Sarah feed the baby. As much as the pharaoh was enjoying being a parent, being married to Sarah was still the one thing in her life that brought her the most enjoyment. Watching Sarah run her index finger over the baby's head, Ramses marveled at how lucky she was to have Sarah in her life and how much that life had changed in the short time the queen had been with her. Despite everything they had gone through, Sarah had given her nothing but love and acceptance. The queen would love Ramses no matter what her faults or shortcomings, and would do so till the end of their days.

"I love you, Sarah," whispered Ramses. Sarah had changed Ram to the other breast and Ramses could see that his eyes were getting heavy.

"Not that I am complaining, but what brought that on?" asked Sarah. She brought the baby up to her shoulder and waited for the big warm hand to come up and rub the baby's back, Sarah leaned back into her spouse. They worked as a team in almost all that they did, making them a guiding force for their people. Hearing the burp, Ramses got up and laid the prince in the small bed beside their own. Making sure that he was covered and comfortable she moved back to join Sarah.

"What brought it on is that fact that I love you, and you make me happy. The other reason is that you are truly beautiful, my love, so I thought it needed saying."

"Warrior, I have already married you so you don't have to keep turning my head," said Sarah as she rolled Ramses onto her back so she could lie on top of her.

"Well I could try going back to my somber, stoic side and cut out all the sweet talk," said Ramses with a sigh. She dropped her head onto the pillow under her head and dropped her arms from Sarah onto the bed.

"You do that, sire, and you will have a very upset woman on your hands," Sarah told her.

Moving up so that their faces were even, Sarah bit Ramses's bottom lip sucking it into her mouth. Sarah wouldn't go any further with Ram in the room but it was nice to see that she still had an effect on the pharaoh. As Ramses's hands started roaming over her back Sarah rolled off and handed the pharaoh her sleep shirt. This reminded Ramses of the only downside to having children in your life, her sex life was now one of planning instead of spontaneity.

Surprised that the sun was now up and there was no fussing coming from Ram, Ramses opened her eyes to look in that direction. Standing by the baby's bed making faces at him was Hawk. Seeing his big brother's antics was keeping Ram happy and cooing, so Ramses closed her eyes before the older of the two children saw her. Ramses stayed in that position just holding Sarah until she heard Nina come in.

"I see that both my little princes are awake. Let's go for a walk and give your parents the opportunity to sleep. Your brother had us up all through the night, so they deserve it." She picked up the baby from the bed and took hold of one of Hawk's hands and led them out of the room. Nina turned as they reached the door and winked at the twinkling blue eyes that shone back from the bed. "Yes, Prince Hawk, let's go for a very long walk," was the last thing Nina said as they cleared out of the room.

"Highness," Ramses said softly. She was kissing Sarah's neck trying to wake the young woman up.

"Love, stop it, Hawk should be here in a moment," whined Sarah.

"Your sons are out walking with Nin this morning and they just left," Ramses informed her. She bit down on Sarah's neck trying to get her to turn around.

"I see, a morning alone with you here in this big bed. Tell me, sire, any requests?" asked Sarah rolling over. It was a rare morning that they spent not in the company of their children so she was going to enjoy it.

Ramses was about to answer when Isa came into the room. Checking with the departing maid, Nina, Isa entered to relay a message from Denu. Sarah's mother was about to run from the room when she heard the groan coming from the pharaoh. If there was something the older woman had learned in her time in the palace, was that Ramses and her daughter kept each other very entertained. Entering their bedchamber was always a gamble as to what you would find if the two women didn't expect you.

Pushing Ramses off of her, Sarah asked her mother, "Good morning, mama, what's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, Sarah, I have a message from Denu for the pharaoh." Feeling the body next to hers sigh, Sarah rolled her eyes in exasperation. She would try again to get her mother to see Ramses as something other than ruler. Sarah would eventually convince her mother that Ramses was now a part of their family as well as they a part of the pharaoh's.

"Mama, I would think that after all this time, and considering we are joined, you could call Ramses by her name. It is our son's name and you have no trouble calling him by it."

"I'm sorry, sire, but there is still much that I fear and it is hard to get past but I will try if it makes you happy. I'm sorry to disturb you but Denu has headed for the fields already and wanted you to know they are starting the clearing today. Your horse and guards are waiting at the front of the palace. Shall I tell them you will be delayed,...Ramses?" Isa asked, as the last part of her question died on her lips. She fidgeted nervously waiting for a response. She finally relaxed when she saw the brilliant smile directed at her from the bed. *I can see Sarah why this one stole your heart*, thought the old woman as she shyly smiled back.

"No, Isa, I once told Hawk that responsibility comes before play when you are pharaoh. And unfortunately for me this morning I am pharaoh." In a whisper the pharaoh told Sarah, "If I don't get any time alone with you, I may have to start a war to relieve the pressure." Sarah blushed, hoping that her mother had not overheard Ramses. The tall king rolled to her feet giving her mother-in-law an eyeful of leg muscle along the way.

As Ramses walked further from the bed, the bigger the pout got on her young queen's face. Except for a few heated kisses, Sarah and Ramses never seemed to be able to get any further. Except for the time after Ram's birth they had not found the time for intimacy. After most days of constant feedings and running after Hawk, Sarah was too tired to think about making love no matter how much she wanted to. She missed that part of their relationship and she figured Ramses did too, considering the slump to her shoulders as she headed for the bathing chamber.

Ramses came out dressed in a white tunic that stopped inches above her knees carrying her

boots. Sitting on the bed again, the pharaoh noticed that her mother-in-law was still in the room picking up discarded clothing and empty water cups. Feeling Sarah press herself against her back, Ramses directed her conversation to Isa. "Isa, please don't feel that you need to do that, Sarah and I have servants that keep up these rooms. Why don't you sit with us and have breakfast before I have to go?"

"I don't mind, sire, it gives me something to do. Would you like for me to have something brought in for breakfast?" asked Isa. The arched dark brow that was pointed in her direction told her that she had forgotten her promise to use the pharaoh's name.

"Yes please, mother, make sure you tell them it is for three," answered Sarah from behind Ramses. She was enjoying the movement of muscle under the linen tunic as Ramses pulled on her boots and laced them. *Perhaps I'll take a long nap today and surprise her when she gets home*, thought Sarah. She watched her mother leave to summon a runner to the kitchens, so Sarah took the opportunity to give Ramses a taste of what was to come.

Moving around so that she was sitting in Ramses lap, Sarah ran her fingers through the thick black hair. Slowing scratching Ramses's scalp with her nails she felt them both moving back toward the bed. Sarah moved to straddle Ramses's waist once the pharaoh's back hit the bed. Running her fingers over the high cheekbones, Sarah watched as Ramses's eyelids fluttered closed. The two strong hands came up and cupped Sarah's bottom causing the small woman to moan and close her own eyes to the sensation.

"Kiss me, my love," requested Sarah in a low voice. The muscles in Ramses's neck strained but she brought her head up and granted the request. "I miss you, warrior, and I'm getting a little worked up myself from frustration. Don't be too long playing pharaoh today, love, I have plans for you tonight." With that said Sarah dipped her head again and kissed Ramses lips more gently to cool the desire Sarah saw in her eyes.

"Sarah, you are a cruel woman. I may die soon from wanting you," said Ramses. Maneuvering Sarah onto her lap again, Ramses reached for her wife's robe. As soon as it was on and tied Ramses scooped Sarah into her arms and addressed the woman just entering the room again. "Come, Isa, let's the three of us dine by the river this morning. Suddenly I am famished."

Isa sat and quietly ate her breakfast as she watched the pair in front of her. In her long life she had been silent in the presence of any of the pharaoh's men. Now with the pharaoh sitting before her feeding her daughter grapes, Isa was having trouble settling that picture in her mind with the stories she had heard.

Ramses's father had commanded respect through force, had been the rumors in the slave quarters. Isa had never been beaten but the slaves that lived near them that worked in the palace had told her stories all her life. The stories of Ramses's daughter, Hawk, had come to the village when the young woman hit the battlefield. Under her command, the old pharaoh had acquired more land and subjects than any ruler before him had. Isa had listened as the palace kitchen servants told her about the bloody path Hawk had cut through some of the battles she had fought in.

Trying hard not to stare, Isa looked at the subject of so many tales told at night around fires all over Egypt. Ramses was truly striking. The tan smooth skin pulled tight over muscle always had a healthy glow. The black hair, the older woman noticed, was always combed back from Ramses's face and curled slightly when it grew longer than the style the sire usually kept it. But it was the eyes. The eyes held the wisdom of the ages within their impossibly blue depths, and they always seemed to hold compassion in them. That was a riddle for Isa, the compassion. This woman who held Sarah in her lap was not who she expected, but would Ramses eventually revert back to who she was bred to be? If she did how could Sarah and the children pay that price?

"Mama, aren't you hungry?" asked Sarah as she ran her fingers through Ramses's hair again. It would be time for Ramses to leave soon and Sarah wanted the musk and citrus smell that always permeated the pharaoh's being to cling to her as well. The small woman was finding that the days when Ramses had to be away always dragged by, so any reminder of the pharaoh was welcomed.

"No, Sarah, I have eaten my fill. Could I get you or Ramses something else?" asked Isa. She cast her eyes down as the question had come out. The more time Isa spent in the powerful woman's presence, the more questions about her she formed in her mind.

"Yes, Isa, there is something I would like," said Ramses looking at Sarah as she said it. The king chuckled when the remark earned her a raised brow and a warning glare from the queen. Ignoring both she continued, "Please spend the day with my queen and my sons if you would. I am going to go and play in the mud so that the new fields will be ready for planting. We want the grain silos to be filled for the winter season." The pharaoh gave her wife a quick kiss before turning her attention to Isa.

Throwing her fear aside for a moment the old woman posed a question. "New silos for the gods of Egypt, sire?" *Their children went hungry at times so that the food the slaves grew with their sweat rotted in the temples for the gods. Did these people have no sense of justice and fairness? Sure Ram and Hawk had been saved from that life but what about the others that remained behind? Did they not deserve some form of kindness from the king of Egypt?*

"Do you not think the goddess Isis deserves to have food in her house, Isa?" asked Ramses. Her tone was even but the question was serious.

"I meant no disrespect, sire," pleaded Isa. The minute she allowed her anger to escape her lips, Isa realized her mistake. Thinking of nothing else, Isa threw herself down so that her face was on the pharaoh's feet. The old woman prayed that if she were to be beaten, it would not be in front of her daughter.

There was a moment of doubt in Sarah's heart and she stiffened when Ramses set her aside and moved toward her mother's crying form. As pharaoh it was Ramses's right to punish anyone that disrespected her, her wife hoped this would not be one of those times.

The hands that picked her up were strong but gentle, and the shoulder she was pressed against was broad. The pharaoh held the woman against her and let Isa cry away her fear before

proceeding. When she felt the long shuttered breath Sarah's mother expelled, Ramses used her fingers to dry the slightly wrinkled face. "Isa, I would never tell you to speak freely then beat you because you ask a question. Do you think me such a monster that I would do so in front of your child?" asked Ramses. Sarah watched her mother relax under the gentle stroking and the low tones Ramses usually reserved for their children.

"I'm sorry if I frightened you, I am used to dealing with my advisors. We seem to only converse with each other in questions. Isa, I live here," said Ramses sweeping her hand around. The moment the hand left her face, Isa strangely missed its comfort. "But I am not blind to the plight of my people. All of my people, Isa, so no the new silos are not for the gods. They are for the Hebrew people. I figure that with full bellies they will find the strength to carve at least one statue of me so that my wife and children will not forget me when I fade into the sand. Now why don't you and the queen call for a bath so that you can both relax and talk about what scares you both so much about me."

Isa went to move from Ramses's lap when the arms around her tightened again. "Remember, Isa, I mean you no harm. I swear it on the grave of my mother," whispered Ramses into her ear before letting her go and rising. Ramses bent and kissed Sarah before quickly turning and leaving. The royal guards that had been standing a distance from them followed the pharaoh out.

The look in the blue eyes told her wife that while she had tried to hide the fear, Ramses had seen it. The eyes that had always held such love for her, Sarah saw now held hurt. The comment Ramses uttered about talking to her mother about their fears cut straight to her heart. She went to run after Ramses when she ran into Nina instead coming out of their rooms.

"No let her go. Whatever the quarrel was about will die away in the mud of the Nile just let her be. She loves you, Sarah, that fact alone will bring her back to her senses," said Nina. She had seen Ramses pass her on the way out and immediately knew something was wrong. That grim face Ramses wore had not made an appearance since Sarah had come into their lives. Nina was surprised when her comment meant to make light of the situation instead made the queen fall against her and burst into tears. Looking behind Sarah, Nina could see that Isa was also crying but made no attempt to get up and join them.

"It's all right, child, Ramses is moody we both know that. Once she rides off in a fury and figures out what a fool she was for upsetting you she'll be back, I promise," said Nina. She ran her hands up and down Sarah's back trying to get the girl to calm down. Mentally she made a vow to have a talk with the pharaoh about how to deal with women who have recently given birth.

"It wasn't her, it was me," said Sarah. Her head was buried in Nina's neck and the thought that Ramses wouldn't come back kept repeating itself in her head and heart. She explained to Nina what had happened and watched the face of the old woman show more and more aggravation.

Nina led Sarah to sit with her mother amidst the empty dishes of their breakfast. As she remained standing Nina tried to clam down before she started talking. There was no sense in making matters worse. "Are you two daft?" she yelled making both women flinch. *Well so much for calm*, thought Nina. "You," Nina said pointing at Isa, "Have let the stories of old women with

nothing better to do rule your life for too long now, Isa. Honestly, woman, you have seen Ramses with Sarah and the children? How could you think that she would just snap and beat you?" Nina's volume was getting louder. "And you," she turned her finger toward Sarah, "Have no excuse. That woman that just left here can be an idiot at times, but she would rather fall on her sword than to bring harm to you or your family, Sarah, you know that. What were you thinking? Ramses has never raised a hand to any slave in this palace or anywhere else, and you think she would start with your mother?"

"The only two that she fights and beats up on here are my sons, and they are giving as good as they get when they spar. I have watched you push her away for weeks now, and I have seen her show incredible patience because she loves you. Trust me it is not something that comes easy for the ruler of Egypt, patience, but for you she has it in abundance."

"Do you want to leave here, Sarah? Have you changed your mind after listening to the stories of your mother? When has Ramses ever given you cause to fear her?" Nina asked the questions without giving either of them a chance to answer.

She turned around and headed back to the palace to find Corby. Maybe he could catch up with the pharaoh and bring her back before this situation got any further out of hand. The way Nina felt about Ramses, she was ready to beat Isa herself for making those types of assumptions about the young woman. Nina had not spent most of her life helping to raise Ramses without knowing how this had hurt the pharaoh, especially when it came to Sarah's assumptions. Those, the maid knew, would be the hardest for Ramses to get over.

Heading toward Corby's rooms, Nina guessed that he would be glad to leave them. His wounds were healing nicely but Ramses would not return him to duty until they had completely closed. "God, Denu, my boy, I hope you had a good breakfast this morning," the old woman muttered. In a bad mood, Ramses could work a mule into the ground.

Sarah watched Nina go and thought about what she had said. Was she pushing Ramses's advances away? *I should have stayed in bed with her this morning and sent the world away*, thought Sarah. What Nina and Ramses didn't know was that Sarah had spent weeks after Ram's birth listening to the servants talk about Ramses's past conquests when they thought the queen was sleeping. She had tried to ignore them, but Sarah had started to have doubts as to how Ramses would act now that she was saddled with children. Sarah saw that Ramses loved the boys, but still those nagging voices wouldn't go away. Like Nina had told her mother, it was time to let the fears go and just live. Ramses love her and desired her, so it was time to concentrate on those two things.

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The pounding of the hooves on the hard sand gave way to the quieter ride over the grass two leagues out of the city. The summer palace was located next to the Nile, in front of it was located the city and away from it were the agricultural fields that supplied them all with food for the year. Every year the bounty grown throughout the summer season was harvested before their departure, and sent back to the city by barge. This year, because of predicted favorable

conditions, Ramses was going to expand the land that was currently used so that materials needed to rebuild the Hebrew compound would be available. She had assigned Denu and herself to oversee the work, assuring that the work would be done quickly.

The recent rains had made the ground soft and muddy and as soon as she slowed the stallion she was riding on, Ramses could hear the sound of grunting men and the ring of axes as they fell trees. Throwing her reins to one of the guards that traveled with her, Ramses set out to find Denu and see what had been accomplished since he had arrived that morning. She saw him standing talking with Habish, pointing to where the irrigation trenches needed to go she assumed. There was a group of slaves waiting behind them with shovels standing knee deep in mud.

"Sire, don't come any closer, the mud here will swallow your boots. The men have started on clearing the trees the advisors recommended and we are waiting for the animals to arrive so that we can start digging out the trunks and roots. Your tent is waiting for you where the ground is not so saturated," yelled Denu. Ramses nodded and turned headed for the area where the trees were coming down. She was in no mood to sit under a tent and brood.

The old man in charge of supplies was shocked when the pharaoh walked up and requested an axe. Bowing deeply at the waist Rommel headed into the tent to do her bidding. "Would you like some leather strips for your hands too, sire?" asked the old man. When she nodded her head he handed them over. Putting one of the other men in charge, Rommel followed Ramses to see what she was going to do. His son was working on tree duty and if the pharaoh was headed there, he wanted to make sure his son didn't get into any trouble.

The crew worked in pairs chopping away at the base of the trees in perfect synch. Only one man worked alone but his bulk and glistening muscles showed that it didn't matter if there was anyone there to help him. He had learned hard work and farming from his father, who because of his long service now got to sit in a cool tent while others did the work. The man stopped for a moment and watched the tall woman wrap her hands with the leather strips that prevented blisters and wondered why she was there. The clothes she wore were not the clothes of a slave, and there were no women working here except to bring water.

"Need some help?" asked Ramses. She had thrown off her half cloak and stood before him in only the tunic she had put on that morning.

"If you are offering," he told her and waited for her to make the first swing. The tree he had started on was big, but soon they fell into the rhythm of those around them and they could hear the splintering that told them the giant would come down.

Denu stood and watched as many of the slaves did once they figured out who the new worker was. They moved to the next tree and started chopping without conversation, only a smile of challenge to see who would want to stop first. When they moved to the third tree, the others were cheering them on as the sweat and dirt poured down the two strong bodies. As the third tree fell the man called for a water girl, figuring that the stranger could go all day and not ask for a break. Perhaps she was a noble that was sent here as punishment for some crime against the pharaoh.

"Sire, your lunch is ready if you would like to take a break from your labors," said the servant hesitantly. She wasn't sure why Ramses was cutting down trees, nor was she sure that the pharaoh wanted to be interrupted to eat.

"Thank you I'll be there in a moment. Set another place for my friend here, he deserves a meal as well I believe," Ramses pointed to her partner. "What's your name, man?" she asked after taking a drink of water that the servant had brought with her.

"I am Samuel, son of Rommel."

"Samuel, that is my son's name though now he is known as Hawk, prince of Egypt. Would you like to eat with me, Samuel, son of Rommel?" asked Ramses. It was when she said Hawk's name that the slave in front of her realized just who this woman was, and the fact that he had not addressed her as sire when she had spoken to him.

"Sire, forgive me I did not realize who you were," said Samuel as he fell to one knee.

"What is it with people falling at my feet today?" asked Ramses out loud to no one in particular.

"Could it be the good looks and perfect muscle tone, sire?" asked Corby from behind her. Nina had been right and he more than happily had jumped at the chance to leave the confines of the palace for the day to check on Ramses once his mother had asked. "No I believe they find me intimidating, Corby, something to fear. Maybe I'll take up the whip since everyone thinks I wield it so easily anyway," she said in jest. The kneeling man in front of her tightened the muscles in his back when the comment came out of her mouth. She turned away from him for a moment and favored her friend with a smile. The anger of the morning had vanished in the exertion of the morning. "Stand up, Samuel, let's eat."

As they headed for the pharaoh's tent, Ramses noticed the old man that had given her the axe standing to one side looking at the big man that followed behind her. She stopped and motioned him closer. "Let me guess, Rommel father of Samuel?" asked Ramses.

"Yes, sire, I am Rommel. Please forgive my son for any wrongdoing, he is strong but weak minded," said the old man.

"Samuel has been sentenced to..." Ramses let a long pause hang before continuing, "Having lunch with me, Rommel, would you care to join us?" asked the amused pharaoh. Perhaps she had acted too rash that morning if these people were any example of how the slaves thought of her.

*God whatever happened this morning sure has left her in a strange mood,* thought Corby. He walked along side Ramses headed toward the command tent in the distance. The two slaves followed behind them, both looking a little confused as to what was happening.

Habish and Denu were already seated when they arrived and were filling their plates from the platters that lined the table. Habish recognized the two men with his daughter-in-law and nodded in their direction. Sarah's father really didn't know anything about farming, but had volunteered

to help clear the new field instead of staying behind in the city. After watching his comrades working all morning, he was glad that he chipped away at rock all day long instead of laboring in the fields.

The older man with sandy blonde hair had watched his daughter's mate, chopping down trees for the last two candle marks and found that he was starting to grow fond of this woman. Now that he and Isa were living in the palace for the summer, Habish and Ramses found quite a few occasions to sit and talk. She recounted the battles she had been in and he told her of the life of a slave.

Over many cups of wine over the months they had slowly built a friendship that Habish had come to enjoy. Ramses was funny and smart allowing Habish to see that his grandchildren were in the best of hands for their future. He had not approached her that morning when she had arrived because he could see that Ramses was upset, but now as she asked Rommel and his son about their duties, Habish saw that whatever it had been had passed.

By the end of lunch, Rommel and Samuel had enough stories to tell for many nights to come. The pharaoh had laughed with them and sat by passively while Denu and Corby told humorous tales about their childhood. As they stood to go back to work, the mules and other work animals arrived from the city stables to start clearing out the tree trunks and roots.

"Come on, boys, let's go grab an axe and lend a hand," said Ramses as she stood from the table. She had planned on helping out for a while longer then heading back to the palace to have a talk with Sarah and her mother.

Habish walked out with her heading to the work area intent on lending a hand. They worked as a team on the first large trunk they came across securing it with rope and tying that to the yolk of the oxen that waited patiently in the sun. Ramses put Corby in charge of the team while she, Habish and Denu waited to cut away the roots that were pulled up.

"Ha," called Corby to the animals. They strained but the wood wouldn't budge, so the work team behind him abandoned their axes and picked up shovels. "It works better if you put your backs into it," commented Corby from beside the oxen. It only got him three unamused faces looking back at him.

After some time they had exposed some of the roots and then started cutting away finally getting the trunk to move and finally break free. As Corby guided the animals to the fire the slaves had started to get rid of the roots, a glob of mud hit him in the back of the head.

"Who did that?" he demanded as he felt the hot mud run down his back. Three innocent faces looked back at him, all equally covered in mud.

Once he stopped the team and released the reins the fight was on. The slaves that surrounded them stopped their own work to look on as the pharaoh and her three friends acted like children. When the first worker got hit with a mud ball it was a free for all. After they were all tired of throwing the black oozing mud there wasn't one person that wasn't covered in it. There was not

one patch on the pharaoh's tunic that showed the original white color, but Ramses was not concerned as her laughter rang out through the area. That one moment allowed all of the workers there to see a side of Ramses that Denu and Corby knew didn't come out often in public. The child the pharaoh had been would never fully die away. That had always been the main difference between Ramses and her father.

They stayed long past the time Ramses had planned to return to the palace, but in the end they had gotten more accomplished than the work supervisors had hoped. Perhaps a king that could outwork all of them, and showed that she was a proficient with work tools as she was with a sword, inspired the workers to go beyond their normal limits. The slaves could see why men followed her into battle without question. Ramses was a leader of action, not just orders.

She sat with the men around the fires that were burning to get rid of the debris and had a cup of wine to try and numb the muscles in her back. When one cup became five, Ramses and Habish were well on their way to having a good time, with Corby and Denu not far behind.

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At the palace Sarah sat with her mother all day and worried about the events of the morning. Now that she thought about it, it had been silly on her part to think that Ramses would have raised a hand to her mother, and she planned on apologizing to Ramses as soon as she came back. After a long bath and a long talk, Sarah had gotten her mother to see that the pharaoh was what she seemed. A loving and caring partner and parent who, like Nina had said, would give her life to keep her family safe and happy.

When the sunset came with no sign of Ramses, the queen began to worry that maybe Ramses wasn't coming back that night. Corby had left just after Ramses and he had yet to return too, so Sarah didn't worry that something had happened to them, just that Ramses wasn't ready to come back and talk to her.

Hawk had been upset all day that his papa had left him behind and Ram had been fussy just to be fussy. *Maybe I could just start this day over somehow*, thought Sarah. She had finally gotten the children to sleep a candle mark ago and was pacing their bedroom waiting for Ramses to come back. *Perhaps a walk to the front of the palace is in order.*

Her mother was headed in that direction when she walked out of their apartments, so they made the trip together. When they reached the columns of the front of the palace Sarah saw Nina standing there with her arms crossed shaking her head.

"What's wrong, Nina?" asked Sarah.

"You are about to find out why I have gray hair," was all Nina was willing to offer. The singing coming from the bottom of the steps gave Sarah and Isa their first clue.

"Is that papa's voice?" asked Sarah.

"I believe it is, but I don't ever remember him singing this song," said Isa.

"It is an old and disgusting soldier's drinking song, and I have a feeling I know who taught it to him. Thank God the children are sleeping, no need for them to start learning bad habits at such an early age," said Nina. She watched as Ramses and her sons slapped Habish in the back when he finished his part of the song. The mud had long since dried leaving all four looking like bog monsters with their hair sticking out at strange angles.

"Oh my," was all Sarah said as she looked down on the foursome. They were laughing now and sharing a wineskin taking a rest from their singing. The uncoordinated motions of her father that left more wine in Ramses's hair than in her mouth told the queen that the group was drunk and getting more so by the moment.

"SHHHH," said Ramses with her finger up to her lips. "We don't want to wake up anybody, boys. Nin will be mad if she finds out we got drunk and Sarah will be... Habby, buddy, what will Sarah be? I've never gotten drunk with her around before," asked Ramses.

"Ramses, you just have to know how to handle women," said Habish, slapping the pharaoh on the back. He then had to pick her up off the ground as the two brothers held onto each other and laughed that much harder.

"How's that, Habby?" asked Ramses. Her father in law was busy trying to brush her off after knocking her down, which in light of all the mud on the four of them made no sense.

"You are the man, well you are not a man but you know what I mean. That makes you the ruler of your hearth, only you are the ruler of everyone's hearth so you understand what I'm saying. So you can't get in trouble. Get me?" asked Habish.

"I think so," said Ramses. Her alcohol-fogged brain was trying to wrap itself around what Habish was saying but it was getting harder. Just agreeing with him seemed like the easiest thing to do.

"Oh, great ruler of Egypt and master of your hearth, don't you think its time for you all to come inside?" asked Nina in a sing songy voice. They looked up and saw all three women standing in a row with arms crossed and feet tapping.

"Then again, Ramses, silence is good too," said Habish looking at Isa.

Sarah peeled the smelly muddy tunic off of Ramses body and threw it into the corner of the room. She was having a hard time trying to keep the smile off her face as she remembered her parents head off toward their rooms and Nina leading her sons off in the opposite direction, an ear in each hand. "Love, do you think you could sit down for a moment so that I could get your boots off?" she asked. The mud caking the ties were going to make it an impossible task Sarah figured, but they had to come off before she could put Ramses in the water.

"You're talking to me?" asked Ramses.

"Why wouldn't I be?" replied Sarah. She was tugging on the leather ties with no luck until Ramses produced a dagger and cut through them on both boots.

"Well that was easier than trying to get them untied," commented Sarah.

"Love, what did you do to your hands?" asked Sarah. They had gotten into the bath together and that is the part she had started with first.

"Just working today. I tell you I would rather fight a war than have to move anymore of those trees." Ramses watched as Sarah worked to uncover more skin. The body of her naked wife was getting the pharaoh's attention. "You're so beautiful," said Ramses with reverence. She looked at Sarah at times and found that she fell in love all over again. Ramses had been blessed when the aim of a small boy had gone terribly off track.

"I'm sorry about this morning, love, I promise that I will make it up to you," said Sarah softly. She looked up from washing one of Ramses's arms when she got no answer to her apology to find that the pharaoh had fallen asleep. "Too much work, and too much wine for you tonight, my love. Now how am I suppose to get you out of here by myself, warrior?" said Sarah followed by a laugh. She finished wiping away the mud and tried waking the slumbering woman leaning against the side of the sunken tub.

"Love, come on now I can't carry you out of here," Sarah said softly. She had learned that Ramses was best not woken up in a harsh way.

"You want me to carry you out of here?" asked Ramses now seemingly wide-awake. She stood and pushed her hair back and then reached for Sarah. Pressing her queen against her, Ramses kissed Sarah passionately and carried her out of the bathing chamber out to the bed.

"Wait we're all wet," said Sarah when their lips parted.

"You have no idea," replied Ramses. She put Sarah down and kissed her again. When the small woman's mouth opened to her, Ramses took it as an invitation to keep going. She stretched her long frame along side Sarah pulling the small woman on top of her. Ramses could feel Sarah's breathing quicken through their kiss as she kneaded the cheeks of her bottom. Sarah put her hands along side Ramses's face and kissed her back when she felt the body under hers go slack. The wind in Ramses's sails had given out for the night and Sarah would have cried had the situation not been so funny.

Nina walked in with Ram to find a wet, naked and sleeping pharaoh next to the queen who was sitting up wrapped in a sheet waiting for the hungry baby. "I'm sure I'll have to apologize again in the morning, Nina, but I think things are fine now, just a small misunderstanding," said Sarah reaching for her son. She pulled the sheet that was partially covering Ramses up further when she heard the quieter and lighter footsteps that followed Nina's. Looking at the doorway, Sarah saw Hawk sleepily rubbing his eyes and holding a small blanket.

"Mama, is papa back yet? She missed our sparring session today," said the small boy for the

hundredth time that day.

"Come here, Hawk, your papa just got back. You have to be quiet though she's sleeping," said Sarah. She noticed that Nina tried to hide her smile over that comment as the little boy crawled into bed with his parents.

Despite the day, Sarah smiled now that she had her family all together again. Hawk had crawled over Ramses so that he was between them, and then curled up to Ramses's side and went to sleep. Ram was suckling at her breast, and through it all, the pharaoh slept. When the baby finished, Sarah laid him on Ramses's chest then threw her arm over all of them closed her eyes on the day, and went to sleep.

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By morning, Ramses was lying on her side with Sarah's back pressed against her still asleep. Lying on top of the sheet and pressed into Sarah were Ram and Hawk, both covered in the blanket that Hawk had brought in with him the night before. Cracking open one blue eye, Ramses immediately closed it. The light in the room was enough to make her groan out in pain. It was a close competition to see what hurt most her head from the wine she consumed, or her body from the work she'd done. The laughter coming from the woman in front of her made Ramses risk opening her eyes again.

"What is so funny and do you have to be so loud?" she asked Sarah. It was nice to wake up with the feel of her naked wife pressed against her. There hadn't been much of that in their mornings together lately, and Ramses missed it.

"You are what's so funny, sire. How's your head this morning?" asked Sarah more quietly this time. She had started to run her fingers through Hawk's hair trying to keep him asleep a while longer. She had been awake with Ram just before the sunrise so Sarah knew he would sleep for at least another couple of candle marks.

"I feel like I rode back last night being dragged behind my horse if you really want to know. Now I remember why I don't drink this much very often. Gods the inside of my mouth tastes like mud," said Ramses with disgust. Securing the sheet around them so it wouldn't slip off if one of the children woke up, Sarah turned around and faced Ramses. Not caring what Ramses's mouth tasted like, her wife gave her a rousing good morning kiss.

"I'm sorry my love for yesterday morning. I apologized last night but you fell asleep on me," Sarah said softly.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, my queen. Sarah, despite what Nin says about me, I'm not an idiot. I know where you grew up compared to what I grew up to be. Your fear isn't that farfetched, but I'm not my father. I loved him the gods know, but I didn't agree with everything he did. Some of those stories your mother heard are no doubt true and only time will show the both of you that I'm not like that. I really was kidding with her yesterday, it just came back to bite me I guess. I love you, Sarah. You and the children are my life, you have nothing to fear

from me." Ramses bent her head down and kissed Sarah again. "I miss you, wife," she whispered in the woman's ear.

"I miss you too, warrior, more than you know."

"Mama, is papa back yet?" the sleepy voice interrupted them.

"Yes, son, papa is right here," whispered Ramses over Sarah's shoulder.

"I missed you yesterday, papa, you missed our sparring lesson." Hawk looked through the hair that had fallen on his face and plastered a well-timed pout on his lips. If there more fun to be had outside the palace today he wanted to be sure he was sitting on the horse with Ramses when it pulled away that morning.

"I think I just heard that," laughed Ramses. In a short time, both son and mother had learned that a pout went a long way in getting the pharaoh to do their bidding if it looked pathetic enough.

"I'll make you a bargain, Hawk, you let me lie here for a little while longer and I'll take you all out for a picnic by the new work sight. With any luck there will be another mud fight today and we can practice our sparring there," said Ramses. The little boy lay there pretending to contemplate the offer, but couldn't hold out too long before the smile split his face.

"I'm sorry I missed that if that happened, papa. Will you tell me about it?" asked Hawk.

"I have a better idea, go and ask your grandfather Habish since he was the one who started it," answered Ramses. That comment got even Sarah to look at her in surprise. She hadn't grown up for long in her father's house, but she remembered him to be a serious and stern man. Starting mud fights was certainly not in character for him.

Hawk crawled over both of them and hit the floor on the other side of Ramses so that he could run out of the room. When left alone with only his two guards, Hawk took those opportunities to explore the palace. Finding the apartments his grandparents occupied would not be a problem.

"One down and one to go," said Ramses with a laugh in her voice. Placing a pillow on the other side of the baby to make sure he wouldn't fall out of the bed, Sarah turned around and faced Ramses. "That was pretty sneaky, sire," teased Sarah.

"Yeah, that's why they gave me those nifty scepters and the crown, for my sneaky ways. Do you by any chance have any remedies for a headache?" asked Ramses. Just as Sarah was about to answer Nina walked in with two maids loaded down with breakfast. The smell of roasted meat added another ailment to Ramses's headache and the pharaoh barely made it out of bed and out to the bathing chamber where she promptly threw up in a water bucket.

"I suggest that you turn your eyes to the floor if you would like to keep your jobs here and not be placed out at the new field they are clearing as of now," said Sarah from the bed. She had noticed that the two young and beautiful maids had eyed Ramses naked body all the way into the other

room.

Not wanting another misunderstanding, Nina had the girls place the trays down and head back into the kitchen. It was interesting to watch Sarah come into her own and start to wield her power and command respect. Some of the palace servants had underestimated her and were quickly learning that the queen born a slave would not let anyone or anything stand in the way of her happiness. To Nina that merely translated into the queen getting her feathers ruffled when anyone's eyes lingered too long on the pharaoh.

"Nin, get my sword for me," ordered Ramses as she walked back toward the bed. Her skin had taken on a slightly greenish tint and it felt cold and clammy to the maid.

"Why?" asked Nina.

"So you can kill me now and put me out of this misery I'm feeling this morning," answered the pharaoh.

"Oh no, what you need is a good hearty meal," declared Nina. She and Sarah laughed as that comment got Ramses to run back in to the bucket.

Once the retching had stopped in the other room they heard Ramses bellow, "You are both evil women."

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"I don't know if I want to go out to where the men are working, mama," said Hawk. He was sitting next to his mother out by the river having lunch. Lying in front of them was his baby brother dressed only in his bottom wrap taking a nap. The canopy that the servants had put up left them to enjoy the slight breeze while sitting in the shade. Both Ramses and his grandfather had stayed in with some illness they had gotten yesterday at the new field.

"I'm sure that you will be fine, Hawk, you won't get whatever is ailing your papa today I promise. You will quickly learn that some wounds are self inflicted and by allowing yourself to make mistakes will be the only way to learn not to do them," said Sarah.

"I don't understand, mama," said Hawk looking up at her.

"That's all right, one day you will. It's just that your papa and grandfather aren't perfect and they learned that yesterday. Unfortunately for both of them they are paying the price for that today, but by tomorrow they will be up and throwing mud with everyone else, you just wait."

They finished their meal and sat watching Ram until he woke up. Heading back to their quarters so that Sarah could feed him, they found Ramses up and getting dressed. There were dark circles under her eyes but she was making an effort to get moving and not waste the entire day lounging in bed. Kissing Sarah goodbye, the pharaoh took Hawk into the weapons room for their daily practice rounds, after working with her almost everyday the boy was getting rather good at

swinging a staff.

They had progressed from the learning of the moves he would have to know to engage someone, to the point of sparring with one another. It would be years before Hawk could match Ramses overwhelming power, but the large warrior patiently explained that speed and a small size sometimes made all the difference. For the sword he would need muscle to take down an opponent but first must come form and skill. Those would be the difference behind the brawn he would someday attain.

As they moved around the open room they talked about the friends Hawk had made around the palace and the teachers that were providing the rest of his education. As a prince of Egypt, Hawk would have to know much more than how to swing a sword. Ramses made it clear that his first course of battle must always be with his words rather than his steel. It was the type of ruler she was and the type of man she wanted him to be.

He was on the path to be pharaoh, and Ramses had not varied from that course in case the dream Sarah had had about her mother was wrong. Ramses would not force him into the position but she did want him to be ready if it was what he desired. She was about to teach him a new defensive move when they were interrupted by one of the male servants that worked in the palace.

"Sire, the queen wishes to know if you will be much longer? Prince Ram is napping and Prince Hawk is scheduled for his afternoon lessons shortly, so she would like for you to join her," said the man from a bowed position.

"Tell the queen I'll be there shortly after I walk Hawk to his lesson," she replied. The thoughts of why Sarah wanted her to join her were already dancing in her head as she stood in a combative stance. It was those same thoughts that prevented her from seeing the smaller staff whizzing toward her head, and it came as a brief surprise when it connected with an audible crack.

Ramses never heard the frantic, "Mama," that came out of Hawk's mouth as she fell to the floor in a heap. Nor did she remember being carried back to their rooms by four of the palace slaves that answered her son's calls.

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Relief flooded Sarah's face when the two blue eyes fluttered open. "Are you all right, love?" she asked the pharaoh. Sarah could tell by the way that Ramses was moving her eyes around the room she was trying to figure out what had happened, and how she had ended up back in their room. "You know, when I asked you to join me earlier, I meant that you should be conscious when you arrived. If the enemy ever finds out about Hawk you had better sleep with an eye open, my love. All these heroic stories I've read about you taking out entire armies makes me wonder if someone didn't take creative license. So far Hawk has cut you open with a rock and knocked you on your back with a little stick," teased the queen.

A smile came across the pharaoh's face after she remembered what had happened. Her son had

managed to do something Denu and Corby had tried to do for years in their all out sparring sessions. If the knot on the front of her head didn't hurt so much she would have gotten up and congratulated him for his hit. "I'll have to give him a gold piece for his victory when my head stops hurting," rasped Ramses.

"A gold piece? He thinks you are going to send him packing after what happened, so that will be a relief to him," said Sarah. She had finally had to let Nina attend to Ramses while she calmed the little prince down. As he ran ahead of the men that had carried Ramses back into the room, he had clung to his mother telling Sarah that he had killed his papa.

"No, he got in a good one while I was busy thinking about you," admitted Ramses. "Why don't you go and get him and I'll have a talk with him," said Ramses.

"I'm sure he'll be thrilled to know that you're awake," said Sarah heading to the billowing sheers that hung along the columns that faced the water. Hawk was sitting out there with her mother waiting until Sarah said it was all right to come in and see his papa.

"Hawk. Come on, son, it's all right," said Sarah. Ramses could see the outline of Sarah's body through the thin sleeping shift she wore as she bent to talk to Hawk and it made her heart rate go up. The headache she had now would definitely interfere with the plans she had for the small queen later.

"Papa," said Hawk in a very low voice. The small boy had never thought he would ever connect with any part of the woman's body much less her head, so when he had and he had watched her fall to the ground it sent a shock wave of panic through his heart.

Hawk never wanted to do anything that would make his papa send he and his family away. Ever since they had come to live with Ramses, he had forgotten what it was like to live with constant fear. The big woman that had married his mother was nice to him and she cared about what he thought and did. Would she still feel that way now that he had hit her? He hoped that she knew it was an accident and he hadn't meant it.

"Come up here where I can talk to you, Hawk," said Ramses. She patted the space on the bed where Sarah usually slept. The queen had moved around to her other side and sat on the edge of the bed, leaning her body into Ramses's. The little boy sat down across from his parents and looked at both of them in turn turning to gauge what the outcome of what had happened would be. Before she started talking Ramses opened her palm so that Sarah could put something into it, but before Hawk could see what it was she closed her fingers over it.

"You got in a good one today, son, and I think that deserves some recognition, don't you?" asked the pharaoh in a serious voice.

"Papa, I didn't mean it, I didn't mean to hurt you," said Hawk with tears in his eyes.

"Son, I'm not mad at you, I'm proud of you. Hawk, you will grow up to be a fine warrior and you started to show just how good today. You knocked down the one person that has never fallen in

front of anyone before, so here something that you can remember the day with," Ramses told him as she handed over the gold coin that bore her likeness.

Hawk held it up and smiled at her through his tears. No one except his mother had been proud of him before. With no concept of money he didn't know what the coin represented but he would keep it for the rest of his life because his papa had given it to him.

"Can I go and show it to Denu?" asked Hawk. The trepidation that he had felt outside waiting to see Ramses had vanished leaving the happy little boy that she had come to love.

"Yes but tell him only you get those if you knock me down, nobody else. That's all that I need is for him and that brother of his coming in there and trying to take my head off to make a gold coin," Ramses said softly to Sarah. The queen laughed and leaned forward to kiss her son before he scrambled off the bed.

Finding themselves alone for the first time in two days the pharaoh pulled her wife down for a kiss and felt the small soft body drape itself over her chest. One of Sarah's hands closed over a breast and Ramses could feel her nipple getting harder under the queen's manipulations. *Maybe my headache isn't that big a deal*, thought Ramses as her body started to enjoy the reaction Sarah was bringing forth.

"Pardon the intrusion, sire, but the Regent Belizar has arrived for your annual dinner with him. I put him in the outdoor dining area if that's all right and told him you were slightly delayed but would be with him directly. Will there be anything else?" asked Nina. She stood by the door and waited for the explosion.

She knew that Ramses hadn't been paying attention when they had gone over the planning for this seasonal meeting. Belizar was a pompous ass in Nina's opinion, but his village provided the realm with wine so Ramses was willing to put up with him once a season to keep the peace between them. The man was slow to understand that there was only one pharaoh and it wasn't him.

"What are you talking about, Nin?" asked Ramses still not paying attention. The look on Sarah's face was winning any competition for attention.

"Dinner - Belizar - tonight. What part of that don't you understand?" asked Nina.

"That's tonight?" yelled Ramses.

"Yes."

"And he's here already?"

"Yes."

"Go and put him at the outside dining area and tell him I'll be there as soon as I can," said

Ramses. This was not what she wanted to do on an evening when her body felt like it had been run over by her chariot.

"What a great idea. Why didn't I think of it?" said Nina. The sarcasm wasn't lost on Sarah who had been paying attention.

She rose off the bed and pulled Ramses up with her. Sarah figured the sooner they started with this dinner the sooner they could get back into bed. All that was really left to do was drag Ramses out there since she and Nina had arranged the entire affair earlier in the week.

Sitting in one of the room's chairs drinking a cup of the wine Belizar's region provided, Ramses waited for Sarah to finish dressing. As queen the young woman was expected to present herself in a certain way at these things, but no matter how she looked Ramses always thought of her as regal. Sarah had been beautiful when she had found her in rags all those moons ago but she had bloomed under Nina's tender hand in the palace, thought Ramses.

Her hair had turned a lighter shade of reddish blonde, as her skin had tanned a bit from spending time with Ramses in the sun. When the opportunity presented itself Ramses liked to take her out on the water in a small boat she owned. It had been a gift from her father before he died and the small woman loved being alone with her king. It didn't matter to her that another vessel full of soldiers followed at a distance when they did get to go, just as long as Ramses held her and the wind was in their hair she was happy.

After the birth of Ram, Sarah's body had softened from when they first met, but it still remained breathtaking. Her breasts were fuller from the milk they contained but the abdomen had returned to the same flat surface it had been when they first met. The thought of Sarah's attributes brought a smile to Ramses's face and that is how the queen found her when she stepped back into the room.

"Ready?" Sarah asked. They had both dressed to their stations but in light of the warm weather they were both barefooted, giving them both an exotic look. Ramses had on a white short tunic of heavy linen belted at the waist and trimmed with leather. The belt at her waist held a dagger with her hawk emblem on the hilt. Sarah stepped out in a light blue gown the dragged the floor slightly and Nina had pulled her hair up with an ivory comb. Small tendrils of hair had fallen out softening the look of the style. The queen could feel the burning in her cheeks as the pharaoh stared at her with a hungry look in the blue eyes. When Ramses bestowed these looks it did wonders for her insecurities as a mate.

"I'm ready, my queen, unfortunately for me it is not to have dinner with the ass Belizar," said Ramses. She had stepped forward and taken Sarah's hand so that she could place a kiss on the back of her fingers.

"It is unfortunate for both of us, my love," said Sarah.

As they made their way out hand in hand to the dining area that had been set up by the banks of the Nile, Sarah pulled them to a stop. The pharaoh looked at her in question and answered the

queen's smiles with one of her own. The guards that followed them looked away for a moment as the pharaoh bent her head to kiss Sarah. The love the couple shared made the men all wish for the day they found a woman that would look at them the way the queen looked at their ruler.

"Love, why don't you go ahead and I'll be there in a moment. I want to check on Hawk and Ram before I go out and make sure they are situated for the night. I fed the baby so he should hold out until we're done, but I wanted to see if our staff champion is doing all right and there are no bad feelings left because of what happened today," said Sarah. She placed a soft kiss on the inviting lips above her one more time before moving toward the palace again.

"Don't take too long and kiss the boys goodnight for me. The only thing that will make this evening bearable will be the fact that I get to stare at you all night instead of listening to Belizar drone on about himself. I love you, my queen," Ramses told her as she bowed in the queen's direction. With a quick flick of the hand by the pharaoh two of the guards broke from the formation and followed the small woman inside. After what had happened before Ram's birth, Ramses was not taking any chances with her family's safety.

"Sire, how good of you to join us," said Belizar when the pharaoh walked up. As was customary for these dinners, most of Ramses's advisors were present, as well as some of the court. The low tables surrounded in large soft pillows were loaded down with food and wine but no one touched anything until the hosts for the evening arrived.

"It's good to be missed, Belizar. I hope this new season finds you and your family well," commented Ramses. Belizar bowed his head only slightly to acknowledge her greeting then straightened the ring on his finger before continuing. Before Ramses's father had sent her to their region to quell rebel uprisings, Belizar's family had been the ruling family. He and his family still lived in opulence, but the reality was that he was a subject of the pharaoh just as much as the girls serving his wine were.

"Yes it has been a good year for my grapes," said the portly man. One of the reasons most of the regents in the area that were left to run their areas didn't mind Ramses authority was that she rarely used it to intimidate. Her rule kept the peace within the realm and opened lines of trade within the cities under her control. Tonight though flexing a little muscle was called for to put this man back in his place.

"Your grapes, Belizar? I was under the impression that they were my grapes," said Ramses arching an eyebrow in Belizar's direction. The fact that the idiot had not tacked on sire at the end of his statement had not escaped her attention either.

"My mistake, Ramses, of course they are your grapes as anyone here will attest to. I am merely a servant of the realm living only to serve you pharaoh," taunted Belizar. He saved his rancor and hate for their arrangement for this one night a season. It bothered him more that Ramses never let his remarks ever get to her, than the fact she owned the land that had been in his family for generations. There was that and the laws she had put in place about the treatment of slaves. If he wanted to kill someone of no value, what business was it of hers?

Those around the table rose and bowed as the queen made her way to the table. With his back to them, Belizar did not notice their actions as he too took in the entrance of the beautiful woman followed by two royal guards. His gossips from the palace had not told him of any new sex slaves that Ramses had acquired, so Belizar wondered who the woman was. Brushing past the pharaoh, Belizar headed toward Sarah with the intention of getting to know her better. As regent of one of Ramses's more important acquisitions, it was his right to taste of the pharaoh's fruits if the opportunity presented itself.

"Ramses, your tastes have improved dramatically from the last time I visited the summer palace. She is simply breathtaking," said Belizar, as he got closer to the queen. The two guards moved closer to their charge as well and waited for the man to move closer. They had noticed the murderous look in Ramses's eyes and didn't want that turned against them if they failed to act should the situation warrant it.

"Careful, Belizar, this woman commands your respect. I insist upon it as does everyone else in Egypt," said Ramses.

Before she could formally introduce Sarah and her position the wine maker grabbed one of Sarah's hands and pulled her into his body where with the other hand was poised to take possession of one side of her behind. Everyone standing around the table stopped breathing waiting for Ramses's reaction. Considering how the pharaoh felt about the young queen, it had the chance to get messy.

"Belizar, move away from her now and I might not kill you slowly and with intense pain," Ramses said in a deceptively low and calm voice, stopping all movement in the winemaker. Isaac, Corby's lover, was one of the guards assigned to the queen that night and even in his short tenure with the pharaoh, he knew that tone. It was the one she used the night she carved up a large portion of Philbus's army and fed them to the fish.

"Why, Ramses? She is merely a pleasure slave and I will be gone in the morning," Belizar told her.

Sarah stood frozen, afraid to move in the man's grasp waiting for Ramses to do something. Before Belizar could get a better grip on any part of her body, he found himself face down on the ground with Ramses foot on his head. Ramses had moved so quickly that the people watching would never had guessed she had a hangover and had received a blow to the head that afternoon. The guards that were present were in awe but not surprised, already knowing that the tall king was the best warrior Egypt had.

"She is not a pleasure slave, Belizar, she is your queen," came the low calm voice again. *Queen? She is queen*, Belizar asked himself. Surely he would have heard if the king had joined and taken a queen. The punishment for what he had done made him shiver in fear.

"Yes queen, Belizar," Ramses continued as if having heard his silent questions. "My wife, the mother of my children and the woman that sits to the right of my throne, Belizar. Can you imagine the consequences of putting your filthy hands on this woman will be, Belizar?" asked

Ramses. The more she said his name, the more it sounded like a curse to the man with his face pressed to the marble.

"Sire, please it was a misunderstanding. I did not know who she was, surely you will not punish me for that," Belizar said in a lighter voice than he felt. He hoped that Ramses would forgive the indiscretion, considering who he was.

"Belizar, do you think that I would allow you to walk around my home grabbing anyone that caught your eye without punishment, even if they were a pleasure slave?" asked Ramses. After her question Belizar heard the distinct sound of her dagger leaving its sheath.

"Ramses, love, lock him away for the evening and we will deal with him in the morning," said Sarah. She had walked up and put her hand on Ramses's back hoping to calm the situation. She knew this man lying beneath Ramses's foot from her days in Larlis's house.

Ramses turned her body so that she could look at Sarah to see if she was serious, which caused her to put more pressure on the head under her foot. From outward appearances Sarah looked fine, so Ramses nodded her head slightly as a signal for the queen to continue. The pharaoh was encouraged that Sarah was shedding her fears and growing into her role as a legitimate ruler and partner.

"Come, love, let Isaac deal with him for now while we enjoy our meal, then in the morning we can dispose of the problem," said Sarah. She held her hand out to Ramses as she held her breath and wondered if the pharaoh would agree with her wishes.

Sarah wanted to talk with Ramses before Belizar got an easy ride with a quick death. The man under Ramses's foot was a master of humiliation, and on the occasions she had been in both he and Larlis's company, they had made it a competition. The young queen smiled at the irony of having the opportunity to pay the pig on the ground back in kind. Her smile grew bigger when she felt the large warm hand cover the one she still had outstretched.

"My queen," was all Ramses said as she bowed over Sarah's hand.

"Yes I am," Sarah replied. She pulled Ramses closer to her and kissed her for the gift the pharaoh had just bestowed.

When they turned and faced their guests, Corby broke away from the group of advisors he had been speaking with and helped Isaac and the other guards lead Belizar away. The overweight and over dressed man went quietly, wanting not to add any more fuel to the fires of hate Ramses felt for him. By morning the pharaoh would realize she needed his expertise and all would be forgiven. No woman, especially a slave, was worth a wine harvest.

"I'm sorry if I overstepped myself, love, but I wanted to talk to you before you started cutting him into little pieces," said Sarah. They walked to the table and sat at the head. The pillows that had been piled up allowed Ramses to lean back and become a convenient backrest for Sarah.

"Sarah, you are queen so you have nothing to be sorry for. Whatever happens to Belizar will be your decision to make since it was you he wronged. I can tell you that what he did should constitute death if it were up to me. No one has the right to take liberties with you like that, not even me," said Ramses. Ramses looked up at Sarah as the small woman absorbed what she had said. There would come the day Ramses was sure when Sarah would just accept her role within the realm and with a little help, she was sure that day wasn't far off.

"Thank you, love, it's just that I knew that man from my time as a pleasure slave. I don't want to kill him, I want to give him a new job." Sarah smiled down on Ramses and brushed the pharaoh's face with her fingertips. As she traced over the dark brows Sarah thought about how the handsome face under her fingertips had slowly consumed her dreamscape as well as her daydreams.

"I'll leave you to it tomorrow then. You do whatever you think is best," Ramses told her. She was enjoying the sensation of Sarah's hand on her face, but looking a little to the left she could see that they had an audience. The advisors were looking in their direction and some even sported a faint smile. The queen with her easy manner had won them over enough that they had stopped being combative and listened to her observations. The other duty that Sarah had carried out dutifully for them was to provide the pharaoh with heirs saving them from going elsewhere in Ramses's family should the need arise.

"I would rather you said that we would do it together, warrior. I'm a little new at this and I would like you to be my advisor as well as my teacher," said Sarah.

"My sweet Sarah, I wouldn't dream of leaving you alone for anything but I am confident in your abilities, so I think I'll just sit back and observe tomorrow. If you need anything all you have to do is look behind you and you will find me at your back," answered Ramses.

"For tonight I would think that you would promise that I will find you within easy sight, sire," said Sarah in a low voice. The hint in Sarah's voice made the pharaoh tighten her hold around the small woman's waist.

"And I would think by now, my queen, that you would know that I will grant every wish you have."

Forgetting their guests for a moment the ruling couple allowed the diners a small glimpse into the love they shared. The wives in attendance felt a twinge of jealousy knowing that it had been a long while since their husbands looked at them the way Ramses looked upon the small woman seated in front of her. It was a look that spoke of love but also of passion, leaving no one guessing on how the pharaoh felt about her queen.

Sarah finished eating and took her leave knowing by the ache in her breast that it was time to feed Ram. Once that was finished she would have candle marks to show Ramses just how much she had been missed.

"As fascinating as I know you find the affairs of the realm there are other affairs that you must

attend to tonight, sire, so don't linger. I am going to feed your son then I will be expecting you," whispered the queen.

They stood together for a moment before the queen stepped away followed by two new guards that stood silently by. The rest of the dinner participants bowed as the small blonde walked away, each taking mental bets as to how long Ramses would last before following her. The incendiary looks they had shared as the queen hand fed Ramses made them wonder why they didn't just leave together.

Ramses watched the sway of the departing hips for a moment before turning back to her guests with a wolfish smile on her lips that caused most of them to chuckle. Shrugging her shoulders the pharaoh sat and grabbed her cup so that she could finish her wine. One more cup and a bit of conversation she figured would give Sarah enough time to finish, and then their night could begin.

"Come on, Ram, I know you're hungry sweet boy so let's get going," Sarah cooed down to the baby attached to her breast. While she loved the closeness she felt when she fed him, some nights the young prince liked to take his time almost as if he were savoring a fine vintage.

Sarah ran her index finger over the dark hair that covered his head and looked into the deep blue eyes that were looking intently up at her. The queen was convinced that when he grew to be a man he would look much like the pharaoh that had given him his name, and she hoped that he would grow to be as honorable when he inherited the title. The baby lifted one chubby hand into the air waving a fist at her to breaking out of her musings. Opening the small hand, Sarah could see that even his hands reminded her of Ramses. *Come on, son, let's finish here. I know you have her hands but I have a date with the originals back in the royal bedchamber,* thought Sarah.

The prince fell asleep with a nipple in his mouth and the queen wasn't far behind. The worries of the day and her duties left for little energy by the end of the day. Sarah did smile when she felt the strong arms pick her up and cradle her momentarily before they started walking. Even in sleep she recognized Ramses's touch. Her only protest was silenced by the low voice in her ear. "Don't worry, my love, he's fine and sleeping next to our bed already. He's waiting for his mama to join him in the land of dreams."

"Papa, would you tell me a story?" asked Hawk from Ramses side of the bed. She had been holding a sleeping Sarah and looking at the billowing sheers moving in the breeze and hadn't heard the older prince come in.

"What story would you like to hear, Hawk?" Ramses answered his question with a question of her own.

"Would you tell me a story about your papa?" asked the little boy.

Getting him comfortable in the large bed Ramses began her tale. "Many seasons ago there lived a great king who his people thought was a great warrior and defender. He ruled like his father

before him, with a fair but firm hand and his people prospered. But the king was lonely."

"He had spent most of his life building a realm but had no one to share it with. His blood called him to war but his heart was empty until the day of blessing of the Nile waters. That is a celebration that is attended by all the noble men and women of the court, so that we can pray the rainy season is good to us and feed the mother Nile."

"On that day one of the noblemen brought for the first time his daughter, Risea, so that she could participate and take her rightful place in his family. This nobleman's name was Mubaris, and he had served the pharaoh faithfully in his army for seasons. As the pharaoh poured the sacred waters from the urn in his hand and spoke the sacred words, his eyes landed on the young woman in a white tunic. Her eyes were like the summer sky and her hair was as black as the soil left by the Nile after her floods. For the first time in his life the king's heart spoke to him louder than the cry of his blood."

"For over two seasons he fought a different war than what he was used to, he fought the battle of trying to win the heart of the beautiful Risea. While other women looked at her as if she were mad for not returning his affection, Risea bid her time with the pharaoh. She listened to his late night serenades outside of her window, and she spent time talking to him in the company of her family. But still she made no promises to him."

"On the second anniversary of their first meeting as he stood in the waters of the Nile again giving sacrifice to the gods, he smiled at her as he handed the urn back to the priest at his side. At that moment, it was told later, she drowned in that look he bestowed on her and Risea fell in love. She became his queen and for a season the pharaoh knew total happiness. In the beginning of their second season she gave him a gift without measure, they were going to have a child. It was to be the beginning of the family he had dreamed about and his happiness grew."

"She bore him a daughter that shared their dark hair but had one thing that the pharaoh did not. Their daughter had her mother's blue eyes as if to remind the pharaoh of the love he shared for a short time. Risea died a few days after the birth of the next pharaoh and her beloved mate never joined with another. He spent the rest of his days teaching their child to be pharaoh, but that is another story for another day," finished Ramses.

"That baby was you, papa?" asked the sleepy little boy. He rubbed his eyes with his fist fighting to stay awake as he sunk deeper into Ramses' embrace.

"That baby was me, little man, and if you go to sleep I promise that I will tell you the next part of the story," whispered Ramses. The pharaoh looked over her son into the eyes that had captured her own heart and smiled. It was not the way they had planned to spend the night together but it did bring its own kind of happiness.

"I'm sorry, love," said Sarah as she ran her fingers through Hawk's hair. She thought about how big he was getting and wondered where he would have inherited that trait. Both she and Larlis were not tall people, but Hawk was heads above the other children of the same age in the palace. It was as if, Sarah thought, he was feeding off of the tall muscular body of Ramses.

"Don't be, Sarah, you seemed to be tired and I know you have your hands full with these two. Now don't blame me if when we finally do get time alone I have forgotten what to do. I love you, my queen," said Ramses. The twinkle in Ramses's blue eyes, noted Sarah, had never changed since the first time she had seen it. Ramses had a way of making her feel that she was the only woman in the world that would make the pharaoh happy.

"Believe me, warrior, I will do everything in my power to refresh your memories on pleasuring Egyptian queens. I miss the feel of your skin, my love," whispered Sarah.

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"And you serve as the overseer of the winery for Belizar?" asked the queen. The young man that sat across from her bit in to an almond stuffed date and tried to chew furiously so he could answer her question.

"Yes, my queen. My father taught me all that will ever needed to be known on how to grow grapes for wine. Belizar's family owned the land and the vineyard but it is my family's knowledge and work that make the pharaoh's wine. Please don't think that I am complaining because we love what we do, but it would be nice for my father to get some of the credit on the final product. Those fields are his life's work and you can taste the love he has for them in the wine you drink."

The man stopped talking and dropped to one knee as he saw the tall figure come up behind the queen. "Replaced me already, Sarah?" asked Ramses. She was dressed in a long white tunic with gold trim that had a leopard pelt draped across the shoulders. Ramses looked very much like the pharaoh of Egypt that morning in reference to sentencing a nobleman.

Sarah looked back at her and laughed, not at the outfit but at the question. "Maybe you should get out of the sun, sire, asking questions like that. Ramses, may I introduce you to Netho. His family is the one that tends to Belizar's vineyard so that the wine is to your liking."

Before Ramses let the man up from his kneeling position she bent down and kissed her wife good morning. Sarah was dressed and gone by the time she was ready so Ramses wondered what she was up to. "Netho, yes I know your father. Did he not accompany you this time?" asked the pharaoh.

"No, sire there were at least a league of plants that needed to be harvested so he stayed behind," answered Netho from the floor.

"Sire, I don't think that he can finish his breakfast from down there," hinted Sarah. Ramses let her head drop back as her laughter filled the area. Sarah was definitely coming into her own and it was a delight to watch.

"You heard her, Netho, get up, boy, and finish your meal. I am sure that the queen has plans for you, so you will need your strength," bellowed Ramses. Sarah shook her head at Ramses teasing

then leveled the pharaoh with an arched brow. Netho for his part just swallowed and wondered what the pharaoh meant by that.

The ruling couple left him to finish his meal and think about why he had been summoned to the palace that morning. Looking at the retreating women, Netho thought they looked as different as night and day. The pharaoh's broad shoulders and dark hair, contrasted with the golden hair and smaller build of her queen. It was when they stopped walking and shared a kiss that the young Egyptian saw the love they obviously shared. Whatever the queen had in mind for him, he thought it would be best for his health if he stayed on his best behavior. One false move in the small woman's presence and he might find his head hanging off the pharaoh's blade.

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The drums started and Corby walked in front of them. The head of the guard announced their arrival and Sarah watched as all the heads in the room bowed as they made their way to the front of the room toward the dais. Ramses held her right hand and Sarah felt as if it were a lifeline telling her that she would do all right. She smiled at her spouse as Ramses helped her into her throne before taking her own. Once Corby made the announcement of the planned activity of the day everyone straightened and looked at their leaders seated together at the head of the room.

"Corby, send in the accused," said Ramses in an even voice. It would be, she promised herself, the only order she would give that morning concerning the events. As much as she thought putting a dagger through Belizar's forehead was the only solution to the problem, Ramses had promised Sarah she could handle the situation in whatever manner she chose.

Belizar was brought in with two guards at each side. Ramses could see that he was frightened but he would try to use the force of his personality one more time to try and get out of any punishment for what had happened. The accused noticed, as he stepped closer to Ramses and her queen, that Netho and his younger brother were standing close to the dais. If they laughed at any humiliation on his part he would have them whipped once they reached home, Belizar swore silently. Belizar whipped his head forward when he heard Ramses say in a low voice, "My queen."

"Belizar, you do realize that the charges against you carry the punishment of death. To touch the queen of Egypt without her permission usually carries that punishment, but you and I have a history so that will not be your fate today," started Sarah. Belizar looked at her and wondered what she meant by that, but he didn't interrupt her.

"You are a good friend of Larlis and that will get you special favor today in my eyes," continued Sarah. Her clear voice carried over the crowd so that even the people by the doors wondered if she had lost her mind. Sarah was queen, but everyone knew of where the pharaoh had found her. It wasn't spoken of in public, but behind closed doors it was widely known that the queen was a former pleasure slave in the house of Larlis.

"Yes, my queen, Larlis and I are good friends and I am sure that he will vouch for my honor," said Belizar puffing out his chest. He couldn't help but smirk at the pharaoh, knowing that this is

not what the tall woman had in mind for him. "How is my **good friend**, highness?" asked the increasingly cocky man.

"Your **good friend** is dead. The slaves in the quarry found him with a hammer buried in his skull and a chisel through his heart. I'm afraid that will prevent him from vouching for your honor this morning, Belizar," said the queen with satisfaction. The people in the room laughed at her comment, knocking some of the definition out of Belizar's chest.

"Was his murderer found and punished?" asked Belizar. "He was a loyal servant to the throne and to Egypt," he continued.

"No, Belizar, he was taken out of the city and thrown in the sand to feed the snakes, lizards and scorpions. It seemed he was more useful in death than he ever was in life. It was a fitting end for a man with no honor don't you think?" asked Sarah. She continued, not giving Belizar a chance to answer. "You and he have much in common but death will not be one of them. From this day forth, the lands that were once in possession of Belizar and his family will pass to Simus and his sons Netho and Jarvus. Simus will be the pharaoh's new regent in that territory of the realm and will be known as winemaker to the pharaoh and the queen," Sarah stood up and came to the end of the dais to face the man that had brought her such misery. She thanked God that his visits were short and only once a year. The thought of how he treated his own slaves made her comfort level go up in what she had done. She watched as first the color drained out of his face then return with a deep red shade indicated his growing anger over what she had just said. She could also see that he was finally coming to realize who she was and where he knew her.

The queen was correct in her assumption on what was going through Belizar's mind. Putting aside his fear he remembered the fair-haired pleasure slave that he had tied to the bedpost of the room Larlis had given him for the night. His intent had been to whip her until she screamed, which drove his desire, then he was going to bed her. But after the feat of tying her up, the wine he had consumed that night had altered his plans. The next morning he found her still hanging there but the game didn't seem as interesting as it had the night before. Now he thought he had missed his opportunity to be able to boast to the pharaoh that he had bedded her queen after making her back bleed.

"What happens to you though, Belizar, is for the pharaoh to decide. I am her wife and am hers alone to touch. The punishment for taking something that belongs to her should be for her to say not I," Sarah said while looking at Belizar and the crowd. It was meant to be a message for them as well as the man before her. "Love, my gift to you," she told Ramses as she turned around to take her seat.

Sarah spared a glance at the two brothers standing close to the raised dais she and Ramses sat upon noticing that if their smiles got any larger, their faces would split in two. It was an added bonus to be able to gift them something that meant so much to them, as well as giving their father the recognition that his son mentioned to her that morning. As her focus turned to Ramses, Sarah noticed the mischievous smile that had overtaken the handsome face. For a brief and fleeting moment she almost felt sorry for Belizar's future, but only briefly.

Ramses had figured part of Sarah's plan when she found her wife having her morning meal with Simus's son, but the last part came as a complete surprise. She considered his sentence carefully so the room waited silently for her to speak. The pharaoh had listened to her wife's tale before entering the chamber and promised not to interfere with whatever Sarah decided, no matter how much she wanted to. Knowing what the small woman had been through, Ramses agreed with her in that death would be too easy for Belizar. No, he deserved something much more interesting. More than just the loss of his title and lands.

"Belizar I would think that you would fall to your knees in gratitude in that your queen spared your life," started Ramses. The guards heeded what she was saying and pushed the man between them to his knees. Now in a subservient position for the first time in his life, Belizar still didn't say anything. "As for her decree in the possession of your family's lands," Ramses said raising one hand, "So be it." The scribe taking notes put the order in the parchment he was writing on. He had already done so when the queen ordered it but now there was a note that the pharaoh agreed with her decision.

Turning to Sarah, Ramses bowed slightly and told her, "Thank you, my queen, for this unexpected gift. I will strive to make the most of it. When I am done my hope is that you will be pleased."

"Ramses, don't you think it's time to stop this farce and undo these chains. That woman up there is nothing more than a slave. You can call a horse a sheep, but it will continue to be a sheep even with the new name," said Belizar. He decided to speak before the situation got any further out of hand. The open hand slap that the guard to his right delivered knocked him to the ground and sent a searing pain up the side of his face.

"I'm sorry, sire, but he disrespected my queen," said Isaac as he went down to one knee.

"Well done, Isaac, rise," Ramses told him. The blow the former slave had delivered saved her from having to go down there and do it herself.

"Listen to the wisdom of the guard next to you, Belizar, when he says my queen. It doesn't matter to you what station Sarah started at, it is where she ended up that matters to you. She is queen and a legitimate ruler of Egypt, so that brings us to why we are here this morning. Considering how you have lived your life and treated others, Belizar, I have something in mind that will fit the crime you have committed," said Ramses. She had her dagger in her hand so Belizar thought better of saying anything else. He didn't want to provoke her into throwing it at him and sinking it into some part of his anatomy.

"You seem to be a man that likes pleasure. Knowing that you have taken your pleasure when it was offered and in most cases when it was not, I have just the thing for you. Your new home will be in the soldiers barracks from this moment on, until the end of your life," Ramses started to pass judgment when Belizar interrupted her.

"Ramses, you know that I am not a soldier."

"I am not asking you to don the uniform of one of my soldiers, Belizar. No the role I have in mind for you is that of a pleasure slave. We have some men with exotic taste and I'm sure that they would love to teach them to you. I'm sure that I can find someone one to tie you to something and introduce you to the whip, Belizar. I'll make sure that whoever it is doesn't imbibe too much before starting. We wouldn't want them to not be able to carry out the second part of that ritual you seem to be familiar with."

"Isaac, would you be so kind as to escort Belizar to the barracks so that he may begin his new duties. Tell the men that, like the queen, I am feeling quite generous and Belizar is my gift to them. Do with him as they please, as many times as they please," Ramses said with a laugh. The court joined her in the humor and thanked the gods they were not the one that was out of favor. Between the queen and the pharaoh, they had quite the imagination when it came to meting out justice.

Turning to Sarah, Ramses bowed her head and then looked at her with the standard arched brow. The queen smiled back at her and simply said, "So be it." The last thing that Belizar saw as he was dragged from the chamber was a reenactment of their joining as the pharaoh stood kissing her queen on the dais.

"Are we done for the day, sire?" asked Sarah. She thought that there might be a possibility to spend the afternoon thanking Ramses for allowing her to handle the situation.

"No, love, it is time for the blessing of the waters so that our rainy season will be plentiful. If they are, then our new fields will be gifted with the rich soil that only the Nile and Isis can provide," answered Ramses.

"I thought that was tomorrow," said a disappointed Sarah.

"No, love, that is today. All these misunderstandings," said Ramses. She ran her fingertips along Sarah's cheek getting the green eyes to look up at her. "Don't worry so much. love, it will all work out."

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With Hawk standing next to her, Ramses spoke the words that many pharaohs before her had uttered. She poured the water from the urn in her hand into the river as she asked the gods to grant them a fruitful rainy season to feed their crops. Hawk watched Ramses as she went through the motions of the ceremony, and then looked at his mother as she looked on. The story his papa had told him came into his mind and he could now visualize the look of love his grandfather had bestowed upon his queen. Hawk's attention went back to his papa when she handed him the urn and let him pour the little water that was left into the river.

The queen's smile got impossibly bigger as she watched the little boy's concentration as he completed his task. Sarah looked on as two of the people she loved most in the world finished their appointed tasks. As they had made their way out of the palace to the river earlier, Nina had come out with the two princes to join them. Hawk was dressed in a tunic and cape that matched

Ramses's down to the last detail. The golden armor that resembled hawk wings and the arm bracers were even the same, only smaller versions of the ones that Ramses wore. Ramses had indeed been a godsend as far as Sarah was concerned, if only to see the look of total adoration on her son's face when he looked up at the tall king. If she had conjured up the perfect father figure for the two boys, Sarah would have fallen short considering some of Ramses qualities when it came to the children.

So lost in her thoughts, Sarah didn't hear Ramses and Hawk walk up to her. She jumped a bit as she felt the strong arm pull her into the large body she knew so well. "Sorry, love, I didn't mean to frighten you, but you seemed leagues away. I'm not that boring am I?" asked Ramses.

"Well just a little," teased Sarah. The queen handed the baby over to Ramses to give her arm a rest. Considering how small she was, Sarah was having a hard time trying to figure out big the brute would get. She laughed when she considered Ramses's size, knowing somehow that Ram would take after her in that as well.

"You are so funny. Maybe I'll make you the court jester," Ramses teased back.

"No, I'm interested in another job but only if it's available," said Sarah.

"Oh and what might that be?" inquired Ramses.

"Personal love slave to the pharaoh," stated Sarah.

"Sorry that job is taken but I'll keep you in mind if we have an opening soon," said Ramses. The look of irritation that was directed at her from Sarah made Ramses momentarily want to retract her tease, but she kept her mouth shut.

"You are in so much trouble sire if I find out you have been keeping someone else company. Here I have been feeling guilty about how I am denying you and you are out sleeping with someone else. I thought you loved me?" said a dejected Sarah.

Ramses felt horrible having her joke go so far off course. She motioned for Nina to come and take the children away so that she could talk to her obviously insecure queen. Once Nina started to walk away with their children Ramses, to the amusement of their guests, scooped Sarah up and moved to a more private spot. Since the festival had begun, Ramses figured they wouldn't be missed.

"Put me down this instant," demanded Sarah. The queen was so angry that she forgot who she was addressing, much to Ramses delight. Maybe their misunderstanding was a good thing that would show both of them that Sarah was comfortable enough to voice her displeasure without fear of reprimand. She had truly become queen of Egypt.

"Yes, my queen," said Ramses as she fell to one knee. "If her majesty would allow this humble servant to explain, I'm sure that you will be happy with my answer," Ramses continued. She looked up seeing Sarah had crossed her arms over her chest and had no intention of answering

her.

"The position of personal love slave is filled by the queen, my lady. She is a beautiful woman who is insanely jealous, so as much as I appreciate your offer I have to decline," said Ramses. She stood up and walked toward Sarah, stopping just in front of her, but not touching the small woman. "She holds my heart, so no, I would never lie with another in this lifetime. I would hope that she would know that by now but I have obviously been remiss in reminding her of her importance," finished Ramses in a softer tone.

"You mean you haven't," started Sarah. They were still standing apart and the queen fought the urge to reach out and touch Ramses.

"No, love, I haven't. Sarah, you are the most important person in my life, you have to know that I would never do anything to jeopardize losing you. As pharaoh it is my right to take as many pleasure slaves as I could handle," said Ramses noticing the slump of her wife's shoulders. "But it would be wrong to do so. I can only imagine what it would feel like if you decided to share yourself with someone else, it would kill my spirit, and you are no different from me."

"If you had listened to the story I was telling Hawk about my parents, you would have some idea of how I feel about you. I never knew my mother, but that didn't preclude me from hearing the stories of the love she shared with my father. He was a good father to me and he loved me with all that he was capable of, but there was always a part of his heart that belonged to my mother. That part died along with her and no one, not even me, could bring it back to life. The pharaoh never joined with another and when he did take a woman into his bed it was for the pleasure not love."

"It was the love I grew up with and the love that I want to share with you. I want to know that when our children sit with our grandchildren and tell them about us, they will go to sleep with a wish of finding that special person that will make them feel the way you make me feel. That they know how happy this pharaoh is because she looked into the eyes of love and she said yes. The only difference in the ending is that I will be old and brittle before I am ready to take that trip across the water to my next life. What I am certain of is that when I get there I will sit and wait for you so that we can make the trip into the next life together."

"I love you, Sarah. I love you and I belong to you," said Ramses. The long heart felt talk got Sarah's attention Ramses guessed, looking at the tears that were threatening to spill down the queen's face. It was time to get passed the awkward stages of trying to guess what the other was thinking in their relationship, and get to the truth of their feelings. A part of Ramses had always thought that Sarah had agreed to be her wife because she had no choice in the matter. It wasn't important that Ramses had given the queen her freedom, she was sure that the acceptance was partly due to obligation and not total devotion.

"In all my life no matter how old I get, Ramses, I will never be able to figure out what I did that God has blessed me so by giving me you. I came here as a slave and you made me a queen. I came here as a servant and you made me a ruler. But the one thing that I give thanks for is that I came here spent and humiliated and you made me your wife and gave me your heart. That is why

the queen is so insanely jealous pharaoh, she is afraid that you will find that I am nothing more than a slave and a servant and I will lose what I value most. Your heart and your love are the two things that give my life meaning, Ramses, as well as the children we share. I know that it is within your right to have as many slaves as you want but my wish is that what we share to be ours alone, it will keep it sacred."

"I too love you, Ramses. With all that I am and all that I will ever be I love you, and I belong only to you. My heart and my love are yours and they are freely given," said Sarah. Sarah ran her hands up the muscled arms of the pharaoh and closed the small space between them by pulling Ramses forward. When their lips met, Sarah felt Ramses's big hands cover her back and pull her closer. There were no children, no parents or other distractions now. Their obligations were finished for the day and Sarah planned to take advantage of the moment.

The kiss was hungry and Sarah wasn't surprised when she felt her feet leave the ground again. She only pulled her arms tighter around Ramses's neck as she felt them start to move from the spot they had been standing in. Feeling Ramses so close to her made Sarah close her eyes and suck more greedily on the lips that were covering hers, so she failed to notice that they weren't heading toward their rooms in the palace. Ramses instead walked to a place that Sarah hadn't seen yet in their time in the summer palace. It was going to be the queen's surprise that night, and the king's attempt at romance.

When Sarah felt the ground under her feet again and the kiss the pharaoh had been bestowing on her soften, the queen noticed two things at once. The smell of the room and the vibrant colors once her eyelids fluttered open. "What is this place, love?" asked Sarah as she turned in a circle taking in the hundreds of blooms that were within reach of where they were standing.

"This is the royal gardens, Sarah. It's where all those flowers that you find throughout the palace come from, and since I know the owner really well we have the place to ourselves for the night," said Ramses as she moved aside so the queen could see what stood behind her.

The broad shoulders of the pharaoh had been hiding the large pallet covered in soft blankets and pillows, and the small table covered in food. Another smaller table stood next to the bed with a liter of wine with two silver goblets standing next to it. The servants had lit candles within the plants so that once the sun set, the flowers could still be enjoyed by the royal couple.

"I thought the most beautiful flower that has graced the Nile would enjoy an evening among the blooms with her humble servant," said Ramses bowing deeply at the waist. The sentiment and the actions of the pharaoh caused the small woman to let loose a heartfelt laugh that brought a smile to the pharaoh's lips.

"You are turning into a hopeless romantic, my love, and I absolutely love it," said Sarah. Bowing only her head slightly the queen continued, "The queen accepts your generous offer, sire."

Ramses heard the queen's laugh again when she scooped the small woman off her feet for a third time and deposited her gently in the middle of the pallet behind them. Kneeling next to the bed Ramses lowered her head again and asked, "May I serve you, highness?"

At first Sarah didn't understand the question until Ramses waved her hand in the direction of the food. "Yes you may," answered Sarah. She looked as Ramses filled a plate with some of her favorite foods wanting to just skip over the eating portion of their evening and just getting to the naked and sweating part. Ramses had been right when she said the frustration of wanting was maddening. The pharaoh noticed the change in the queen's eyes when she turned around and almost laughed at the desire so plainly written on Sarah's face. It had indeed been awhile.

Ramses brought the date up to her wife's lips and watched her bite it in two. Sarah hummed in pleasure finding that the kitchen had stuffed the treat with nuts. The pharaoh continued to feed Sarah and as the queen chewed, Ramses took the opportunity to start removing the ceremonial armor she was wearing. Once all the pieces hit the floor the pharaoh was left in a glowing white tunic and bare feet. When she got up from the bed and stood next to the small table to pour the wine, Sarah thought that with the short black hair that glowed in the candlelight Ramses looked like a goddess.

The blonde was glad that Ramses was kind and gentle with her and she loved the pharaoh with a passion, but the fact that her spouse was incredibly good looking didn't hurt matters any. Sarah was sure that she would have responded to Ramses's kindness no matter what the package would have looked like, but the fact was just looking at the pharaoh at times made her wet with desire.

Handing Sarah a goblet, Ramses proposed a toast, "To you, my queen, and our life together. You make me happy and make me feel loved," finished Ramses as she tapped her cup against Sarah's before taking a sip.

Sarah watched as the blue eyes looked over her body over the rim of the silver cup and decided to give the pharaoh more to look at. She pulled the ties of the dress she was wearing through the gold hoops that held it in place on her shoulders allowing it to fall open on one side displaying only one of her breasts. Ramses watched attentively and when the pink nipple appeared, her eyes narrowed and her nose flared out in anticipation. Dipping her finger into the wine, Sarah ran the tip around the nipple getting it to harden and the skin around it to pucker. While Ramses was busy looking at the small bit of wine clinging to the end of Sarah's nipple, the queen untied the other side of the dress, completely exposing the top part of her body. The blue eyes tracked the finger as it journeyed to the other nipple and got the same result as the first time the queen did it.

Ramses leaned to capture the wine Sarah had swabbed on to her chest when the teasing finger came to rest on her forehead stopping the pharaoh's forward progress. "No, sire, I am in charge tonight. No touching until I say so," said Sarah as the pressure she was applying to Ramses's forehead increased. All Sarah really wanted to do was let go and let Ramses's mouth reach the destination it was headed for, but they didn't get nights like this often without the children and she wasn't going to waste it. The incredulous look on the pharaoh's face after her statement almost made the queen start laughing. *Let's see how far Ramses is willing to play*, thought Sarah as she moved to stand up.

"Where are you going?" asked Ramses. She watched Sarah move from the pallet and walk around as if heading out of the room. "I'm not going anywhere, love. There is something that I

want you to do for me, Ramses. Do you think that you can grant me a wish?" asked Sarah. Ramses looked up at Sarah as she continued to walk until she was standing behind the pharaoh. There was a certain boldness to the queen's movements that was exciting to Ramses, so she would wait to see what Sarah wished. Even if it was to change the course of the Nile, Ramses was sure she would grant the request.

"What is your wish, highness?" asked Ramses. To encourage Sarah she bowed her head slightly and dropped to her knees giving the queen the advantage of height again.

"Ramses, I love you because you are kind and I know that you love me and our children. But just because we are so in love doesn't mean that I don't feel desire when I look at you. The kind of desire that feeds my dreams and makes me ache when I am awake and you are near me. Do you remember the first night that I came to the palace to live?" asked Sarah. She waited until she saw the dark head nod before continuing. Sarah smiled seeing that while the pharaoh nodded her head, she did not bring it up from its bowed position.

"That night I came to you thinking that you had wanted me as a pleasure slave and saw you standing in the moonlight looking out at the river. You wore a robe and nothing else so that when you heard me you turned around and I got my first look at your body.

Since I was twelve my body has been used for the pleasure of others but I have never felt any in return. I had a son that was not conceived in love, but was the result of advances I didn't invite. Looking at you that night for the first time, I got wet at the sight of another human being. I learned what desire and wanting were about when the muscles rippled through your body even though you were angry at the time. For the first time the fate that God had given me was welcome, if it meant that I would be yours and yours alone."

"I will never touch another, nor let another touch me again but I have no need of that. There is no need because I have you and that is all that I will ever need," said Sarah.

The whole time she had been talking her voice had not risen over a husky whisper. The pharaoh's body she could see had gone from a casual kneeling position to one of tension. Ramses's hands were balled into fists; her eyes were closed and through the linen draped across her back Sarah could see the individual muscles standing out in relief. Her soliloquy, Sarah knew, was making Ramses war with herself to keep her kneeling position and not get up and just take the queen into her arms. It was time to turn up the heat just a little.

"That night I dreamed of something, my love, after you sent me back to my rooms. Maybe dream isn't the correct word since I didn't sleep that night thinking that I would never get to lie with you after what had happened, it was more of a fantasy," the queen stopped for a moment.

She was standing so close to Ramses that the king could feel the heat from her body but couldn't feel her yet. The queen's mouth whispering in her ear so close was driving her mad but she would wait to see what Sarah wanted. Walking around so that she was standing in front of Ramses again Sarah held out her hand. Pulling the pharaoh to her feet she continued, "Undress for me, sire, and I will tell you what my fantasy is. Because I came to you with child I haven't

been in condition to fulfill it but I have every intention of doing so now." She watched as the long robe that Ramses had been wearing for the ceremony was pulled open revealing the naked chest and breach cloth the pharaoh had on underneath. Sarah took a small hand and pulled on the material watching it fall to the floor leaving her spouse in fairly the same condition she had first seen her in.

From hooded eyes Ramses looked at Sarah and waited to see what other tortures the little blonde had in mind. In the candlelight Ramses admired her queen, as she stood there naked from the waist up, since Sarah had not fully removed the dress she had been wearing. As Sarah's tongue came out of her mouth to wet her lips, her hands went to the belt at her hips that was holding up the dress she wore. With one quick tug, the queen was naked.

Sarah moved forward and ran her hands from Ramses hips up to her shoulders, raising bumps on the pharaoh's skin as she did. When she reached the strong shoulders, Sarah pushed the robe off to the floor leaving Ramses as naked as she was. "I looked at you that night for that one short moment and I noticed how strong you were. It amazes me that the body that was built by war can be so gentle with me and love me so well. There is one part of you though, sire, that I have admired and want to feel under me," said Sarah as she came to stand behind the pharaoh again.

Two small hands moved from Ramses's hips to her abdomen, and Sarah raked her nails over the hard-ridged surface. "I wonder what it would feel like to straddle you here, sire and grind myself against these muscles? What would it feel like to hold on to your hard shoulders and kiss you while I," the queen didn't get to finish as Ramses turned around and kissed her hard.

The pharaoh brought her hands to the queen's bottom and pulled up until she felt Sarah's legs lock around her waist. With out breaking the kiss Ramses sat on the edge of the pallet and leaned back slightly giving Sarah room to maneuver. The queen needed no further invitation as she made herself more comfortable for what she hoped would be a long pleasurable journey. Sarah brought her hands up and took hold of Ramses's hair pulling the pharaoh closer to her and intensifying their kiss. When she felt Ramses's breathing change again, Sarah pulled the pharaoh's head back by her hair and told her, "Look at what you do to me."

Ramses's eyes followed the path that Sarah's right hand was taking down their bodies. She could already feel the queen's desires dripping onto her lower abdomen. The queen ran her hand down the center of Ramses's chest until it reached her own heated center. With the blue eyes watching her intently, Sarah used her index and middle fingers to spread open the wet hot folds of her sex before pressing them into Ramses's body. "Prop yourself up on your elbows, love," she requested. The position the pharaoh was in made the muscles Sarah needed stand out more prominently giving her the surface she desired. "Oh yes, love, you feel so good," said Sarah as she started her hips moving. Ramses could feel the hard nub that was dragging up and down her body seeking relief, and her own desires flared to an almost painful point.

Sarah was going agonizingly slow so that she could drag out the sensations in her body. Ramses stayed still so that Sarah could set her own pace which after a moment started to pick up but wasn't frenzied. Sarah's strong fingers dug into Ramses's shoulders as the queen leaned forward to give her more mobility in her hips bringing her swinging breasts close to the pharaoh's mouth.

Keeping her arms on the bed the pharaoh raised her head to latch on to one of the tight nipples wringing a moan out of Sarah. When the sucking started Sarah moved her hands from Ramses's shoulders her hair again pulling the dark head closer to her chest. When the pharaoh moved her head up, the slick surface Sarah had been pumping against had gotten impossibly harder urging the queen's hips to go faster.

"Don't stop, love, don't stop," urged Sarah as she felt the first signs of orgasm. Ramses only answer was to let go of the nipple she was sucking on and grab hold of the other one. Sarah's movements where becoming frantic and jerky so trying to keep her body in the position it was in, Ramses tensed and brought her hands up to Sarah's hips. "Oh god," said Sarah as the muscles in Ramses's midsection got harder.

The big hands on Sarah's hips helped her to keep pace and pushed her down harder into Ramses. She could feel the orgasm intensify as more fluid poured onto Ramses making the grinding that much easier. The suction on Sarah's breast was broken with a pop when Ramses felt the body above her stop moving except for the small spasms still going through Sarah's frame.

Ramses moved into a sitting position so that she could hold Sarah until she was able to catch her breath. Putting her hands along Sarah's back, Ramses held her in place as she started to kiss every piece of soft skin her lips could reach. "You are so beautiful to me, Sarah. I love touching you, my sweet Sarah," said Ramses. The pharaoh felt Sarah's lips curl up into a smile after hearing what she was saying.

Taking one of her hands, Ramses moved it between them and started stroking the front of Sarah's body. "Let me touch you now, Sarah, and make you feel good," requested the pharaoh. Gliding her hand down Sarah's own flat middle, Ramses kept going until she felt the wet curls under her fingertips. The soft mewling sounds coming out of Sarah weren't ones of protest, but ones that the fires were again being stoked.

Their lips came together as the pharaoh's long fingers slipped into Sarah, each swallowing the other's moans when the walls of Sarah's sex clamped down on the visitors. Sarah threw her head back and screamed as Ramses's thumb rubbed up and down her clitoris as the long fingers pumped in and out in long strokes. Without thinking Sarah took two handfuls of Ramses's hair to keep her in place, pulling so hard that the pharaoh almost came with her when Sarah reached the pinnacle of pleasure again. She slumped against the pharaoh after the second orgasm and reached down for Ramses's wrist pulling so that the fingers would come out.

Ramses misunderstood for a moment as Sarah pulled her fingers out and removed the other arm from around her back. Usually the small woman was in the mood to cuddle after such an intense session of lovemaking but now she had other things on her mind. The protest of being pushed away died on Ramses's lips as she felt the body of her wife slide down quickly until Sarah was kneeling between the pharaoh's long legs.

Without preamble Sarah's mouth came down and started sucking on the point Ramses most wanted her, causing the pharaoh's hands to come up and hold the queen's head in place. Sarah didn't tease knowing that from the moment they had started this dance of passion Ramses had

been ready for her touch. Ramses's hands gripped Sarah's hair just as the queen had done to her just moments before as the pressure between her legs built.

"Harder, love," Ramses called down. Sarah heard the muffled request through the large hands that had taken purchase on her head. Doing as the pharaoh asked, Sarah also poised three fingers at the Ramses's entrance waiting to see what the woman wanted. Ramses was beyond words at that point so Sarah just thrust in with one quick movement causing the body above her to levitate upward for a moment. The "Oh great Isis," that followed Sarah's action told her that she had made the right decision. Sarah loved being with Ramses like this, knowing that her touch rendered the usually powerful leader rather powerless. Knowing that Ramses craved her touch as much as she did the pharaoh's. Seeing Ramses like this dispelled Sarah's fears that the pharaoh needed or wanted anyone else.

Stilling her fingers, Sarah concentrated on the pulsing bud between her teeth sucking in as hard as she could. The walls around Sarah's fingers tightened pulling them in further then with one quick jerk of her hips, Ramses let go and fell off that precipice Sarah had led her to. Once her body stilled, Ramses pulled Sarah off the floor and fell back onto the pallet and moved to the center with her wife draped over her. They found a peaceful sleep in each other's arms, secure in the knowledge that they held the other part of their soul as they slept.

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Nina walked into the darkened room carrying a fussy baby who again would not be put off any longer. The last of the candles burning in the room extinguished as she had entered the garden room leaving a trail of smoke creeping toward the ceiling. The older woman had laughed when she saw how far from the entrance the guards had been standing as she walked by with Ram. *They must have put off quite a few sparks in here to have them standing so many paces from the door,* thought Nina. She was glad that the young couple had forgotten all their responsibilities for a while and concentrated on the one that would make them both the happiest.

She smiled when she saw by the moon light in the room the blonde head curled up in Ramses's arms. Sarah had brought into Ramses's life the kind of balance the pharaoh had always been missing. For those who thought the pharaoh would soften with the addition of the queen and her children would be in for a surprise. If anything Ramses had gotten stronger and faster knowing that her skills as a warrior would be the only thing that would keep her family safe. Sarah and the two small boys she had brought into Ramses's life would know nothing but love and security as long as the big body that held her drew breath. Leaning down on Sarah's side of the pallet Nina whispered, "Highness, it's time for our nightly snack."

Sarah stirred and opened one green eye toward the two visitors waiting patiently by the bed. For once the baby took his cues from the people around him and stayed quiet as if waiting for something to happen. Without embarrassment the queen threw back the sheet covering the both of them then reached up for her son. Moving up a little so that she could cradle Ram to her breast, Sarah took a sharp breath when the hungry mouth latched on to her nipple in search of a meal. "You don't have to go, Nina," said Sarah to the back of the retreating figure.

When Nina turned around and perched on the edge of the pallet, Sarah noticed her smile. "Why are you so happy, Nina?" asked the queen.

"She's happy because we are happy love," said the raspy voice from behind her. "Nin, has always put the happiness of others before her own. There is that and the fact that you have given her grandchildren to spoil. Isn't that right, Nin?" asked Ramses.

"It fills my heart to see the one that I held, like you hold your son now, is happy, Sarah. Ramses, is right. My obligations to my late queen are fulfilled and now my obligation is to you and your happiness," confirmed Nina.

"If there is one thing that I am certain of, Nina, it is that I am a wife and mother and that alone makes me happy. The fact that the one that married me can grant so much more is almost unimportant as she alone completes me. But I thank you for your promise, it means a lot to me," confessed Sarah.

"And you, sire? What are you certain of?" asked Nina. The maid watched the smile form on the pharaoh's lips as she ran a finger along the dark hair covering the baby's head. The pharaoh snuggled closer to the woman in front of her then flicked her eyes to the woman that had been there since her birth.

"I am certain that I too am a wife and parent, Nina. For those who try to hurt the ones I love, the punishment will be swift and without remorse, but for the woman you see here I pledge my love and life," said Ramses then she turned her eyes to her wife. "There will be no further misunderstandings between us because we don't talk about the things we want and need. And I think she knows now and from this day forth that the king of Egypt belongs to her and no other. Her place is by my side and in my heart, and I will capture the wind and the stars if that is what it takes to make her happy. She will never need to fear me and I will love her children as if they were my own. To them will go my worldly possessions and my title, but most importantly they will get my love. Her touch will sooth my desires and her smile will ease my spirit, and it will always be so."

"Like my father before me, my greatest battle was the one I waged to win the heart of my queen. I love her with all that I am capable of and then I always manage to find more," Ramses finished as she ran her finger down Sarah's cheek. When they looked down, Ram was sleeping holding the side of Sarah's breast with a small hand.

Without having to be asked, Nina collected him and started toward the door she had come in from. After the period of adjustment that comes with every new baby, the couple she was walking away from had found their way back into each other's arms and they didn't need an audience for that.

One quick look back as she heard the first moan, Nina could see from the kiss they were sharing long talks were over for this part of the night. Passing by the guards her only advice was, "Ten more paces wouldn't be such a bad idea. Believe me anyone foolish enough to interrupt them now will be missing a body part for doing so."

"By the pharaoh, Nina?" asked one of the guards who followed his partner in moving further away from the door.

"No I would have to say the feisty small blonde one is the one to look out for," laughed Nina. *Maybe another ten paces wouldn't hurt*, thought the two guards simultaneously. They could only imagine what the queen would find the easiest to cut off.

The End  
(For now anyway)

Thanks for reading. This was just a quick check on the girls to see how they were doing with the new addition to their family. Let me know what you think at [terrali20@yahoo.com](mailto:terrali20@yahoo.com). For those of you out there waiting, the end of this one means we now head back to New Orleans. The Simoneaux brothers will soon find out what the term 'Up to your ass in alligators' really means