



QUEEN ANKHSENAMON

A painting by Winifred Brunton
from her book *Great Ones of Ancient Egypt* [1929]

THE LOST QUEEN
OF EGYPT

by

LUCILE MORRISON

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Frontispiece by WINIFRED BRUNTON

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To
LEE ALLEN MORRISON
for whom this book was made
and to
FLORENCE LOUISE BEMIS and A.S. ARNOLD
who helped to make it

LUCILE PHILLIPS MORRISON (1896-1991) was among an elite group of women who attained higher education at a time when women were not valued for their intellectual prowess. She obtained a bachelor's degree from Vassar in 1918, a master's degree in psychology from George Pepperdine University in 1958, and received numerous awards during the 1970s. But such accomplishment, while showing marked tenacity, does not reflect the warmth and sense of magic with which she approached the world. Lucile could wave her wand of words and create mystery, love and wonderment at any moment. She was my grandmother, role model, mentor and my favorite author as a youth. May you be as captivated as I with this journey into the world of Egypt so long ago.

Sharon L. Morrison, Ph.D.

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THE PERIOD

NOT long after 1800 B.C. Egypt was overrun by the Hyksos, a people from Asia who first introduced the horse and chariot to the Egyptians. Armed with these new weapons, Ahmose I two hundred years later succeeded in driving out the invaders. Pursuit soon changed to conquest. Under such brilliant Eighteenth Dynasty leaders as Amenhotep I and Thutmose III the boundaries of the Empire were extended between 1557 and 1337 B.C. to the Euphrates River and the northern limits of Syria. Even the islands of the Great Green sent tribute to Thebes, the capital of the Egyptian Empire.

Prosperity reached its height under Amenhotep III, the Magnificent, and his wife Queen Tiy. Constant contact with the culture and thought of the East had brought a new element into the life of the Court. Amenhotep IV, the King's youthful and visionary son, encouraged by his mother, developed for the first time in history the conception of one supreme God, Aten. He changed his own name to Akhenaten, drove the powerful priesthood of Amon from the temples at Thebes, and wiped out the name of Amon wherever it appeared. He then built a new city, Akhetaten, one hundred and ninety miles down the Nile from Thebes and there established his Court.

Since Akhenaten was opposed to war, the Empire disintegrated rapidly during his reign. His immediate successors could do little to stop the Hittite advance. Later Horemheb, Seti I, Rameses II, and the other Pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty (1350–1205 B.C.) did their best to reestablish the power of Egypt, but the great days of the Empire were at an end.

All the characters found in these pages lived in Egypt during the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1580–1350 B.C.). Only now and then has a name been supplied for artist, nurse, or slave whose exact title history does not record. It is inevitable that known facts should be variously interpreted by different authorities, but every effort has been made to select those interpretations which seemed most in keeping with the spirit of the characters and the written records of the times.

THE CHARACTERS

- AKHENATEN (Akh-en-at'en)* Amenhotep IV, Pharaoh of Egypt.
- NEFERTITI (Ne-fer-tee'tee). Queen of Egypt, Great Royal Wife of Akhenaten.
- ROYAL PRINCESSES, daughters of Akhenaten and Nefertiti:
- MERYTATEN (Me-ryt-at'en).
- MEKETATEN (Me-ket-at'en).
- ANKHSENPAATEN (Ankh'sen-pa-at'en). Later changed to Ankhsemmonef (Ankh'sen-am'on).
- NEFER-NEFRU-ATEN-TA-SHERA. Known as TA-SHERA (Ta-Sher'ra).
- NEFER-NEFRU-RA (Ne'fer-nef'ru-Ra). Known as Little Kitten.
- SETEPENRA (Se'te-pen'ra).
- QUEEN TIY (Tee'ee). Great Royal Mother, widow of Amenhotep III, mother of Akhenaten, Nefertiti and Baketaten.
- BAKETATEN (Ba-ket-at'en). Youngest daughter of Queen Tiy.
- SMENKHKARA (Smenkh-ka'ra). For a short time King of Egypt, co-regent with Akhenaten.
- TUTANKHATEN (Tut-ankh-at'en). King of Egypt. Name changed to Tutankhamon (Tut-ankh-am'on).
- KENOFER (Ken'o-fer). An artist.
- INTEF (In'tef). A goldsmith of Thebes, brother of Kenofer.
- AY (Eye). Fan Bearer on the Right of the King, Chief Counselor of Akhenaten.
- TY (Tee). Great Royal Nurse, wife of Ay.
- HOREMHEB (Hor-em-heb'). Chief of the Army.
- YATU (Ya'tu). Nurse of the royal children at Akhetaten.

* *a* as in *father*; *e* as in *pet*; *u* as in *lute*; *i* and *y* like *ee* in *see*; *kh* as *ch* in *loch*.

THE CHARACTERS

HOTEP (Ho'tep). A Captain of the Mazoi (Ma-zoi') Police of Akhetaten.

TERGEN (Ter'gen). A Hittite slave boy.

KHATAKA (Kha-ta'ka). A Hittite slave girl.

THE LOST QUEEN
OF EGYPT

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT ROYAL MOTHER COMES



Queen Tiy

WHITE as alabaster lay the city of Akhetaten along the eastern bank of the slow-moving Nile. In the brilliant sunlight the mighty pylon towers of palace and temple stood out against the brown of desert and distant cliffs, like vast reliefs upon a temple wall. Above the flat-topped roofs floated long pennons of scarlet on slender poles, and from every building hung colored streamers and festoons of flowers.

Early as it was, the City of the Horizon of Aten had been long astir, greeting the rising disk of the sun with hymns of rejoicing. Eager crowds thronged the wide, paved streets, for all the city made holiday at Pharaoh's bidding. Gilded chariots clattered along High Priest Street and the Royal Road, horses' heads gay with plumes, harness glittering. Some came from the south where lay Maru Aten, Pharaoh's pleasure palace, and the great walled estates of nobles high in the favor of their King. Others came from the north, a new suburb of less pretentious dwellings, where the North Palace was under construction, with its animal haven and aviaries planned for the Queen's delight.

Today all workmen had left their tasks. Workshops were closed, and the School for Scribes was silent and deserted. Even those who labored in the tombs carved in the face of the eastern cliffs had come with their overseers to share in the day's festivities. Pale-faced artisans from Crete and

black-skinned slaves from Nubia, bearded Syrians and Babylonian traders mingled with the white-clad Egyptians, who laughed and shouted gay greetings as they hurried by. On the broad parade ground to the east of the city, the Mazoi, police and keepers of the peace of Aten, moved briskly through their morning drill, the sleek horses of the flying squad prancing and capering under the skillful hands of their drivers, while men on foot passed before the Chief to receive assignment for the day. That white ribbon of city and the curve of desert between river and cliffs were in their keeping, and it was a trust not lightly held by Mahu, Chief of the Mazoi, and his men.

In the nursery of the Royal House, which lay in the heart of Akhetaten, the six small daughters of Akhenaten, Pharaoh of Egypt, were being attired for the approaching festival. The Great Royal Mother, their grandmother, was coming to pay her first official visit to the new city built by her son to the glory of Aten, his God. Down the river from Thebes, nearly two hundred miles away, she was coming in her royal barge, and every member of the King's household must be ready to do honor to the Dowager Queen, Mother of a King and Great Wife of a King, Tiy, Living Forever. It was said she would arrive three hours after sunrise, and already the summer sun had been two hours above the horizon. Nurses and attendants hovered about their small charges, adjusting finery with meticulous care, while the children voiced their curiosity in eager questions.

"Will she be very old, Yatu, the Great Royal Mother of our father? Will she be stern and haughty, like the statues in the temple the King has built for her?" The Princess Meketaten, frail and limp among the pillows of her ebony couch, looked anxiously at the faithful Yatu who knelt by her side. With tender care the old nurse adjusted sandals of gilded leather that never would touch the painted floors. The excitement which had brought a flush to her sisters' brown cheeks had left Meketaten's as pale as the waxen leaves of the water lily she held in her fingers.

"The great Queen Tiy, old?" Yatu shook her head. "No, the beloved wife of Neb-maat-Ra, Amenhotep III, could never grow old in the eyes of those who once served her. Stern, haughty? Rather has she the dignity which becomes a queen. Well I remember the day when she was made Great Royal Wife, honored above all. Bitter the jealousy among the women of the harem when she was chosen!"

"That was because she was not Pharaoh's sister, as a queen should be. Is that not true, Yatu?" The first-born Princess spoke quietly from beside the couch. A grave child, Merytaten, wise beyond her eight years. Already a great sadness lay upon her, the lines of her face deep-etched by anxiety for the small sister whose seven summers had been long months of pain. With watchful tenderness she made her love a staff whereon the little cripple leaned.

"'Tis true the Queen was not of royal birth," Yatu admitted with evident reluctance.

"I've heard it said the priests of Amon called her That Daughter of Nothing!" A young nurse ventured a bit of hearsay.

An excited titter swept through the room. A slave, waving an ostrich-feather fan slowly to and fro, stopped long enough to add, "And I am told her tongue is barbed as a bee's sting!"

"Hush, Unworthy Ones! Such things are not for the ears of children nor the lips of slaves!" With a word of command, Yatu closed the eager ears of curious underlings and sent them, chastened, back to their respective tasks. "The daughters of Akhenaten, living in truth, must shut their minds to the clack of idle tongues!" she scolded. "Can none of you remember the Great Queen? You, Meketaten, were four the year the Court moved here from Thebes."

"I have no memories of Thebes at all, except the magicians who said strange spells over me until I cried out in fright!" Shuddering, the child buried her face for a moment among the soft pillows. Merytaten bent over her.

"Do not try to remember, Little One. That was long ago,

and no magicians of Thebes will come with the Queen Mother. I was five when last I saw her, but now if I try to think just how she looked, I see only her statues in the temple court.”

“Ah, but she was far more beautiful than any statue man has made—and still is,” Yatu insisted.

“Yet not so lovely as our Royal Mother—you have told us that yourself, Yatu. How perfect is our mother’s name: Nefertiti, the Beautiful One Has Come! No wonder our father loves her as he does, openly for all the world to see.”

“And I have her name: Nefer-nefru-Aten-ta-Shera!” Plump as a pigeon was the child who spoke, squirming impatiently in the grasp of her nurse. “I am Nefertiti the Little, and when I grow up, I shall be the most beautiful Princess in the world! Stop, Disnek! It is hot and the pleats scratch. I do not need fine linen to make me pretty.”

“Be not vain, Ta-Shera. You must grow more sweet of temper before you can be worthy of your name.”

The reproving voice of Merytaten made no impression on the rebellious one. She stamped her foot in the dust of lapis lazuli spread upon the floor. All of her four short years she had been free to run about without so much as a wisp of linen to cover her baby fatness.

With an envious eye Ta-Shera viewed her small sisters, Nefer-nefru-Ra and Setepenra. The two Wise Little Ones were bare brown figures playing happily on a rug. About them was strewn a gay collection of wooden animals, bright balls of colored leather, and dolls with strings of beads for hair. Two young Nubian slaves, as black as the ebony of Meketaten’s couch, danced attendance upon them and tried in vain to keep Setepenra’s necklace of bright beads from her hot, teething mouth.

“Do you think the Great Queen will like the feasting and the festivals prepared for her?” Meketaten asked. “She must be old, Yatu, even though she seems not old to you, and a little bit cross, for the aged are always so.”

“Who would not be cross, with six granddaughters and not

one grandson to be Pharaoh of Egypt? I wish I had been a boy!” The voice from the doorway brought a smile to Meketaten’s face. Beyond that doorway were the six night nurseries, side by side. Ankhsenpaaten stood tiptoe on the threshold, then danced lightly across the room, sheer draperies swirling about her. Tall for her five years, her slim, lithe body seemed always poised for flight.

“See, Meketaten, this is how the Royal Mother will look, her teeth fallen out and lips fallen in, like those of Any, the ancient Scribe of the Altar.” She paused before the couch, and with an impudent gleam in her slanting eyes, sucked her cheeks into hollows and tried to twist her lips into a toothless line. The small invalid’s laugh brought a smile to every face. Laughter came seldom to the wistful second daughter of Akhenaten, who would have given all his earthly kingdom to keep her free from pain.

There was no smile, however, on the face of the Great Royal Nurse who entered at that moment to inspect her charges. Too late came Merytaten’s gasp of warning, for Ankhsenpaaten turned in mocking greeting to the newcomer, and found herself gazing into the proud and puffy countenance of the Great Nurse Ty. Into the room swept the short, thick figure of the royal favorite, trailing a billowing cloud of draperies. Before her withering glance Ankhsenpaaten quailed.

Without a word each Princess took her place in line according to age, even the baby wavering on uncertain feet as she clung to the hand of the sturdy two-year-old. Only Meketaten lay quiet on her couch, watchful eyes upon that frowning face. Would the Royal Nurse be satisfied with Yatu’s work? It was not easy to satisfy the haughty Ty, who had cared for Akhenaten and the lovely Nefertiti, brother and sister in the royal nursery at Thebes. She knew her power as Pharaoh’s nurse, and used it openly.

In the haste and excitement, Ankhsenpaaten and Yatu both escaped the reprimands they fully expected to receive. At a sign from Ty, two slaves lifted Meketaten gently into

the litter which was waiting in the hall without. Then the Royal Nurse, followed by the other children with their chosen attendants, led the way down a long corridor and through the Great Hall to the upper terrace of the palace garden. Here nobles and their ladies had gathered to await the coming of the royal family, while a group of musicians played softly from the shelter of a bright awning stretched to form a pavilion on the edge of a pool, blue with water lilies. Below, the garden fell away in terraced slopes, walks lined with trees and bordered by open irrigation ditches, where water sparkled in the sun. Here and there an arbor arched above the path, heavy with vines which offered a cool retreat from the relentless glare.

A gay clash of cymbals announced the appearance of the royal pair just as the children arrived upon the scene, and the Court bent low before Akhenaten, Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt, Ankh-em-maat, Living in Truth, and Nefertiti, Great Wife of the King, Mistress of His Happiness, Lady of Grace. Very radiant and young they looked in their white draperies and lofty glittering crowns. As yet illness had touched but lightly Pharaoh's youthful frame. At twenty-one he was indeed a Beautiful Child of the Sun. A full skirt fell in complicated folds below his knees, but above the waist the spare brown body was bare of all adornment. He wore no jewels save those in the elaborate white and red double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, which seemed to accentuate the pallor of his long, thin face with its narrow jaw thrust forward and its somber, heavy-lidded eyes. Even when he smiled, a brooding melancholy lay upon him like the faint blue shadow of a cloud across a cliff. In one hand he carried the hek, curved like a shepherd's crook, and in the other, the nekhekh, an inlaid whip of gold with beaded thongs, both scepters of exquisite workmanship which symbolized his power.

Nefertiti was more elaborately adorned in honor of her mother's arrival. In addition to the high, jeweled headdress, she wore a necklace of blue faience beads with medallions

of beaten gold delicately wrought. Her arms were decked with bangled bracelets which tinkled sweetly as she moved. The gauze veiling her figure was so sheer it seemed to envelop her in transparent mist, above which the beauty of her face was like the cool perfection of a lotus bloom above a pool.

Hand in hand the royal pair moved across the terrace toward the six small Princesses waiting in their holiday finery. Ankh-senpaaten ran to meet them, catching her father's welcoming hand in both her own, and dancing backward before them as they walked, to feast her eyes upon her mother's loveliness. Tenderly they greeted the smiling Meketaten and the others, then moved to the head of the procession forming at the entrance of the great covered bridge which spanned the Royal Road between the King's House and the Official Palace.

The high sweet piping of flutes and the steady rhythm of drum and sistrum announced their coming to the throngs of people gathered in the broad highway below the bridge, where they had waited since dawn for a glimpse of Pharaoh and his family on their way to greet the Dowager Queen. To the measured beat of the music, the royal family entered the covered bridge and moved slowly along the corridor toward the great palace built beside the Nile. In the center of the bridge the corridor widened into a large room painted with elaborate frescoes of flowers and birds—a bit of garden held captive high above the ground. Here was the wide-open Window of Appearance from which, on state occasions, Pharaoh greeted his people or showered gifts upon some faithful follower who particularly merited his gratitude. Today he paused but a moment, since already the royal barge of the Great Queen Mother had been sighted, drifting slowly downstream from the south. With Nefertiti close beside him, the baby held high in her arms for all to see, Akhenaten smiled his greeting to the shouting multitudes.

"Life! Prosperity! Health!" The voices rose in eager unison.