

The Curse of Nefertiti

Charline Ratcliff

 **Strategic Book Publishing**
New York, New York

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2009 Charline Ratcliff. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

Strategic Book Publishing
An imprint of AEG Publishing Group
845 Third Avenue, 6th Floor—6016
New York, NY 10022
<http://www.strategicbookpublishing.com>

ISBN: 978-1-60693-951-2, 1-60693-951-3

Book Design: Bruce Salender

Printed in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my family, my friends and everyone else who believed in me and helped make this book possible. The writing and completion of this book was the most empowering thing I have ever done for myself. I am also thankful (in advance) to everyone who picks it up and reads it—I hope this book will bring each of you as much joy as it did me when I was writing it.

PROLOGUE

I am running; someone or something is chasing me. I sense a presence, but I have not yet looked to see who my companion is. My only concern is getting to safety, wherever that may be.

It is dark. I'm not sure if it is day or night, or even where I am. I just know that I must keep running. I know I am supposed to go somewhere; I have no idea where or even how I am to get there.

I hear myself speaking as if from a distance. I can't hear what I am saying. I know it has to do with my concern of getting away. How will I get to where I need to go?

A woman's voice responds then to my query. She is a guide; where she came from I have no idea. She seems to speak inside my head, and I find myself grateful for her presence.

Suddenly I find myself on a grassy field. The sun is shining. I see various large, oblong stones; some stand up proudly in the sun while others lie down. I briefly feel their pain of being uncared for and forgotten throughout the centuries before my attention moves away from them.

I still sense the presence of my companion, but again I don't care. My only concern is with getting wherever it is I need to go, not with looking to see who this companion is.

I hear the guide's voice in my head again. It is an odd request, but I do as directed. I climb up to stand on a stone that is

lying on its side. I sense my companion has done the same.

The rock surprises me by moving forward and backward as if I were on a swing. Asking if this will work, I question my guide, although I'm still not sure what "this" is.

What is happening? I wonder silently.

She appears before me then in an effort to ease my fears, assuring me this will work.

As I look at her, the light on her face changes repeatedly. First she is standing in the bright sunlight; then she flickers almost as if she were moving between two dimensions, never really solid in either one of them. She stands solid and still in the sunshine once more until suddenly I am gone instead of her.

It is dark again, but the darkness is receding, and confusion blooms within me.

What has just happened?

As the sky lightens, I see a woman before me black as the night and naked except for hundreds of golden chains encircling her body. Golden stars of different sizes hang from the chains in various places including the ends of her arms where her hands should be.

As I watch transfixed by the mystery of what I am seeing, the stars on the ends of her arms turn into hands, then fingers, and then beautiful golden fingernails. I sense she has directed them to do this, so that I will not be afraid of her.

My focus on her fades as the light gets even brighter, and I start to look around curious about my surroundings.

I am in a large hall, the largest hall I have ever seen; it seems to stretch on forever. All the floors and walls are covered with the same blue tile reminding me of Lapis Lazuli.

In my perusal of this hall, my gaze happens to cross by accident onto my companion, or should I say companions, as I see there are two of them. One man, one woman. I find myself thinking, *this is odd*, as I do not recognize either of them.

Having paused while walking when I espied my companions, I now remember I am here to search for something. I realize I still have no idea what it is I am seeking, but I begin to

move forward.

As I continue, I come across a wall I had not noticed before. From a distance it was invisible since everything is covered with the same blue tile.

Curious now and finding it odd to have a lone wall in the middle of nowhere, I walk around it only to discover it is the back of a room. It has no door, because there is no fourth wall to complete it. I enter; and my fingers trail along the tiles beside me as I walk its length.

Having found nothing upon reaching the end, I feel despair well up within me. I turn around intending to leave this cubby, but as I do, something protrudes from the wall that had not been there before. I turn back quickly to examine it.

It is Egyptian. I have seen many pictures of an object similar to this, but I have never seen the bust in person. I recognize it as the likeness of Nefertiti. I would recognize her famous visage anywhere.

I feel a momentary sense of confusion. I know there was nothing in that room a moment ago, but then my confusion is forgotten as I continue to look at the object.

Eye level with me and strikingly white, it looks as if it has been formed from solid alabaster. Silver light shines forth from within, and I find myself baffled by this.

How odd.

I speak to my companions then; I ask if they have ever seen anything like this before. I wonder aloud if this could be what I am seeking. I receive no answer, and I am unsure if they have even heard me.

I have an urgent sense that we must leave this place immediately. I sense whatever is chasing us has finally reached us. I somehow know instinctively that whoever or whatever it is, it brings only death for me.

I look back along the path I have just come, and I see a great blackness rushing toward me. I realize it is here. Now.

I hear footsteps behind me. I turn, seeing my companions running to me. I watch them and feel confusion as they run past me and head directly for the darkness that draws inexorably

closer.

I understand then that my companions are my guardians. I know they are about to give up their lives, so I might escape.

I open my mouth to plead with them to stop. Sensing this, the woman pauses momentarily. She turns to meet my eyes.

“You must go now,” she says gently.

I feel heartbreak knowing I will lose them both in moments. I stand still and unmoving, unsure if I should heed her words.

“Leave now!” she commands me again. “For if you do not escape all will be for naught!”

The steel edge I hear in her voice snaps me out of my indecisiveness. I nod, knowing I must run as she has ordered.

“Complete the task that has been set before you and none of this will transpire.”

Those are the last words I hear from her. I know without looking that she is gone; they both are gone. Tears stream down my face as I run while my heart thunders loudly in my chest.

“KHENTAMENTI,” I hear before I awaken. I bolt upright in bed gasping for breath.