

His Majesty, Her Self

by  
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE
Hatshepsut	a Queen who becomes Pharaoh	20s
Senemut	the Queen's lover	30s
Isis	mother to the Boy King	20s
Various servants, priests, scribes and gods		

#### TIME

The First Dynasty of the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt, 1530ish BC.

#### DEVELOPMENT

This play is a work in progress, first conceived as a part of Clubbed Thumb's Early Career Writers Group.

## PART 1: THE HUMANS

### WIFE TO AMUN

*Temple of Amun in Thebes.*

*HATSHEPSUT, Queen of Egypt, enters and kneels before a statue of AMUN, God of Wind. She prays to him.*

HATSHEPSUT

Amun. The Unknown One. God of Wind. I was 8 years old when I was first told I would serve as God's Wife to you. I suddenly knew my body was not mine but yours. I felt comfort in no longer being responsible for what this body meant. For the past 12 years, I've known the steps my life would take. I was a Pharaoh's daughter, God's Wife, Pharaoh's sister, Pharaoh's wife. I thought I would be mother to a Pharaoh, until my daughter was born. And I knew, I would either die Queen or live long enough to be a dowager. I knew every step on the pyramid of my life and I took comfort in the knowing. Order amid the chaos.

Amun, I miss the chaos. Amun, I'm bored. My ancestors defeated the Hyksos, re-united the two Egypts. My father expanded the kingdom larger than ever before, but my husband has yet to do anything remarkable. He was always the weakest of my father's children. How he outlived our other brothers I'll never know... Excuse me, I should not speak of the Pharaoh that way.

Amun, I am Hatshepsut, Queen to Pharaoh Thutmose II, God's Wife, and I am bored of the pageantry. Not of this, this may be the high light of my week. \*

I perform here for you, but, I leave here, and I have other duties to my husband, and it is not the same. I see it as another pageant, laying with him, but I cannot perform in the way he wants. In the bedroom, he tries to become a man and I try to become a statue. It is as if he doesn't see me as anything more than a vessel, one of many, in which to store the next heir. It is as if my face could be any face, my body any body.

*She begins to seduce the statue. She begins to remove layers in a strip tease.*

HATSHEPSUT

This is a pageant I understand. I take pleasure in it. I must, it is my duty, but it's all metaphorical, it's all performance, until it isn't. Amun, you created yourself, amid chaos and nothingness, creating order in that chaos. You remained invisible until we humans drew you out. And here in Thebes, we raise you up as King of Gods.

You came to us to stop the Hyksos. You came to us to re-open the trade routes. You united the two ladies, Upper and Lower Egypt, into one, great empire.

I've come here today, laid bare before you to ask one question. Please, Amun, please answer me: is this it? All the steps that every royal woman takes, princess, God's Wife, Pharaoh's Wife, Queen Mother, Dowager Queen, Dead. Why are we human's only born once when God's are born and reborn every day? If my body can create an heir, can it not create the life I desire?

Amun, please answer me. Amun, come to me. Amun, speak! Amun. Amun! Amun—

*A servant enters.*

SERVANT

My Queen—

HATSHEPSUT

Do you mind? I'm having a religious experience.

SERVANT

The king is dead.

HATSHEPSUT

*(like an orgasm)* Oh! Oh! Ohhhhhhh, Amun!

SERVANT

You're clearly upset so I'm going to—

*Servant exits. Hatshepsut looks to the statue.*

HATSHEPSUT

Thank you, Amun.

### A SIGN FROM THE GODS

*A peasant speaks excitedly!*

PEASANT #1

A sign from the Gods! A sign from Ra himself! You had to see it for yourself to understand the magic but I will attempt to unfold to you what my mortal eyes did witness.

\*

## PEASANT #2

Earlier today, at the procession of the Gods, the march they do every season with the statue of Ra, something fantastic happened. You know me, I always set up camp the night before to get the best seat at the end of the route, near the temple's entrance. Usually, you know, the pharaoh sits at the front of the front of the procession, but the king being newly you know dead you know, and the many heirs being so young, the late king's children were all permitted to sit near the march and bless the procession on it's way into the temple.

## PEASANT #3

I was right across the road from them. Honestly the royal children look like any other child, but there was a golden glow around them. Perhaps it was all the gold they were wearing. When the procession came into view, their royal palanquin was lifted and that's when it happened.

## PEASANT #1

As the statue neared the entrance to the temple, it started to turn, ever so slightly. It turned and the men holding it looked around like "what's this?"

## PEASANT #2

"What's happening?"

## PEASANT #3

I don't know, oh my gods," and next thing they know, the statue of Ra was pointing, you know how the statue is pointing with the ankh? Well now it was pointing right at Thutmose II! Wait no the second was his father this is the third I think. Or is he the fourth?

## PEASANT #2

The statue of Ra pointed right at this little royal boy, right at his small, golden chest. And it hit me: who else had golden glowing skin? Ra, the Sun God!

## PEASANT #1

It was a sign from the Gods! An heir has been selected! Thutmose III—I'm pretty sure its the third—will be Pharaoh!

### BEFORE THE CROWNING

*In a dressing room.*

*Hatshepsut is doing her make-up for Thutmose III's crowning. She finishes one side of her eye liner and tries for the other.*

HATSHEPSUT

I can never get these even.

*SENEMUT, the Royal Tutor enters. He is a man of common birth who has skillfully risen through the ranks of the palace.*

SENEMUT

My Queen.

*Hatshepsut smiles.*

HATSHEPSUT

I've been wondering about that: am I still queen? I am no longer married to the King. The new King is 8 years old. And I'm not even his mother. But he will marry my daughter, so I'm Future Step Mother of the Pharaoh—

SENEMUT

That is precisely what I came to discuss with you.

*She stops doing her make-up, suddenly worried.*

HATSHEPSUT

I am still God's Wife, correct? My mother was Amun's Wife until her death.

SENEMUT

You will retain that title, but you may need to devote more time away from the temple.

HATSHEPSUT

The funeral is done, my husband is being entombed as we speak. After this crowning, I imagine my schedule will be how it's always been. Minus at least one or two wifely duties.

SENEMUT

The Boy King is 8 years old, as you said. There are decision that must be made, meetings held, ceremonies, ceremonies and more ceremonies. The Boy King needs a reagent. Do you see where I'm going with this? It's you, Hatshepsut. The Council has spoken. Once the boy is crowned, you will be Queen Reagent.

HATSHEPSUT

What about his mother?

SENEMUT

His mother is common born, you are of royal blood. You are the most pious woman in Thebes, people here know you. You're great in front of a crowd, perfect on stage. The Council and I both agree, there could be no other. We cannot trust men who have the fire in their blood for power and violence. An uncle would take the throne for himself. An outsider would threaten the royal bloodline. And any other woman might be try to install their own son on the throne. But you, who have spent the last decade serving Amun, serving your father, Thutmose I, your husband, Thutmose II, would not do anything to cross Thutmose III, the incarnate, a God in human form. Not with your daughter lined up to be the future Queen. Neither the Council nor the people would expect much. Observe the holy festivals. Keep the peace. That's all we ask.

\*  
\*

HATSHEPSUT

I don't know what to say. Do I need to say something?

SENEMUT

The Council has spoken.

HATSHEPSUT

Alright then... I suppose this was a step I was not expecting but it is a step foretold by the Gods regardless.

SENEMUT

Undoubtedly.

HATSHEPSUT

I shall do this thing. I shall fulfill my duty. For Amun.

*He reveals the Pharaoh's headdress.*

\*

SENEMUT

For today. You'll wear it on stage.

HATSHEPSUT

I'll be on stage?

SENEMUT

We'll be announcing your regency alongside the new King. You'll give a small speech—

HATSHEPSUT

I didn't know I would be speaking.

SENEMUT

I've written everything down for you, don't worry. Standard procedures.

HATSHEPSUT

The headdress feels like a bit much.

\*

SENEMUT

It's not as if people will mistake you for a man. You'll be wearing a dress, not a kilt. Unless... do you want to wear a kilt?

HATSHEPSUT

Why would I want to wear a kilt?

SENEMUT

We'll save the headdress for now. Just go out there as yourself. I'll be watching from the wings. And Hattie?

\*

HATSHEPSUT

Yes?

SENEMUT

Your eyeliner looks perfect. Very even.

### THE CROWNING

*In the throne room.*

\*

*The BOY KING appears on stage as the puppet of a young boy covered in gold. He is controlled by his mother ISIS, a former priestess of common birth. A high priest blesses him before crowning him. The crowd applauds.*

*The Boy King is passed from Isis to Senemut who leads him off stage with the priest. Isis exits separately.*

*Hatshepsut is urged on stage. She is nervous.*

HATSHEPSUTQ

Hello. Good evening, all. How about our new king? Let's give him one more round of applause. How about that gold necklace! Almost big enough to tip him over! Not that our King is not strong, it's only that he is small. Not too small. Perfect for his age. Perfect in every way.

*She begins to read haltingly from Senemut's paper.*

## HATSHEPSUT

People of Thebes, I come to you, humbled before our new King, Thutmose III. A boy his age would normally be playing with his cousins and sisters and brothers and the other children of the palace. Learning his hieroglyphs and the great story of Creation. But Amun has decreed that his time to rule is now—I mean coming soon, but not quite now. For you see... this kingdom is the oldest kingdom in the world. And while we value youth as much as the next civilization, there are times when age is just as prized.

\*

Take me for example. Aged quite a bit more. Not that much more. Some might say the perfect amount. I am a mother, a Queen, and I have had the honor to serve as God's Wife for the last 12 years. Those things are not possible as a child. Or for one of his sex for that matter. I'm getting off track.

Like the goddess Isis raising Horus until he was old enough to take the throne from his uncle Seth, women have always safe guarded young men's power. And I am incredibly humbled, as I said, to have be nominated for that very duty today. A few moment ago, actually.

*She finally gets a good look at the crowd, and goes off script.*

## HATSHEPSUT

I was in the Temple of Amun when I got the news of my husband's passing. When I heard those words, "The King is dead," I felt the void that exists inside your chest once a person departs this world. There was emptiness inside me, but I also felt the presence of Amun, and I knew that through him and his mercy, I would get through this time. This was ordained by the Gods themselves. I believe that, and soon you will too. Thank you. All praise to Amun.

\*

*The crowd cheers!*

WOMEN TALKING

*In a dressing room.*

*Hatshepsut removes her stage make up.*

## ISIS

I'm just saying, my name is actually Isis.

## HATSHEPSUT

I said I was sorry.

ISIS

I was named after the goddess, Isis. In case you weren't aware.

HATSHEPSUT

I know.

ISIS

You're up there like, "I'll be like the goddess, Isis," and I'm like HELLOOOO?

HATSHEPSUT

Was I alright up there? How did I look?

ISIS

Your eye liner was as lopsided as the Nile during the wet season.

HATSHEPSUT

Really?

ISIS

No, ugh, I'm sorry, I'm just—

HATSHEPSUT

Did you want to be reagent? Because I didn't ask for this. Sene only told me today.

ISIS

It's not that. You couldn't have even mentioned me up there? The actual mother of the new King? I doubt they'll be carving my name anywhere at the end of all this.

HATSHEPSUT

You can't even read.

ISIS

Fuck right off, I can read my own name. Also, other, more important people in the future can read. I thought I had more time before I fell into obscurity.

HATSHEPSUT

Is the Queen Mother usually mentioned at these sort of things?

ISIS

How should I know? I've never seen a crowning. I never even saw the former King before he plucked me out of the side-of-the-road temple I was living at in the North. He was the most handsome man I'd ever laid eyes on. He was the only man I'd ever laid eyes on but still. Such deep set, brown eyes. Then I saw Senemut and I was like wait what? That's what men look like?

\*

HATSHEPSUT

Oh my Gods.

ISIS

Wish I'd let him tutor me along with the boy. Then I might be able to read and have a play thing now that Husband is gone.

HATSHEPSUT

Isis!

ISIS

I'm not drunk! It's a celebration! I can have a glass or two!

HATSHEPSUT

Can we please lower the level of treason in here, please?

ISIS

It's not treason for me anymore. I'm no longer fucking the King, the Boy King is taken care of by you. No one's soul is in danger but my own. But tell me true: that's why they chose you, right? Because I lost all favor with the Gods when I gave up the temple for a gold plated life? A moth drifting from the light of divinity to the golden rays of royalty.

HATSHEPSUT

They didn't quite put it like that.

ISIS

I spend just as long praying now as I did when I was living in the temple. I pray in new ways. The world needs all kinds of people. Drunk mothers. Pious sisters. Ugly Kings.

HATSHEPSUT

Are you sure you're alright? I've never heard you talk about the king like this.

ISIS

Because all this time you've known me, I've held the covetous position of the King's Third Favorite Wife. Things were expected of me. Now, no one expects anything! I gave him an heir, he's a body that's more gauze than human, and I'm nothing!

HATSHEPSUT

You're not nothing. You are Isis, the goddess in human form!

ISIS

The Boy King is learning his gods now. Little idiot is having trouble telling them all apart.

HATSHEPSUT

*(Suddenly serious.)* You should not talk to the King like that.

ISIS

I didn't actually call my son an idiot to his face.

HATSHEPSUT

You shouldn't be saying it at all.

*Tense pause.*

ISIS

You're right. Of course. I got so used to him being my son, just a regular son. A regular royal son which is honestly better than a regular regular son. I assumed you and Husband would have a boy one day and he would take the throne and my little Tutty would stay just my son forever. He also has no clue what's going on. Even at the parade as they lifted him up, he started to cry. He thought all this men were kidnapping him. When I tried to explain that he was King he started asking "where's Daddy?" I tried to tell him what I was taught. That he was in the afterlife, eternally with the Gods, but I don't know. All I know for certain is that he's currently having all his organs ripped from his body and filled up with who knows what and sewed back together because every king must pretend to be Osiris, when the truth is, people are judged by the gods the same whether their coffin is made of gold or cedar, so no I don't know where Daddy is and I don't know where he's going or if either of us will ever see him again.

HATSHEPSUT

I'm sorry. I know you'll miss him.

ISIS

It's not that. I miss myself. I miss whoever I was when I was married to the King.

### THE GREAT ARCHITECT

*Hatshepsut is at a desk drowning in papers. Senemut is with her.*

HATSHEPSUT

Foreman of the Palace?

SENEMUT

An old man with a booming voice. Uncle Abow.

HATSHEPSUT

Commander of the Guards?

SENMUT

A man with something to prove. What about your short cousin, Khan.

HATSHEPSUT

Overseer of the Royal Harem? I guess we no longer need one of those.

SENMUT

The King is dead but his harem is very much alive and in need of over seeing.

HATSHEPSUT

Would you like it, then?

SENMUT

Traditionally, that role goes to a eunuch.

HATSHEPSUT

Sacrifices must be made for the kingdom.

SENMUT

There was a particular title I wanted to draw your attention to.

HATSHEPSUT

The Royal Brazier-bearer?

SENMUT

Do not joke of the BB. They could easily burn down your house if not well trained.

HATSHEPSUT

I will be sure to appoint an uncle with the steadiest of hands. Or perhaps a distant cousin of common blood who would be very grateful for the opportunity.

SENMUT

Good girl. We are currently in want of a Chief Architect. The late King's appointee passed some months before he did. Luckily, the late King's tomb was all but finished, so there was no immediate need to fill the position. But now that the Boy King has ascended, we will need to begin constructing his tomb immediately. And yours as well. As God's Wife, Wife to the Late King, Sister to the Late King, Sister Wife to the King's Mother, and Queen Regent, you are due a modest tomb worthy of your rank and titles. Not on the same level of a King of course. But regal all the same.

HATSHEPSUT

Isn't it odd that royals begin planning for our death the minute we start to really live?

SENEMUT

Better to do it when we're all still in a hopeful mood about the future.

HATSHEPSUT

Who do we know that is an accomplished architect?

SENEMUT

This is more of a ceremonial role. No experience required. I would suggest someone close to you, and the Boy King. Someone who knows your family lineage intimately. Someone who has proven to be a loyal friend and confidant.

HATSHEPSUT

Ineni.

SENEMUT

That old man is likely to die before the plans are even drawn up.

HATSHEPSUT

I'm only teasing. It must be you, of course, it has to be you.

SENEMUT

It is an honor I dreamt not of.

HATSHEPSUT

And I assume it is customary to refuse the role?

SENEMUT

I must refuse it for I am not worthy to be trusted with projects this important.

HATSHEPSUT

But you must take this role. Your Queen Regent commands it.

SENEMUT

There are others more pious, more studied than I.

HATSHEPSUT

But none that I trust as much as you. You must accept the position, or I will never see another architect builds in Egypt as long as I live.

SENEMUT

If you insist, then I humbly accept.

HATSHEPSUT

That's settled. One position down, thousands to go.

SENEMUT

I will alert the Council of this happy news and leave you to your work.

HATSHEPSUT

There is one other position that caught my eye.

SENEMUT

What's that?

HATSHEPSUT

Consort to the Two Ladies. The ladies in this case of course referring to Upper and Lower Egypt. As the interim leader of these two fine ladies, of the kingdom, I have not yet chosen a consort of my own.

SENEMUT

I suppose, your being remarried is not permitted at this time so a consort could help alleviate that absence. And it would set a bad precedent to leave the position vacant for too long.

HATSHEPSUT

I agree. All positions should be filled immediately.

SENEMUT

The consort is assumed female—

HATSHEPSUT

Well perhaps this can be a private title, just between us? You are free to refuse.

SENEMUT

This I will not refuse.

*They kiss. It's hot and a long time coming.*

\*

## PART 2: THE GODS

### SUN GOD

*Ra, the God of the Sun. He wears a golden disc on his head.*

#### RA

I have had many names, but I miss my first name, which was nothing. I was nothing and I was all. No division in me, I had both male and female parts and no one to admire it. I have been split, combined, transformed. I have been the God of the Sun, the God of the Sunset and the God of the Sunrise. I've birthed deities and humans and ordered the world as it should be. \*

I have overseen almost 2 thousand years of the River Nile. There was nothing like the Old Kingdom. I mean you can't beat the pyramids. Have you ever has a pyramid made for you? It's very flattering. They gave me so much gold, they eventually ran out. Egypt fell to ruin and by the time the country was reunited, the people had moved on to a new god: Osiris. I suppose I should be proud. My grandson, the first Pharaoh of Egypt, setting an example for all those future human Pharaohs. But soon they stopped building pyramids and sending spirits up to the heavens with me and started chopping their dead King's up so they can go down to the underworld with Osiris. They're even letting women go to the afterlife. Totally killing the masculine vibe I curated.

The time's are changing. I don't know how the gods will keep up.

### GOD OF FERTILITY

*OSIRIS, God of fertility and resurrection, is greened skin, wearing the Pharaoh's headdress.* \*

#### OSIRIS

I'm not ungrateful. I love my wife very much. She found me in the mud of the Nile, she found my body pieces all over Upper and Lower Egypt, she resurrected me after death. I'm only saying, it's difficult to consider myself God of Fertility without a penis. I know I'm more than my earthly body but there are some things that are near impossible for a man to recover from. Used to be a time when primordial gods changed shape at will. Must be nice. I think I'd rather be a woman than a eunuch.

### GOD OF CHAOS

*SETH, God of chaos, has the head of a dog.* \*

### SETH

Do I regret killing him? Not in the least. It's really proof he was not fit to be pharaoh in the first place. A real pharaoh would not have fallen for the oldest trick in the book: offering a free sarcophagus to whoever fits inside. Even my jackal headed son would have seen it a mile away. With no heirs to take his place, the Pharaoh headdress passed to me, and you can't tell me I didn't wear it well. \*

But of course my sister, his wife, had to go and recover his body from the bottom of the River Nile, so I did what any sane, rational God of Chaos would do: I chopped his body into 42 pieces and scattered them across the kingdom. He was already dead anyway. But Isis found every single one and stitched him back together. All but that pathetic member of his that was unfortunately eaten by a fish. No idea how she got pregnant and I'm not sure I want to know.

### GODDESS OF DRUNKENESS

*HATHOR, Goddess of drunken joy, has a cow's head OR  
is a cow with a woman's head.* \*

### HATHOR

There's nothing better than a drunk god. That's when all the best miracles happen. You think Isis was sober when she sewed her husband back together and then immediately climbed on top of him? Baby, that was wine's doing.

When humans get drunk, poor things, it's not always for the best. They've lost a lot of good pharaohs that way. And some alright pharaohs, too. I understand, it's a lot of pressure to be a pharaoh. You have the gods and the people relying on you. In truth, the gods work through all of us, all the time. But it's a lot easier to order the building of more monuments with the one pharaoh rule. I miss pyramids. I think Egypt peaked with those, perhaps a bit too soon. Pyramids at least have an air of mystery. What's inside? Is there a basement? Who is going to build the tallest one? Of course I'm referring to the first generation of pyramids. The Middle Kingdom really let craftsmanship decline in the mid 2000s. They don't build giant monuments to gods like they used to.

Now, everything is an obelisk. Obelisk this, obelisk that, all dedicated to that Amun. And they get bigger and bigger every dynasty. Real men don't need to overcompensate like that. It's ridiculous when you think about it. How would Amun even get dressed in the morning if it were that large and constantly at attention? People pretend that Ra shot the world into existence all on his own and that's the only moment of Godly history worth remembering. I think about the separation of Nut and Shu, the sky and earth sometimes. Two soul mates torn apart by a jealous father, who still found a way to be together. Have you ever thought of the fact that our soul mate is always our siblings? Makes for intimate weddings.

My horns, where was I going with that. Oh! Obelisks! Wouldn't it be so much more interesting to depict something like Shu holding up his wife, the sky, and Nut eating and birthing the son every day? That would take creativity. Obelisks are too on-the-nose. Who wants a giant penis to be their legacy? Give me a temple with a beautiful sky and plenty of wine lining the walls. That's what I would like to see from this New Kingdom. Do something interesting.

### GOD OF THE WIND

*Amun, God of the wind, is a blue-skinned man.*

\*

#### AMUN

We're in the New Kingdom now. Time for new management. And who better than me? Thebes came to accept my power, and now it's time for Lower Egypt to do the same. So many of them are stuck in their ways, still praying to Ra or Osiris, not realizing that I am just like both of them! It's not confusing if you think about it. Sure Ra *appeared* first before any other God or Human but I was also there. The thing is, I'm invisible. I only look like this for the benefit of humans. In fact, when I first revealed myself, people confused me with Ra, that's how alike we are! Many gods look the same, it makes sense, we all come from Ra. That is why some have animal heads or special headdresses, so humans can tell us apart. I opted to blue skin because all the cool animal heads were taken.

\*

But I am not like Ra in his strict rules. Only allowing Pharaoh's to see the afterlife? Noooo, I am a benevolent God. All may speak their truth to me and be embraced by me and, with a few small payments of tombs full of gold, you can even buy a little extra favor. And every Egyptian has a shot at the afterlife.

It just makes sense to consolidate, that is the way of the future. Why have a temple and shrine built to all 50 gods, burning incense for Hathor, giving Anubis snake skin, and praying to Osiris, when you can give all that to me instead?

Since the expelling of the Hyksos and second reunification, Upper Egypt has loved and worshipped me and thrived because of it. I want only to bring that prosperity to Lower Egypt. All I ask in return is a piece of that prosperity I helped to generate. A small price to pay for eternal salvation.

**PART 3: ON TOUR**

**SICKLY BOY**

*In the throne room. Still in the first year of Hatshepsut's regency.*

*Hatshepsut sits on the throne, Senemut close by her side. They are trying and failing to keep their hands off each other.*

*Then, Isis enters.*

ISIS

I hope I'm not interrupting. I was told the King summoned me. Where is my son?

HATSHEPSUT

It is the King who needs you. Now, more than ever.

ISIS

Dramatic.

SENEMUT

Have you seen you son as of late?

ISIS

I see him at meals.

SENEMUT

Every meal?

ISIS

Usually just dinner.

SENEMUT

What did you eat last time you saw him?

ISIS

Hattie, what is this about?

HATSHEPSUT

Answer his questions.

ISIS

The Queen Mother does not answer to the Architect.

HATSHEPSUT

Then answer me: why did you not tell me the king is sick?

ISIS

The king is not sick.

HATSHEPSUT

Tell the truth. I am meant to speak for the King—

ISIS

I speak TO the King every day and I say he is not sick.

HATSHEPSUT

It is a great crime to lie to the throne.

SENEMUT

You know your son is in danger. Not just from whatever ails him, but from the threat of others who seek to remove him from power.

ISIS

I see two now.

HATSHEPSUT

Isis, I want nothing more than to see your son to his adulthood. Without him, what am I? As long as he lives, I am regent, and if he survives, he will likely marry my daughter, as we have always planned. Why would I wish him supplanted when I rely on him for all that I have and my child will ever have? The King summoned you here, I speak for the King as he cannot speak for himself. He cannot understand the danger he is in and he is not to know. But we need you now to work for the King.

ISIS

I will do anything for him.

HATSHEPSUT

You must stay with him day and night. Ignore any commands to the opposite. The minute he is stronger, send him to start his military training. I know it is early, but he is safer with as many men loyal to the crown around him as possible. If any men attempt to speak to him or you before you leave, let me know as soon as you can. Do you understand?

ISIS

Yes.

*Isis exits.*

SENEMUT

Are you sure this is wise?

HATSHEPSUT

Isis would never do anything to put her son in jeopardy. He's all she has.

SENEMUT

It's not her, it is her family. The last report from the southern border said her uncle had won a great victory. The south is rallying behind him as if he is the Great Uniter, Ahmose I come again. If the Boy King dies before he is old enough to produce an heir, it leaves the throne vulnerable. Egypt has been known to crown a commoner who has proven himself in battle. And if he was uncle to the late King's Queen? Even better.

HATSHEPSUT

Everyone in the council, the palace, even all of Thebes has accepted me.

SENEMUT

We have home court advantage. We need all the common people on our side. \*

HATSHEPSUT

Most of the kingdom still does not even know who I am.

SENEMUT

You saw how the crowd applauded you here, at the capital, during the Boy King's crowning. Let's show the rest of the kingdom who you are, just like you did here. A female ruler historically means peace and calm for a few years. We need to assure the people that they are good hands. Upper Egypt loves you, make sure Lower Egypt feels the same. \*

HATSHEPSUT

I've never been North of Karnak.

SENEMUT

Time to change that.

### THE SECOND PERFORMANCE

*A stage in Memphis. A scribe is on stage to introduce Hatshepsut.* \*

## SCRIBE

People of Memphis, thank you for joining us in our kick off event of the Queen's Tour! For the first time in your fabulously kush-y city, I am honored to introduce the mother that will raise Egypt up, the woman who holds the throne in the name of the King, the wife to the Wind God Amun; Queen Reagent, Hatshepsut!

\*

*Hatshepsut enters, more confident, putting on more of a show than her first speech.*

## HATSHEPSUT

Lower Egypt never looked so good! The Nile spills her water here, making you all rich with life! And I only want to make it richer!

*She throws gold into the crowd. The crowd cheers!*

*Hatshepsut begins her rehearsed speech, checking notes from Senemut.*

## HATSHEPSUT

Since my husband's passing—

## PEASANT

Wait, the King is dead?

## HATSHEPSUT

Uh—yes, unfortunately—

## PEASANT

Noooo!!!

*The crowd begins to wail.*

## HATSHEPSUT

Okay, it's alright. It's alright! No doubt Anubis has granted him passage into the Underworld to live forever with Osiris. Much like Isis guarded the throne for Horus—

## PEASANT

Who's the King now?

## HATSHEPSUT

My husband's son will be King. He is King. I mean, in due time—

## PEASANT

Show us the King!

*The crowd begins to chant "Show us the king!". Senemut ushers Hatshepsut off the stage.*

BE MORE

*In a dressing room.*

*Isis is helping Hatshepsut with her make up.*

HATSHEPSUT

Don't make it too bold.

ISIS

It's a big room. You have to make sure it's legible for the cheap seats.

HATSHEPSUT

I don't know why I bother. I can barely get the crowd to listen after I told them the King was dead. We had to throw gold at the exit just to get them to leave.

ISIS

I didn't realize how well loved he was.

HATSHEPSUT

They didn't love him. They loved the shiny symbol of prosperity. Now their symbol is an 8 year old boy, and a woman who's barely left Thebes.

ISIS

You are playing your role as you should be.

HATSHEPSUT

Sene said the same thing. "Just be yourself."

ISIS

That's stupid advice. The people don't want you to be yourself. They want you to be a symbol now. You were a wife, a mother, but now you're more than that. You have to be a great leader of a great empire. Great leaders don't skimp on eye liner.

*She finishes and Hatshepsut looks in the mirror.*

HATSHEPSUT

The temple would never approve of this.

ISIS

You do what you need to do to win the people. The Gods will understand.

HATSHEPSUT

Thank you for coming North with us. I know you would have preferred to stay with the Boy King.

ISIS

It wasn't really an option. Apparently his military men would not appreciate his mommy being present for his training. I'm finding purpose outside of motherhood. I started weaving.

HATSHEPSUT

You're weaving?

ISIS

Don't sound so shocked. I used to weave before I got married to a King.

HATSHEPSUT

It's good to have hobbies.

*Senemut pokes his head in.*

\*

SENEMUT

Ready?

HATSHEPSUT

Five minutes.

ISIS

Senemut, doesn't she look great?

\*

SENEMUT

I'd follow her into battle. Here, more notes for today.

*He hands her another speech and exits.*

*Isis grabs the speech out of her hands.*

ISIS

Ahh, here's your problem. He's telling you to be yourself and then giving you a script to read.

HATSHEPSUT

Sene's speeches are fine.

ISIS

You need great, not fine! Sene is really quite traditional at the end of the day. Blah blah Isis blah blah Horus. Make them remember you as more than just a grieving widow come to comfort them. Men die every day, and people seek comfort with their real mothers. They come to you for something more than what a mother can provide. Make a statement. You want all of Egypt to be talking about what you did on that stage.

*Senemut pokes his head in again.*

\*

SENEMUT

Hattie.

HATSHEPSUT

I'm coming right now.

*He exits.*

*Hatshepsut looks to Isis before tearing up the speech.*

### THIRD PERFORMANCE

\*

*On stage.*

*The Royal Scribe tries to calm a rowdy crowd.*

ROYAL SCRIBE

We are all just as upset as you over the King's passing. We promise that all will be well and you will agree by the end of tonight's show. And now, city of Aswan, the moment you've all been waiting for, the crownéd lady, the gold plated God's Wife, Amun's chosen one: Hatshepsut!!!

*Hatshepsut enters to heavy applause.*

HATSHEPSUT

Aswan! Are you hot? Or is it just me? And it's only going to get hotter. The rumors are true: a golden boy sits atop our golden throne, waiting his golden opportunity to rule over the Greatest Kingdom in the world. And it is me who shall wait with him, not in front or behind but beside him. I don't want you to think that I aim to steal the throne away from our bouncing baby, Thutmose III. I will continue to warm the throne for him, but it's going to get hot in here. Very, very hot. You need not fear it become so hot that we melt the golden throne, but just hot enough to meld it into something new. Know that I will continue to look after the King as only a woman, as only Hatshepsut, can. Many of you know me as God's Wife to Amun, a position I cherish with all my heart. And I want you to know that Amun spoke to me and he is speaking to all of you all the time, though you might not hear.

Gone are the days that God's only come to Pharaoh's. Like my father before me, I believe Amun comes to all that are willing. It's just that no one in the Kingdom is more willing than I. When he calls, I answer. And he promises prosperity to all who do the same.

*She tosses gold into the audience.*

HATSHEPSUT

Amun's true shape is unknowable. He appears to me and you in many ways, as changeable as the wind. As I step into this new role of regent, I too begin to change shape.

\*

*She reveals the Pharaoh headdress.*

HATSHEPSUT

This headdress was worn by my husband, my father, and his father before him. This headdress has witnessed the dawning of our new age and holds in it the secrets and feelings and sprits of Pharaohs of yesteryear. And now, I ask it to impart it's wisdom as I rule along side the Boy King.

*She puts on the headdress and a beam of light shoots down upon her from above. The crowd disappears and Hatshepsut is in shock. Her arms float up from her sides as if the wind is lifting her to fly away.*

\*

*And just as quickly as it comes on, the light is gone, the crowd is back, and cheering.*

HATSHEPSUT

Thank you, people of Egypt. And thank you, Amun.

### BACK TO THE TEMPLE

*Amun's temple in Thebes.*

*Hatshepsut is still wearing her Pharaoh headdress and stage make-up. Isis walks with her.*

HATSHEPSUT

Do you think the headdress was a bit much?

ISIS

No but your face once you put the headdress on? You were like—

*She mocks a stunned face.*

HATSHEPSUT

Did you see what happened?

ISIS

You mean you almost passing out from the weight that silly thing? Yeah, the whole kingdom saw it.

HATSHEPSUT

I thought I saw something or someone. A light, a bright light.

ISIS

Is it always this cold?

HATSHEPSUT

Gods, I've missed this place. I cannot believe it's been almost a month since I've seen the inside of a temple.

ISIS

*(To no one in particular.)* Can someone light a fire please? Hellooooooo?

HATSHEPSUT

Come down this way. I want to show you Amun.

ISIS

I don't want to see another statue of a man, I want a fire. Where is that damn Brazier-bearer.

*The two women arrive in front of the statue of Amun. He has blue skin and carries a staff in one hand and an Ankh in the other. Hatshepsut kneels in front of him. Isis remains standing.*

ISIS

I wasn't picturing him so blue.

HATSHEPSUT

Kneel and confess your truth before you pray.

ISIS

Who says I want to pray?

HATSHEPSUT

Why else did you come?

ISIS

Because my son-king's step-mother, former husband's sister commanded it, why else?

*Hatshepsut pulls her down.*

ISIS

Alright, alright.

*Brief pause.*

ISIS

Do we confess out loud or?

HATSHEPSUT

If you wish. He can hear you either way.

ISIS

Creepy. Okay. My truth is that I've always hated the way the Pharaoh headdress looks. \*

*Hatshepsut swats at Isis.*

ISIS

Alright, alright! I confess to you, Amun, that I... tasted the King's potatoes before the royal taster. I know! We're supposed to wait to make sure it's not poisoned! But I was so hungry and the servants were taking so long to dress him and the taster can't taste until the King is in the room and I was there alone and they smelled so good and honestly I thought to myself "well, if it is poisoned, I'll die in the service of the King!" And... I had a second bite. And the truth was, it was delicious. So delicious I was ready to die right then.

HATSHEPSUT

That's horrible, Isis.

ISIS

Only the Gods can judge me.

HATSHEPSUT

I don't want to think about you dying. I need my sister here.

ISIS

Well, my truth is that I think about it a lot lately. I've lost my purpose, Hattie. I knew how to be a wife. I performed my wifely duties with the perfect amount of enthusiasm.

Not to much so as to be unrealistic but just enough so he knew I was enjoying myself, and I did enjoy myself. As funny looking as he was, Tut wasn't bad in the royal bed.

HATSHEPSUT

We are in a temple.

ISIS

And I am speaking my truth. I knew how to be a wife. I knew how to be a mother. Both those things were taken from me on the same day. I hardly saw my son even before he started his military training, aside from meal time. And even then, we are usually joined by some Royal Master of the Chickens attempting to breed favor with a boy who won't even remember them in a few years when he's old enough to bestow it. The worst part is that my son gets lessons every day on how to step into his new found role, and they never thought to give me any instruction. They are fine with me fading into the shadows, quietly eating potatoes at the far end of the table until I die. The potatoes truly are delicious, though.

\*  
\*

HATSHEPSUT

I may be able to find some role for you at court. More than just Mother of the King.

ISIS

I don't wish for more. I wish for things to be as they were. There's no going back though, is there? Dowager, ugh. Just the sound of it makes you throw up in your mouth doesn't it?

HATSHEPSUT

Don't you feel better?

ISIS

I feel pathetic.

HATSHEPSUT

Here. Try this.

*Hatshepsut hands her the Pharaoh headdress.*

HATSHEPSUT

It made me feel better.

*Isis tries it on.*

HATSHEPSUT

How do you feel?

ISIS

Even more pathetic.

*She takes it off and smells it before handing it back.*

ISIS

It still stinks like Husband. You know, we never talk about him. Not really.

HATSHEPSUT

We have a new King now.

ISIS

He was our husband. Did you love him? I thought I did, but now that he's gone, I'm not sure.

HATSHEPSUT

If I'm honest, I don't know that I ever loved him as a husband, just a brother, not that loving him was a requirement of the role. I feel more laying with Amun than I ever did with him.

ISIS

Why wouldn't you! Why lay with the "incarnate" when you can lay with the actually real-carnate, or what have you. I've always wondered, what's it like to have sex with a God-statue-thing?

HATSHEPSUT

You make it sound so vulgar.

ISIS

What do you call it then?

HATSHEPSUT

I am guiding him to rebirth.

ISIS

Is he ever able to be reborn more than once in one session?

HATSHEPSUT

It is a spiritual experience, for Amun. In a way, he helps me be reborn every time as well. I don't know how else to explain it. I mean, how did you feel when you used to pray in the temple?

ISIS

Bored. Hungry. If I went too many hours at once, I felt light and airy. My arms becomes wings, every movement I made created the wind in the sky. I saw swirls of color. Shapes appeared in my mind and a clear path of the future was laid out in front of me. And then the drugs wore off.

HATSHEPSUT

Well, it's like that. I feel transformed. Like part of him comes inside me.

ISIS

We're still stalking about the statue right?

HATSHEPSUT

It's difficult to put into words for some who is—

ISIS

Illiterate?

HATSHEPSUT

No! Someone who does not truly believe in Amun like we do in Thebes.

ISIS

Maybe I should give Amun a shot. After all, he's brought much prosperity to you. The Gods took away the King, but Amun gave you a new life. What has Ra or Osiris done for me lately.

*Isis gets up and places a hand on Amun's statue.*

ISIS

Thank you for listening, Amun.

*Her hand finds his crotch.*

\*

ISIS

Oh, I can see why you prefer him to Husband.

*Hatshepsut pushes her away.*

HATSHEPSUT

Go on!

ISIS

I'm going! I'm going! I'll let you have a little alone time with your first love.

*Isis exits.*

*Hatshepsut puts the headdress back on.*

HATSHEPSUT

Amun. I must give you my truth. I've been thinking about you more than I thought possible. And not in the way Isis suggests. I have played the part of your wife but you have always been my father. I was born of you. My name: Khnumt-Amun Hatshepsut, "Joined with Amun, Foremost of Noble Ladies." It has always been so. \*

I cannot stop thinking about your victory over the Hyksos. It was here, in Thebes that you gave the soldiers strength to push back the invaders and re-open our trade routes. It was then you became Great Protector of the Roads. You brought our kingdom back together and made us whole again. I know it is not humble or right to say so, but the first time I put on that Pharaoh's headdress, I too felt whole again, like I was coming home to you. \*

*She stands.*

HATSHEPSUT

I do not share Isis's thoughts but I do share her feelings. I do not know how to live in this in between. I am not Queen nor King, Leader nor Follower. My husband made me a woman, now that he's gone, I don't believe I am one of those either. I have half a foot in my old life and half a foot on the throne. If I step fully into it, I am demonized, but if I pretend it does not exist, I feel like I am lying to myself. Show me the truth, Amun. You have always been an incredible listener but now I need you to speak. Speak to me Amun, and I will listen.

*Suddenly, the statue comes to life, raising the ankh above its head. Hatshepsut falls to the group with a yelp.*

*He speaks in a booming voice!*

AMUN

If the King commands I speak, I must obey!

HATSHEPSUT

Amun! I am no King! I am only a woman!

AMUN

You just said you were not a woman! What then are you?!

HATSHEPSUT

I am Khnumt-Amun Hatshepsut—

AMUN

I know your name! That was who you were when you were born! Who are you now!

HATSHEPSUT

I—I—I—

*He lowers his voice and helps her up.*

AMUN

Alright, alright. Stand up now. Was I yelling? My apologies, I tend to do that when I first come to. Let's talk, human to God. Are you okay? Do you need some water?

HATSHEPSUT

I'm okay. I'm overwhelmed. I've never felt your presence in this way before.

AMUN

This is your first time praying for me since you stepped into your new life. It is as you said: I have always been here.

HATSHEPSUT

Thank you, Amun, for guiding me all these years. I was worried you might think I abandoned you when I became regent. My duties kept me busy. I have not made the time to visit your temple in the way I should. Forgive me.

AMUN

There is nothing to forgive. My greatness extends far beyond these walls. Or else I would not have been able to accompany your grandfather's troops to drive those damn Hyksos off our sacred land. I was there at your crowning, you know.

HATSHEPSUT

That was not my crowning, it was for my step-son, the boy-king. I only rule in his name.

AMUN

Regardless of what name you put on the top of the papyrus for the event, I was there.

HATSHEPSUT

I did not see you. Not meaning any offense but you're hard to miss.

AMUN

Of course you would not have seen me in that room with so many non-believers. They need to see the King and believe in him. If I showed up every time the King had something to say or do, do you think anyone would follow him? No! We must maintain some sort of order in the human world so I allow the King to hold the spotlight. But surely you must have felt me, whenever you donned the headdress at your last tour stop.

HATSHEPSUT

Yes! Oh, Amun, I felt your presence so deeply, I thought I might fly away on the wind! I assumed because of the ceremony it was Ra's light or—

AMUN

I have a secret to tell you: I am Ra, and Ra is me.

HATSHEPSUT

I'm not sure I understand.

AMUN

Come now, child, don't we look alike?

*He strike a hieroglyphic-esc pose.*

HATSHEPSUT

Well...

AMUN

What?

HATSHEPSUT

It's just that Ra has... you know... the big sun disk on his head? \*

AMUN

Of course that's how he appears to you humans. In my world, all Gods look much the same. Same body, same skin, same sex. We are everything and nothing. My form is unknown. We don the falcon heads and bull horns set us apart or else things would be too confusing. But you must see the similarities.

*He strikes the post again.*

HATSHEPSUT

I suppose most Gods look alike when they're standing like—

*She strikes the pose too.*

AMUN

Exactly my point. That's because all Gods are different faces of One Great God.

HATSHEPSUT

And that One God... is you?

AMUN

Now you've got it!

HATSHEPSUT

You are all Gods? Even Seth, God of violence and chaos?

AMUN

Yes.

HATSHEPSUT

Even Hathor, half cow goddess of drunkenness?

\*

AMUN

Yes.

HATSHEPSUT

Even—

AMUN

Whatever God you can think of and also those who have not been thought up yet, yes yes yes they are all me and I am all of them.

HATSHEPSUT

This is a lot to take in. Of course we in Thebes worship you as a sort of King of Gods, but Lower Egypt and even other pockets up and down the Nile are all free to continue their worship of Osiris or Ra or whatever God they have.

AMUN

Every year there's a new God for something! Gods for harvest! Gods for famine! Gods for life, death, salt water, fresh water, many Gods combining into one God, Gods splitting into many Gods, Gods changing shape, it's like we get it! Humans like to have their own special God! At the end of the day, it all is the same. You have done well, my child. You have introduced me to all of Egypt, and people are beginning to fall in line. You have always been truthful with me but I know there is one truth you are still holding back.

HATSHEPSUT

I have laid myself bare in front of you, Amun, I swear on my life.

AMUN

There is a feeling that you do not share with Isis. It is a feeling you are afraid you don't share with anyone. You do not just feel you deserve more, you feel you are more. True or not?

HATSHEPSUT

...It's true.

AMUN

I appreciate that you hesitated just long enough to show humbleness. You are right in that feeling. Do not run from it, embrace it. As long as the Boy King is a boy, you are the King in all but name, but that can change.

HATSHEPSUT

That is an honor I dream not of.

AMUN

You cannot lie to me, my child. It is not proper for one of your sex but you left that behind. It was your husband who you made you a woman, now what are you? This in-between as you call it. Having a foot in both world is not a bad a thing. You need not give up Khnumt-Amun Hatshepsut to reach the next step of your journey. All you need is your devotion, that headdress and a little more make-up.

\*

HATSHEPSUT

Tell me what to do.

#### FOURTH PERFORMANCE

\*

*On a stage.*

*A Royal Scribe makes an intro.*

ROYAL SCRIBE

Thebes! Are you ready?! I said ARE YOU READY??!!?! We are so honored to be back in the South. Everybody knows Upper Egypt, knows how to get down! And now! The Foremost of Noble Ladies, like you've never seen her before: Queen Reagent, Hatshepsut!

\*

*Hatshepsut jumps on stage wearing men's clothes including the Pharaoh's headdress. She is in full drag, even wearing the Pharaoh's beard.*

*The crowd cheers, but also sounds a little confused.*

HATSHEPSUT

Good evening, Thebes! The empire is strong in this room tonight, I can feel it. Your eyes mind not recognize me though I know your hearts do. Many may have known me by my birth name, Khnumt-Amun Hatshepsut, "Joined With Amun, Foremost of Noble Ladies." It is time for a reintroduction to me and my many qualities.

After the late, great Pharaoh's death, I was shown the light of my new position. I thought I could not! Would not! Should not accept it! But now I have. Do you want to know what it is? I said do you want to know what it is?

\*

This is not a position for a lady of Egypt like Hatshepsut. That is why here, with you and you and you and all of you, I am not Hatshepsut. I come to you now, as another who has lived inside me since birth, waiting to slide out. But first a story.

When my mother was newly married to the late, great Pharaoh Thutmose I, she was walking the halls of the palace during the Festival of Drunkenness when she smelled the most wonderful, woody, whimsical smell that had ever wafted westward. She felt her womb drawn to the smell, and found herself in an empty bedroom. There is where Amun himself entered her and gave his blessing of prosperity, much like the Queen's before her. She cried out in ecstasy "AN HEIR! AN HEIR! AN HEIR LIVES IN ME!" \*

Imagine my mother's surprise when I was born, a girl. She stuffed down the truth. She knew others would not! Could not! Should not believe what she knew to be true! She kept the secret from everyone, even my father, assuming it had been a hallucination, not a true vision. The two are hard to tell apart during the Festival of Drunkenness. But as the years went by, my mother being the Chief Wife, she knew that the royal line would continue through me and she finally revealed the vision, claiming it told of my marriage to my brother. \*

"But mother," quote I, "A princess is not an heir! Even if she marries a prince! And Gods don't make mistakes! Least of all Amun!" "Oh child," quote she, "They do, especially during the Festival of Drunkenness, they do. We just name those mistakes as miracles!" When my husband died while I was in the temple of Amun, I thought back to my mother's vision. Could I not be the miracle? Could I not be the heir? Hatshepsut could not. But what if I am no longer Hatshepsut? What if I take a new name? \*

Call it a mistake. Call it a miracle! Just make sure you call me by my new name: Ma'atkare. Come, let's say it together: Ma! (Ma!) At! (At!) Ka! (Ka!) Ra! (Ra!) Put it all together: Ma'atkare! (Ma'atkare!)

Hatshepsut was a Pharaoh's Daughter. A Pharaoh's Wife. A Pharaoh's widow. Ma'atkare is a Pharaoh. A new Pharaoh for a new time!

*The crowd erupts!*

### AFTER PARTY

*Some peasants discuss the show.*

PEASANT #1

But that was a woman right?



PEASANT #2

We waste too much time trying to figure out the royals. If they're feeding us or funding us, we cheer as we should!

PEASANT #1

At least we can all agree on one thing. Ma'atkare is way sexier than the last Pharaoh.

*The others agree "Absolutely" "By the length of the Nile" "I'm secure enough to admit that."*

PEASANT #1

May he rest in pieces.

PEASANT #2

May he rest in pieces.

PEASANT #3

May he rest in pieces.

\*

PEASANT #1

And long live Ma'atkare!

PEASANT #2

Looooooooong live Ma'atkare!

PEASANT #3

Looooooooong live Ma'atkare!

\*

### PILLOW TALK

*In the royal bedroom.*

\*

*Hatshepsut and Senemut have just finished having sex.*

*They kiss.*

HATSHEPSUT

Being on stage like that was so invigorating. I have never felt the presence of the Gods work through me like it did today. And did you hear the crowd? They have been hungry for a pharaoh. And I'm honored to give them one, if only for a little while.

\*

SENEMUT

It was a risk to call yourself Pharaoh. I wish you had told me before hand. The council was shocked but they saw the will of the people.

\*

\*

HATSHEPSUT

It's not just that, it's the will of Amun as well.

SENEMUT

Can we not talk about the Gods for a few minutes?

HATSHEPSUT

I can try but the Gods are in everything, in me and you. Especially you tonight. You were hungry and willing like I've never seen.

SENEMUT

That was not the Gods, it was my desire. I feel as though we hardly see each other. You're at the temple every other day.

HATSHEPSUT

I have been communing with Amun all week. Where do you think all this came from? Amun was right, he was always in me. And when I was inside you—

SENEMUT

Not so loud. I don't need the servants to hear.

HATSHEPSUT

What should we care! I'm Pharaoh and you're my Consort. Let them hear what they like.

SENEMUT

We agreed that was a private title. It's one thing to do it in private. It's another to say it out loud. Someone might write it down.

HATSHEPSUT

Why can't you relax? The crowds only get bigger and bigger. As much money as we're giving away, they're donating it back in the name of Amun. Aren't you happy for me and the kingdom?

SENEMUT

I don't want all this to go to your head. You are still a woman.

HATSHEPSUT

Was I a woman when I was penetrating you? Because you felt like more of a woman than I. Don't shrug away as if you didn't enjoy it.

SENEMUT

It's not that. I come to you as myself and I want you to do the same.

HATSHEPSUT

I came as myself many times.

SENEMUT

Then you admit it is you and not the Gods doing?

HATSHEPSUT

You cannot separate me and the Gods anymore.

SENE MUT

You act recklessly and it's always "the Gods the Gods the Gods." This might have gone a totally different way. If the crowd turned on you, what then? Would you still blame the Gods?

HAT SHEPSUT

Amun would not have told me to move forward if he did not see the step there. I took a leap of faith, it's not my fault you don't share my belief. As Pharaoh—

SENE MUT

You are not Pharaoh.

HAT SHEPSUT

Then who was the crowd cheering?

SENE MUT

They were cheering a symbol.

HAT SHEPSUT

Every Pharaoh before me has been a symbol. They were more than men as I'm more than a woman. A woman could not do what I have done. This is just the beginning. It may take time for you to see it, but you will.

SENE MUT

You have nothing that cannot be taken away. I worry for you and your life. Please promise me you will be careful when you are about. Talk like this can get you killed. On stage, you can be Pharaoh, you can be King, as long as the crowd cheers you as such. But off stage, a King is more quickly stabbed in the back than a Queen. \*

HAT SHEPSUT

I promise to be careful. If you promise to see me as I am.

SENE MUT

I see you nude every night we spend together. I see you.

HAT SHEPSUT

No, you don't. But you will.

*She stands up away from the bed.*

HAT SHEPSUT

Come here and look in my eyes.

*He does, expecting some kind of sexy game.*

HATSHEPSUT

Look into my eyes and tell me the truth: you feel my power.

*He does. He cannot hold her gaze for long. He doesn't know what to say. Maybe he does feel something.*

HATSHEPSUT

Get on your knees.

*He does.*

HATSHEPSUT

Look up at me.

*He does.*

HATSHEPSUT

Say it.

SENEMUT

I—

HATSHEPSUT

Say I am Pharaoh.

*He hesitates. But then—*

SENEMUT

You are Pharaoh.

HATSHEPSUT

Good boy.

*She kisses him.*

**PART 3: THE END****THE NEW KING**

*In a palace chamber.*

\*

*Isis is drunk. Senemut is not.*

ISIS

It's the Festival of Drunkenness! Loosen up, Sene!

\*

SENEMUT

I'm loose enough, thank you very much.

ISIS

Well I'm not. It's been so long since I've been loose, I bet I'm losing width and depth as we speak. Soon, I won't even be able to use the bathroom. I'll be like a tomb that's been sealed up.

SENEMUT

I thought she was due to arrive early in the morning.

ISIS

Maybe she's actually celebrating the high holy days, unlike some royal architects I know. Oh! Congrats on the new Platform of Drunkeness. I think it's my favorite work of yours. My favorite work dedicated to my favorite goddess. Don't tell Isis. Shhhhh.

\*

SENEMUT

You haven't seen her today, have you?

ISIS

I can barely see out of this eye. And the other is fading fast.

SENEMUT

I'm going to check the throne room again.

ISIS

Sit down! Sit down! Sit down!

*She drags him to sit on a couch with her.*

ISIS

What's got your kilt in a twist?

SENEMUT

Nothing.

ISIS

I may not be your lover but I am a woman still, at least until they seal me up. I can tell somethings wrong. Frustrated? Need a little release?

SENEMUT

I need a drink.

*He takes the goblet from her hand and chugs.*

ISIS

WOOH! FESTIVAL OF DRUNKDEDNESS!!!

SENEMUT

She's changed.

ISIS

Well she's almost 30 and you've known her since she was like 6 so yeah I'd sure hope so.

SENEMUT

I mean she is not the way she ought to be.

ISIS

You were her tutor, her advisor, her lover. If she is the way she is, I think we know who to blame.

SENEMUT

Well it sure as hell isn't Amun.

ISIS

Oh my goddddsss if she brings up Amun one more time during brunch. I will vomit. I will make myself vomit. Just BLEEHHHHHHH all over the table. \*

SENEMUT

She doesn't really believe it, does she?

ISIS

Are you kidding me? Only the pious can be that annoying. I don't understand. I used to pray for weeks on end before I came to the palace. I would pray all day and night and not eat or sleep and I never got even a waft of any Gods nearby. She puts on a headdress and now she has direct contact to an almighty God?

And I don't care how many times she says "Amun lives in all of us." I have yet to feel him inside me. Or anyone inside me for that matter.

\*

SENEMUT

She's gone mad. We can't feed into this delusion.

ISIS

It's all fun and games until the gauze comes out.

SENEMUT

What?

ISIS

Nothing. Drink.

SENEMUT

I miss the days when I taught her. I would tell her what to think and then quiz her on it and she would know just what to say.

ISIS

Sounds like a great way to start a relationship.

SENEMUT

It was peaceful.

ISIS

She did bring peace again. Those skirmishes in the south are a thing of the past. Sorry sorry sorry, Amun brought peace. The Great Amun, the Unknown One, who always was and always will be! Amun's cult grows every day just like the royal harem.

SENEMUT

Her Majesty does not have a harem.

ISIS

Her Majesty doesn't. But His Majesty might.

\*

*Hatshepsut enters. She has bound her chest with gauze meant for mummies and is wearing a kilt instead of a dress.*

HATSHEPSUT

Sene! Ahh, I've missed you!

*She rushes to embrace him. He returns it a little shaken.*

SENEMUT

What are you... wearing?

HATSHEPSUT

Oh? Oh! I got so used to it on tour. It's honestly easier to just have it on all the time. Makes becoming Pharaoh much easier if I just stay Pharaoh. How's my favorite Lady of the Palace?

*She also embraces Isis.*

ISIS

Bored.

HATSHEPSUT

Run out of wine already? Well, let's go. We have better get started with the arrangements.

*They go to exit together.*

SENEMUT

Hatshepsut. Your Majesty. I thought we might talk about plans for the coronation.

HATSHEPSUT

That won't be necessary right now.

SENEMUT

The king has come of age. It's time.

HATSHEPSUT

Are you that eager to lose your position?

SENEMUT

I doubt he will supplant me as Architect that easily.

HATSHEPSUT

We both know it will be more than the king making that decision when the day comes. Besides, there is something else we must plan first.

ISIS

A royal wedding!!

*Senemut looks at the two of them in shock.*

SENEMUT

You can't be serious. This will not stand!

HATSHEPSUT

Calm yourself. It's a wedding for our children. The King and the new High Priestess. It's time I pass on my title of Amun's Wife.

SENEMUT

And it will go to your daughter?

HATSHEPSUT

My mother passed it on to me.

SENEMUT

I can't help but see some similarities in your daughter and yourself. You walk the same steps of the pyramid.

HATSHEPSUT

Not at all. Her walk will be much easier because of what I have done. What we three have done.

SENEMUT

We have done much and now it is time to turn the page. The King—

ISIS

Please don't talk of coronations. He's not ready.

SENEMUT

He's nearly a man. The princess will be a woman any day now.

ISIS

Okay, then I'm not ready. I can't lose him as a son again. He's completed his military training and now I have but a small window with him before Hatshepsut's daughter matures and he goes off to his husbandly duties. \*

HATSHEPSUT

There's no point in rising him up until we have another heir. Just in case. The people have embraced Ma'atkare, no reason to get rid of him so quickly.

ISIS

Now if you'll excuse us. I have a wedding to plan and lots more wine to drink.

HATSHEPSUT

We'll speak soon. \*

RECEPTION

*In the royal bedroom, after the royal wedding.*

\*

*Hatshepsut and Isis are drunk in Hatshepsut's room.*

ISIS

My speech was not that bad.

HATSHEPSUT

You basically begged them not to have children for at least 10 years.

ISIS

I don't think that's bad advice! Let him get a few more wives before the real work starts. It take a harem to raise a child.

HATSHEPSUT

That's for sure.

ISIS

But you liked what I said about you?

HATSHEPSUT

It was very kind. It has been my honor to be an example to your son in his growing years.

ISIS

Has it?

HATSHEPSUT

It has.

ISIS

Has it really?

HATSHEPSUT

I just said it has.

ISIS

You don't talk about him much any more.

HATSHEPSUT

We talk of him all the time. We are talking about him.

ISIS

Not in private. On stage. You're always only talking about your father and his father, sometimes our husband, but never my son.

HATSHEPSUT

Your son is now able to speak for himself.

ISIS

You do still plan for him to be king?

HATSHEPSUT

Of course. Isis, power is tricky. I cannot be an aunt to a King and retain all this. I have to style myself as my father's heir, or else it could all be taken away from both of us. Both my parents are of royal blood. Our husband had a mother of common birth and so does the Boy King.

\*

ISIS

Don't try to confuse me with all your legal royal blood talk.

HATSHEPSUT

It's not hard to confuse you when you're like this.

ISIS

And it's not hard for you to be a dick when you're like this.

HATSHEPSUT

We should be celebrating! Our children are the next generation of royals. They are young and healthy. We have cemented their future.

ISIS

Cement. Cement. Building. The Future. What is Senemut working on now?

HATSHEPSUT

My tomb, of course.

ISIS

A tomb fit for a king.

HATSHEPSUT

Why shouldn't it be.

ISIS

I saw the plans. You don't need to be able to read to see your real plan clear as day. I see who you cement into the future.

HATSHEPSUT

The tomb simply tells the story of my birth and my rule.

ISIS

And the future of the next rulers. I see. I saw. I saw your daughter.

HATSHEPSUT

She is the future queen, she is to be Amun's Wife, she is my only child, it is not crazy that I would include her in my life's story.

ISIS

I saw how big you drew her. Bigger than the queen of Punt! And we all heard the stories of that giantess. She was almost twice the size of my son, the real heir.

HATSHEPSUT

To be fair, she is taller than him right now.

ISIS

No! It's not fair! It's never fair! That's the point. We were trained in the unfairness. We were raised in the unfairness. I was taught to work within that unfairness and I became so good at accepting role after role put on me. I accepted the unfairness and I ended up in the palace because of how good I was. I was a good girl. And now you're turned those roles upside down. You gave me my son back but took whatever it meant to be a woman and poked so many holes in it, it would sink to the bottom of the Nile. Every time we talk I would feel better, feel free, feel ready to face the world as whatever I am. But the second I am in the room with a man, I panic. I don't know how to be anything other than a woman.

HATSHEPSUT

I'm trying to make things better for my daughter. For all of Egypt's women.

ISIS

Don't pretend. You're doing all of this for yourself, sorry your god. How many times have you mentioned women when you're on stage?

\*

HATSHEPSUT

My power is your power. I lead the way for more women. I might have to accept this role as someone in between or as a man or as a god, but that means my heir might be able to accept it as a woman.

ISIS

So you do plan to name her as heir!

HATSHEPSUT

I mean, if she finds herself in my position.

ISIS

What's your plan, get her pregnant and then have my son killed?

HATSHEPSUT

You're being hysterical.

ISIS

I forgot, when you became Ma'atkare you gave up all your emotions and maternally duties. \*

HATSHEPSUT

I thought you liked Ma'atkare.

*Hatshepsut begins to trace Isis' body with her hand.*

HATSHEPSUT

You liked the kilt. You liked the beard. You're even starting to like the headdress.

ISIS

I don't mind the headdress.

HATSHEPSUT

You said you wanted your son safe, and I did that for you. You said you wanted to feel like a woman, and I did that for you, too.

ISIS

I suppose.

HATSHEPSUT

Would you like to feel that now?

ISIS

I don't want to be confused.

HATSHEPSUT

Then don't question what makes you feel good.

*They kiss.*

HATSHEPSUT

Say my name. My true name. \*

ISIS

Ma'atkare.

*They kiss again.*

JUBILEE

*Backstage before the Jubilee, celebrating Hatshepsut's rule.*

\*

\*

*Hatshepsut is in full drag with the beard, a masculine figure and men's clothing.*

*Senemut enters with a bundle of clothing in his hands.*

HATSHEPSUT

Why aren't you dressed? The jubilee is set to start.

SENEMUT

You're wearing the beard.

HATSHEPSUT

I thought it only fitting. It is a very special occasion.

SENEMUT

You look different. You look strong.

HATSHEPSUT

I emphasized my shoulders a little more. And you'll look beautiful next to me.

\*

SENEMUT

I can't wear this.

*He sets down the clothes.*

HATSHEPSUT

You seemed more than happy to wear them last night.

SENEMUT

You know I don't mind acting in private with you. I don't mind being your consort, but performing as that, as a wife or a lady, in front of the people, that's different than doing it for you. You enjoy your performance, but I'm not performing, it's just how I am when I'm with you.

\*

HATSHEPSUT

I might make it flashy but that doesn't mean it's not coming from a place a truth. It's coming from Amun.

SENEMUT

If Amun had never come to you, would you still do this?

HATSHEPSUT

That's a silly thing to ask.

SENEMUT

If I had never come to you, would you have wanted this? Because without me, you wouldn't have any of it.

HATSHEPSUT

The Council chose me, and before that Amun chose me.

SENEMUT

Who bribed the council? I cannot speak for Amun, I do not know him—

HATSHEPSUT

He's in your heart—

SENEMUT

No he's not! You are in my heart. But Egypt is in my blood. I cannot let Egypt see me as some consort, some lover, like a woman.

HATSHEPSUT

There are worse things in the world than being a woman.

SENEMUT

And yet, here you stand, dressed like a man.

HATSHEPSUT

I love women.

SENEMUT

Oh yes, Isis told me all about your love for women.

HATSHEPSUT

Is a Pharaoh not free to do as he pleases?

SENEMUT

Yes, *he* is. Hatshepsut, you are not he.

HATSHEPSUT

You seemed fine with it as long as I left it on the stage, and in the bedroom. But god forbid the world knows that you receive me every night like a woman.

SENEMUT

I am a man, I cannot pretend to be anything else.

HATSHEPSUT

You were not born wearing a kilt and holding a spear. Every day, the men of Egypt wake up a choose to be men. You could easily choose something else.

SENEMUT

Not all of us were born in a golden bed. I am born to be this and no matter my feelings, I cannot change. There is too much danger in losing my position. There must be some order in the world.

HATSHEPSUT

If the gods have chaos, why do we expect order?

SENEMUT

I do not want to talk of gods. There is something you should know.

HATSHEPSUT

Tell me after the jubilee.

SENEMUT

You need to know now. I have been appointed as Royal Treasurer.

HATSHEPSUT

Really? When did I do that?

SENEMUT

I was appointed by the King. He has appointed a new architect to begin the building of his tomb.

HATSHEPSUT

He's not yet Pharaoh.

SENEMUT

No, not yet. But soon. You should know he has allowed me to complete your tomb. It seems you will get all the rites due to someone of your station. He has made no hint that you will not be buried as you are. As a Pharaoh.

HATSHEPSUT

So there was a question?

SENEMUT

No woman alive has been given this honor. Call yourself whatever you'd like, but the embalmer must be told what words to say over your corpse.

HATSHEPSUT

Let them make sense of me however they like. The Gods change shape at will to make better sense to humans.

SENEMUT

You are not a God. I shouldn't have to tell you that, but I suppose no one else is willing to say it. You are a human who has put on a costume and taken a name because you were unsatisfied. There are many that loved you before all this. I among them. I was devoted to you, always. But I cannot do any more for you than I already have. Once you are gone, I must find a way to survive without you.

FINAL PERFORMANCE

ROYAL SCRIBE

Ladies, gentlemen and those who occupy the unknown space, please prepare yourself for the Jubilee! Celebrating 10 years of our Pharaoh's rule, doing it up as only Egyptians can. I hope you wore your best golden toe covers because you're about to be knocked out of them. Here for you tonight, the One and Only, the Shining, Shimmering, Shimmying, Singing, Sensation; Adored by Amun, Pharaoh of the People, His Majesty, Her Self: Ma'atkare!

*Hatshepsut is in full drag. She is confident at the height of her power but there is a nagging feeling that it can only go down from here.*

HATSHEPSUT

It is I: your beneficent King! I am the wild horned bull coming from heaven that he might see her form. I am the falcon who glides over the lands, landing and dividing his borders. I am the jackal who swiftly circled the land in an instant. I am all these things, and none of these things. And you can be, too.

Although, I rule now, healthy and strong, I cannot help but think of the next steps for me as Pharaoh. I know that one day I will leave you. Perhaps my death waits in the shadows for me right now. Perhaps I will have a long journey, and many more wrinkles before that day. But my death comes apace. And yours does, too.

I cannot be all that I am without you, without Egypt. Men put gold on my body, gold on my head, Amun gave me divinity, but you, the people, gave me the strength to become myself. I knew what I was, deep down, but I did not know anyone would accept me.

Some have turned away from what I have become, but my people love me more than ever. For that, I want to give you the gift of eternity, from Amun.

He who will praise me, he will live. He who will speak an evil thing, ignoring my majesty, he will die. You will not join Osiris in his boat or Ra in the sky. You will live in darkness and chaos with only Seth to torment you. I say this not as a threat but as a warning. Amun speaks this warning through me, for he only wants for all of Egypt to join him in the light. \*

I have one request when my fated end comes. Bury me as a man. Paint my skin orange. Keep my hair short. Call me “king” as you speak over my coffin. Bury me as a man, so that I may be reborn within myself. Let these two halves of me conceive the new me. It is one last trick we must play on the gods so I may be allowed to pass on, as all Pharaohs before.

And let it trick whoever dares disturb my tomb. Let them be fooled as well. Let them say “Here lies a pharaoh, strong, powerful, virile” let them say “He must have born many sons,” Let them wonder at my many names. Hatshepsut. Ma’atkare. Queen. Mother. King. Pharaoh. His Majesty, Her Self. I am that I am, let men wonder, for he is the fool to need an answer. \*

I thank you. Amun thanks you. Thank you for your love, your support, and your gold. I love you Egypt! Remember me for all that I am! Nothing more, and never less! \*

**END OF PLAY**