

Excerpts from *The Marriage of Nefertiti – Book Two*:

Nefertiti's guardians sat together under a cluster of tall palm trees that had been left intact in the renovation of the "palace," where she had been sequestered. The band of physicians, courtiers and handmaidens met to compare notes, and decide what else she needed to learn to complete her training to join the royal family. Everyone was pleased her health had improved, but universal displeasure at her posture remained.

In her own rooms, Nefertiti was tallying her gains instead of studying the images of God she was tasked with memorizing. She always began by first remembering that day in the audience room when her uncle, the Pharaoh, said, "There will be additional regalia commissioned for you, but for now, see these tokens of your impending new rank as royal wife" and pointed to a row of boxes on the side table.

She had sprung up to open them, clapping her hands delightedly. Four matched sets, some with necklace and earrings, others with diadems and bracelets. Exquisite dainty work with carnelians set as flowers; filigreed gold in the style of Syrian work, chunky bangle style bracelets set with multiple stones of turquoise and carnelian, a large, multi-strand collar with all the colors of the rainbow. And a golden

diadem. She felt she must have the best jewelry of any bride ever with this cache. Even now, they comforted her on bad days. She had been allowed to bring them so she could practice royal demeanor.

She continued. Let's see. I have my own household full of people who wait on me with a bow, all loyal to me and willing to do my bidding. I have two women to do my hair and one to paint my fingers and toes with henna. I have three maids who help me bathe and put on whichever new gown I chose to wear. My skin has never been so soft. The woman who paints the kohl around my eyes is so skilled I think they look larger and more seductive.

She could re-affirm this in all the mirrors placed everywhere so she could see her beauty. She never suspected it was to assist her correct her posture, and stop her darting around; to encourage graceful walking. She could also practice the graceful gentle wave they encouraged for royal ceremonies.

She certainly agreed with Prince Amenhotep that their parents had certainly been withholding their royal due from them. She should have had all this done for her at home instead of sharing one old grumpy maid with her younger sister. It was all fine for Mutnodjmet – she'd never

amount to anything anyway. . .

True the lessons were tedious, but she was resigned that learning them was her key to leaving here to actually marry and begin to live with her Prince. Her people never brought up the disagreeable past - the tactics she had used - to bring this about - perhaps they had been forbidden to speak of it. No one believed little Nefertiti, from a sheltered home, had the grit to bear all that happened, but she would prove them wrong. Still, it really was too horrible to dwell, on so she dreamily began planning which of her jewelry she would wear for her wedding.

Over under the palm trees, Lady Takhat offered a bright idea. "Now, don't laugh at me. She willingly agrees to learn things that enhance admiration of her. I have been teaching her how to wave, like the royal family does. In royal processions she will ride a chariot like the rest of them. I suggest we put her in one here and bounce it around a bit. She will quickly learn she can't cling on for dear life and the crowd would guffaw if she fell off on her royal ass."

She looked around for reactions.

"Splendid idea! agreed the Chief Physician. "That will correct her posture in two weeks. Especially if she realizes he won't let her ride with

him unless she is sufficiently ornamental."

