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OUTCAST OF ABRAM : EXCERPT

Sarai became rich beyond measure through Pharaoh's lavish generosity, but she was insatiable. She was a contrary woman of wild extremes. As beautiful as her features, she was malicious and caustic, as fluid as her dance – her nature was rigid and uncompromising, she was as abrupt as she was graceful and as niggling as she was expansive. But mighty Pharaoh was amused and obsessed by her quicksilver temperament.

On the day that Sarai was finally summoned to the bedchamber of Pharaoh, She was most beautiful to behold. She wore the lightest of transparent gossamer tunics, embellished with gold all around the hem, which flowed and shimmered as she walked nearly naked through the passageway. Her neck was adorned with twelve intricate gold rings rising from her shoulders towards her chin that fit her dimensions flawlessly. Her ripe round breasts were quite bare, as is our custom. Refusing a wig, she chose to garnish her own gleaming chestnut hair with lapis beads woven into braids that held pearls and other fine gemstones that He had presented her with. She was then carefully veiled in translucent silk as a sign of bridal modesty. Thin pale arms were adorned with the finest gold bracelets, at her wrists and coiled around her biceps. At her ears, she wore the earrings presented to her upon the summons to His bed – heavy and precisely matched beautiful mosaics of lapis, emerald and golden nuggets. Her eyes were kohled to a smoldering perfection, and her body had been bathed in fragrant waters, shaved and

anointed with sensuous oils and perfumed with the richest aphrodisiacs of our people since the morning.

On the threshold of that most magnificent bedchamber, He did not embrace her, kiss her, or even take her hand. The curtains closed upon them and we returned with the escort to the slave quarters. Sarai returned to the women's domicile at dawn. Spent, disheveled and undone. She wore only a plain linen wrap for cover.

Three days later the palace was filled with commotion. The Pharaoh had been stricken with an evil noxious disease. No one except the Royal Egyptian wab sekhmet Tuthemhabmet had seen our Lord all day. As the Pharaoh's own priest-physician, it fell to Tuthemhabmet to discover the nature of the entity that was intruding upon the good spirit of Pharaoh, possessing and usurping His strength. Tuthemhabmet would isolate himself for two days in the temple of Imhotep, powerful God of medicine, to meditate. Four of his most gifted scribes were posted beyond Pharaoh's chambers walking and chanting a prescribed incantation for our Lord's good health. Hour after hour they walked round and round, muttering the magical words over and over and over.

The next day, we were told that Tuthemhabmet remained in the temple invoking powerful magic. We could hear him praying for the help of the Gods to manifest a cure. Every now and then he would request a certain ingredient: honey, coriander, once he asked for lye. At last, his eunuch was dispatched to deliver a blessed amulet, a gift from Imhotep himself for our Pharaoh's renewed health. On the third day Tuthemhabmet concluded that our Lord had been possessed of a foreign and putrid spirit, but that He was healing and would regain His vitality very soon.

Two days later, it was a glorious sight to see Pharaoh once again striding through the palace with a lusty appetite and a strong constitution. One week later, Sarai was again summoned to the royal bed of our mighty Pharaoh. Again, we bathed her and anointed her with exquisite care. Precious oils and aromatics were employed to extravagance. Her raiment was of rich Persian silk, as transparent as a spider's web. Around her hips she wore a girdle of gold intricately fashioned to represent two serpents coiled and intertwined one with the other's head in his mouth in an ornate elaborate gem-encrusted clasp that fell below her navel. She wore jewels at her ankles, wrists and in her own hair. Again she was admitted to His bedchamber. At the dawn, she returned to her apartments disheveled and naked.

The next day, our holy Pharaoh was again unwell.

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