

The Queen

Advice given to me:

- add more feeling
 - add more suspense
 - clarify when she is, and who the rulers are
 - be more specific about the time periods she is living in
- "this story ends with a beginning"

This story begins with an end. The end of a life. Queen Nefertiti, royal wife to Pharaoh Akenathen, ruler in Ancient Egypt, took her final breath in 1330 BC, and began her journey to the underworld.

In ancient Egypt ~~On Earth~~, Nefertiti was known as one of the most beautiful and beloved queens to ever walk the Earth. Even in death, she was radiant. ~~a beauty to behold.~~

Although she succeeded her late husband, Nefertiti was pained to leave behind her six lovely daughters. Nefertiti managed to successfully navigate the dangerous underworld journey, and arrived _____ to face her final judgement. Although a very proud, capable, and confident woman, Nefertiti was not immune to the rainbow of emotions that come with death. As Nefertiti waited anxiously for her sins to be weighed, and her soul to be judged, the formidable God of the Dead and the Underworld, God Osiris, laid his eyes upon her delicate and elegant features, and instantly felt sorrow and compassion for such a powerful and dignified woman. Osiris' wife, Isis (Goddess of Healing and Magic), was a beautiful, resourceful and empowered woman – Osiris felt a similar respect and reverence upon seeing Nefertiti, that he felt for his wife. fell instantly in love, it was not love – it was admiration. It was not desire – it was appreciation. But most importantly, it was not a woman who he wished to possess or adore – Nefertiti was a woman who he wished to respect. She had proven herself a devoted wife, loving mother, and formidable ruler – she was a woman to be revered. Osiris was known to be a merciful, and forgiving God, who was fair and kind to those who passed through from one life to the next. He was considered an honest and fair god. As he reigned, and presided over the proceedings before him, he watched Nefertiti ~~her~~ in line, gracefully awaiting her turn for judgement. His heart ached to protect ~~be with~~ her, as ~~but~~ he knew that the underworld was no place for a woman of such grace, ~~and~~ beauty, and achievement. Without so much as a conversation with her, Osiris used his power and magic, and instantly returned Nefertiti to the land of the living, forever immortal, so that the world could always feel the warmth of her glow. Osiris felt merciful, and content in his decision, knowing that he had provided her a reward for her accomplishments while in the world of the living. He had no intention of repayment, thanks, or even staying in contact – this simple act of honour and recognition was gift enough. Osiris respected and admired strong and confident women, and Nefertiti had proven to be both. Nefertiti, unaware of such a gift from the gods, awoke one morning on the outskirts of the Valley of Kings, and stumbled towards the city. Her body had been lain to rest among pharaohs, queens, and other royal family members, in a ceremony befitting a ruling queen. However, her journey across the valley was not easy, and her confusion and uncertainty made her doubtful. Had she not died? Had she not been buried with her ancestors, and late husband? Why was she now alone in the desert?

Set, God of war, chaos and thunder, saw this, and immediately smiled a wicked smile at the thought of toying with his brother Osiris' plans. Set, as God of Disorder, did not share the same noble characteristics as his brother – he was wicked, mischievous, and reveled in the misery of others. He and his brother had previously had several unpleasant and disastrous interactions – this was yet another opportunity for Set to meddle with Osiris' happiness. After all, what better way to get revenge on Osiris, than by sully the gift that Osiris bestowed upon someone of importance to him.

After all, Osiris held no jurisdiction in the land of the living. Osiris was able to help this woman, and give her immortality, but she was off limits to him while she was in the land of the living. After Osiris granted immortality to Nefertiti, he immediately re-consumed himself with his responsibilities in the underworld, and she was forgotten. To Set, Osiris' gift was an opportunity. If Set could not attack Osiris directly, then he would get back at his brother through Nefertiti. Set, unaware that Osiris held no further investment in Nefertiti, misguidedly set himself to securing Nefertiti's downfall and ruin.

“Immortality is what you want, then my dear brother, she will endure forever”. Set ~~instantly~~promptly used his authority and power to cause upset and mischief. With a waive of his hand, the people of Egypt hardened their thoughts to her name, and instantly shut out any possibility of her making a magical or ~~miraculous~~godly return to Earth, from the underworld.

When Nefertiti returned to the city, she could not convince a single soul that she was who she claimed to be – after all, why would a supposed dead-reborn queen be walking outside of the palace, alone, and without guards. The great Queen Nefertiti had died, and her body had been properly laid to rest in the Valley of the Kings – surely this woman claiming to be Queen Nefertiti was an imposter. Set’s magic had worked – no one would believe her. She felt lost, scared, and confused. What a frightening world, where one’s identity no longer existed, and one’s place no longer welcoming. Nefertiti, completely unaware of Osiris’ gift, or of Set’s mischief, could not make sense of what had happened.

She was rejected by her own people, as being a fake, and a lunatic. Without title, money, servants, or family, Nefertiti was forced to accept her fate, and resign herself to her new, lower station in life. It did not take long for Nefertiti to figure out that she had been ‘reborn’, and that she was apparently now immortal. She assumed that when her sins had been weighed, that by some miraculous occurrence, she had been delivered back to the land of the living. However, this seemingly fortunate happening, was coupled with the sad awareness that she could no longer see her six beautiful daughters, or exist among her people. With sad resignation, but determined resolve, Nefertiti accepted her new fate, and carried on.

Nefertiti roamed the land for centuries, moving on when questions arose of her lack of apparent ageing. She was forced to work jobs which she ~~saw~~was as far beneath her station – servant, cosmetics, and entertainer. Some days were harder for her than others – she felt frustration, anger, and fatigue. She missed royal life, and she missed being ... substantial. Being expendable was not what she was used to being, or feeling. However, despite feeling alone and, at times downright dejected, she also felt grateful, and appreciative; she had after all been given an incredible gift. This duality of emotions... this wavering between ups and downs... this vacillation between feeling empowered and feeling disenfranchised... the lack of surety combined with the spirit of adventure, was what drove Nefertiti forwards.

Centuries passed, and Set decided that it was time to pay Nefertiti another visit. By this point, she found herself living in Greece. Nefertiti had managed to become quite skilled in pottery. She had begun to achieve a respectable level of admiration for her work, and was beginning to prosper. Set, his mischievous gaze cast upon Nefertiti, decided that it was time to meddle once again. Set watched Nefertiti working, and upon seeing her most grandiose and formidable vases, knew how best to intervene. A very wealthy family – the Berlusconi family - who commissioned a black and gold vase with depictions of Zeus and Poseidon~~gods and goddesses~~, returned ed to Nefertiti’s shop to purchase the vase that she had expertly crafted~~made~~. As the wealthy couple left her shop, with the vase in hand, not only a few feet from the door, Set used his trickery to shatter the vase. ~~Berlusconi~~The man holding the vase tried clutching the falling pieces, but it was too late. The vase was ruined, and it was not his fault. Nefertiti was accused of intentionally selling defective goods. Due to Berlusconi~~the man~~’s status, influence, and wealth, Nefertiti was ~~declared~~instantly guilty, and immediately sentenced to slavery. She lost her shop, her savings, and her freedom. She felt as shattered as the vase. Surely, no Egyptian queen in history had fallen so far.

For decades, Nefertiti worked as a slave – bought and sold several times over – no family ever owned her long enough to notice her immortality. And yet, Nefertiti approached each day with a mostly neutral resolve. She waited patiently for her time to come again.

Centuries passed. At one point, Nefertiti managed to secure her freedom, from one particular family, for years of continual service. Hundreds of years of slavery – it had been hard, so very, very hard, but it had not broken her. Her spirit would simple not allow that to happen. Although free, she was far from poverty. Once Again, Nefertiti found herself at the bottom of society, forced to work hard, and struggle for every comfort and necessity. But hard work was no match for her inner strength. After all, each day on Earth was a reminder of how pure or righteous her life must have been before her judgement – to resent her current existence, would be to lack appreciation for such a gift from the

gods. If Nefertiti valued anything, it was the opinion of the gods; you do not want to feel the wrath of the gods. In this way, Nefertiti was determined to exist with gratitude, and appreciation.

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Years passed, and Set felt once again that it was time to play games. When he checked in on Nefertiti, she was living in Rome. The year 50 AD was looking like a promising oneyear. Nefertiti had managed to work hard and rise up, despite the rigid structure of society, and found peace and happiness with her position as scribe to Emperor Nero. She was back among 'her people' – people of power, prestige, authority, and wealth. One day, while scribing for Emperor Nero, Set changed her writings when she had finished. Nero, seeing these 'mistakes', immediately banished Nefertiti from Rome, accusing her of intentionally trying to mislead him of his financial accounting. Nefertiti, ashamed, alone, disheartened... and immortal... left the city in shame, once more to wander the land in search of a new beginning. Again, she felt shame and dejection; somehow she had been removed yet again from 'home'. She had chosen several paths in life, but leaving Rome was not of her choosing. At times, Nefertiti dwelled upon her failures. Other times, Nefertiti used them as a source of inspiration to seek out new opportunities. Today however, was not a day for optimism. It was a day that she would allow herself to once again, feel loss, destitution, and undoing. Tomorrow would be a different day.

Nefertiti spent centuries moving from one city to the next, and from one village to another. She worked as a laundress, as a shop keep, and finally, as a florist. In the late 18th century, in Paris, Nefertiti had nestled once again, into a life which she had made her own. She took pride in her work, no matter the task, no matter how menial it seemed. She was a beautiful woman, who brought beauty to everything she did. She knew how to command respect, command a civilization... and now, how to arrange a bouquet of flowers. Nefertiti's shop was an unimposing, but welcoming olfactory delight. As a woman with a keen business sense, Nefertiti had intentionally chosen a location close to Versailles. Nefertiti's feminine and elegant presence had caught the eye of a young French noble, and under the advice of the noble, was summoned to court by Louis XVI. Nefertiti found her place among the ladies at court, and for a brief moment, enjoyed the comforts and niceties of palace life. She was finally where she wanted to be – among leaders, among influence, and among privilege. Although not the queen of the palace, it felt overwhelmingly reassuring to return to a familiar, but now distant experience. Lavish lifestyles, exuberance, and pampering. She was home.

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However, as fate, and godly powers were at odds with her success, it was at this time, when Set involved himself once again in her life. Upon seeing Nefertiti's glowing happiness and success, Set became infuriated – why had she not remained a slave? Why had he not defeated her emotionally when she was ruined the last time? Why could his victim not remain a victim?

Instead of simply removing Nefertiti from the palace, Set removed the entire royal system from existence~~the country~~. Chaos, bloodshed, and instability reigned, instead of royalty. In 1789, Set ignited the French Revolution. Nefertiti was forced to flee Paris. King Louis XVI was most unceremoniously beheaded, and a new, grittier-era began. Nefertiti, no longer a lady of the court, escaped to the French countryside. She found work here and there, working as an inn keeper and seamstress. She did not feel the same loss as when she lost her freedom in Greece, but the pain was unfortunately familiar.

Finally becoming a master of managing fear, and quelling her worries, she had learned how to become resourceful, independent, and self-reliant. With no family to turn to, and no family fortune to help her, her wandering lifestyle had taught her how to be truly strong and resilient. She headed North to Calais, and boarded a boat to England. Perhaps a new life, in a different~~new~~ land, would help her find a new-homeland. Nefertiti stepped on to new soil, with the assurance that the future here would promise her more peace and stability.

Time passed. Sun rises, sun sets, and days blend into one another. In 1942, Nefertiti found herself working with the British Secret Intelligence, during the Second World War. Her life had been fairly peaceful for the last 153 years, despite several conflicts, and a world war. Although her country had known hardship, Nefertiti had gracefully risen, yet again, towards the top of society. While money can be taken, and respect repealed, her steadfast and resourceful character remained.

Nefertiti had been working on translating secret intelligence for the British, when once again, Set emerged uninvitedly into her life. He could not believe this frustrating woman – no matter how many times he tried to break her, she rose, unbroken, and stronger than before.

Nefertiti had submitted her most recent translations to her supervisor. The manilla envelope she handed him, lay on his desk, unopened. Set saw to it that the envelope magically made its way into the wrong hands. Nefertiti, unfairly accused, of leaking documents of national importance, found herself, once again, relieved of her duties.

Nefertiti, familiar with loss and disappointment, used this setback as an opportunity. She boarded a ship for Halifax, and sailed to Canada, where she began working at a munitions factory, to support the war effort. It seemed only yesterday that she was boarding a ship for a different land; with grace and imposing presence, she boarded this new ship, to sail to a new land. So far from home, but so close to where fate would have her belong.

After the war, Nefertiti relocated to Toronto, and then eventually worked her way west towards Vancouver. She began working as a temp in a printing and publishing company, before meandering her way through web design and marketing. Nefertiti had made quite a name for herself in the industry, and was quite successful. An ancient queen of a desert civilization, had become an expert at digital presentation. She had begun to consider Vancouver 'home', and even toyed with the idea of adopting a cat.

But when you're Nefertiti, happiness can only last so long. Set enjoyed this new digital age, and the digital chaos it could cause. He loved tormenting Nefertiti. He couldn't wait to torment her again. He loved watching her fail. With a simple, solitary, powerful glance, Set changed Nefertiti's fate once again. Her digital identity had now been stolen, her accounts all locked, and her e-files all deleted. Set crippled her financially, and effectively erased her legal identity. She had been ruined, yet again. She could no longer conduct her web design business, access her bank accounts, or even login to her email. Nefertiti, as a digital being, ceased to be. She had had enough. Hundreds of years of ups and downs, successes and failures, had finally caught up to her. She had navigated death, financial ruin, slavery, monarchy collapse, and now, identity theft. Being deprived of her identity in a digital age pushed her too far. Nefertiti sank to the floor, and for the first time in centuries, she cried. For the loss of dignity, the loss of hope, and the loss of belonging, to an underworld where she was destined to be. She remained there, on the floor, feeling shattered, frayed, and wrecked.

She left the building, and waited for her bus to take her home. Solemnly, she stood in line, unsure of which steps to take next. Vacantly, she stared ahead of her, letting her thoughts drift through her consciousness, like the River Styx, a meandering creek.

She boarded the bus, and took an empty seat, unaware that the impeccably~~finely~~ dressed man sitting next to her was none other than her personal tormentor, Set. He had come to admire his handywork, and revel in the destruction. Set was often among mortals, but never exposed his true identity.

"Tough day?" he asked, with a subtly smug and distant tone. He couldn't help but smile to himself, and delight in the knowledge that he held such power over her. Nefertiti, pausing only to momentarily refocus her attention back to the present, slowly raised her gaze from a formless distance, to the man at her side. She sighed heavily, looked him directly in the eyes, with a fatigued air of resignation, and quietly stated: "nothing I can't handle." With that, she turned away unemotionally, and resumed her personal and quiet contemplation. Displeased with her answer, Set tried again, to force his victim to break before him. "Come on. You can tell me. Everyone has a breaking point. Surely you found something you can't handle." Nefertiti, stoic and unshakeable, in the most powerfully detached and sober response that could be commanded, simply responded in a way that highlighted her unwavering steadfastness and remarkably royal caliber of fortitude and resolve: "nothing can break that which was created unbreakable. I was destined for greatness... and destiny always wins." With that, she simply glanced away, with a neutral and dignified air.

Set, for his part, huffed indignantly. As Ggod of Wwar and eChaos, how had he been unable to shake this infuriating woman? How had he managed to cause so much chaos in her life, but not her soul? He exhaled angrily, and stared out the window. This was beyond exasperation. This reached further than loathing. This was something entirely new for Set... this was... this was... this was love.

On a busy bus, on a busy day, in a busy part of town, silently sat a god of war, and an immortal queen. While this story began with end, it must now end... with a beginning.
~~Both of whom, sat silently, pondering their next move.~~