



# A SLEEPLESS MIRAGE

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"What the hell?" I looked in grimace at the scene before me.

"Pretty. Isn't it?"

"No, it isn't," I shot back.

"I believe what I said is called 'sarcasm', Ms Carter."

I couldn't help but glare at the man beside me. I was in an ancient pyramid in Memphis, a city in Egypt. It is believed to have been built during the reign of Djoser of the 3rd dynasty. The pharaoh had built it before he had ever built the step pyramid.

As an Egyptologist, I really didn't do anything big until now for some unwanted circumstances. But this case had really sparked my interest. Now I am starting to think it was a mistake coming here. I could feel the nausea creeping up to me. With every passing moment, it was becoming unbearable to stand in this blood-covered chamber. Oh god, are those brains on the wall?

"Shall we proceed?"

"Yeah, sure."

Fortunately, Akhem – a local tourist – agreed to come with me though he himself had never entered this pyramid before. Other locals were afraid to even come near it. But they aren't to be blamed considering the string of murders that have taken place in the recent few days. And that is what intrigued me the most. A

place of historical value and also a crime scene? I had to work my way around to enter here.

The pathway got darker as we proceeded. After what had felt like an eternity of walking, we finally reached the biggest chamber. Akhem started lighting all the fire torches there. Once the room was completely illuminated, all the tombs came into sight. There were about eight of them, owned by a priest of the royal court and his family. But that's all the information I was able to acquire.

Unfortunately, no one in this region knew anything about the priest. All of them suspected these mummies to be cursed. And that's probably why the murders were taking place.

I turned around to find Akhem. But what met my eyes was nothing.

"Akhem?" I called out. "Akhem!"

Something was wrong here. I stepped out of the chamber. Suddenly, I wasn't in the pyramid anymore. I was back in my house in the States. In front of me laid my own corpse. My limbs had been torn apart, intestine pulled out, blood gushing out from my nose and mouth. It was everywhere – spilled all over the floor and walls. And then I remembered.

What was I doing in the pyramid? I asked myself. My work was done; the project was successful. One of the tombs was also taken for experiments. I had gathered all information regarding the

pyramid and the priest, and had returned from Egypt three days ago.

I remember going to Egypt and exploring the pyramid with Akhem. I remember roaming the chambers and pathways, examining artefacts, tombs and engravings on the walls. I remember going to those chambers, stained with the blood of innocent victims. I remember coming back home. I remember the words engraved on one of the tombs in ancient Egyptian.

*"All shall fall like others."*

What did it mean? Who were the 'others' here? Am I dead? Or will I die like the corpse in front me? Am I in the pyramid right now? Did I ever return? What is happening right now?

Was it all real? Or just an awful nightmare?

My head started spinning and I unwarily stepped back. Being unable to stand anymore, I fell. As I tried to see through my blurry eyes, I had found a tall figure hovering over me. It had its body and limbs stitched together. Its rotten skin could be seen through torn cloth on its body. It was a living corpse – a mummy.

I was back in the pyramid, and I was certain I, too, shall face the same gruesome fate.

All my instincts told me to run and I did. I didn't care if I was dead or not. "This creature will kill me if I don't run," I thought. All that mattered was to save

myself at this moment.

Suddenly, the ground beneath me collapsed and I fell down. Ignoring the pain from the fall I had taken, I tried to scramble to my feet. Before I could move again, someone grabbed a fistful of my hair and bashed my face on the ground. I screamed. It was that thing again and I was in that chamber of tombs.

Reality came crashing down. I did return home. I did come back safe and sound. But death always has a way of finding you. What I saw was merely a prediction of my death. And I shall die a gruesome death accordingly. Those words came true. *I will too fall.* I felt agonising pain as it began to tear my limbs. Having lost my will to fight, I prayed and prayed. All of this was too horrifying to be my reality.

"Is this what death feels like? Drowned in despair, slowly fading away," I wondered to myself.

As I slowly succumbed to darkness, I looked at that thing. Its face showed madness but its eyes showed nothing. I didn't reminisce my whole life. I only regretted not having enough time. I felt cold, saw all blurry and in my last moments, with the last bit of my conscious, I accepted my regrets and faded into the arms of death.

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