

## AMUN & DEMETRI

After Renesmee was born and our family came under threat from the Volturi, the Cullens assembled the largest group of vampires in one place, possibly since the Romanian wars. Aside from the terror of annihilation, the stress of proving to each coven that our daughter's existence did not violate any laws; and being heartbroken over Alice and Jasper's defection, the whole affair did give me a lot of mental fodder. I learned a great deal about our collective history and relationships that I never knew existed before.

One vampire whose mind I found fascinating was Amun. He was among the more difficult of our guests, but he was also one of the most ancient. If Carlisle's assessment is correct, Amun has lived for over four millennia—four thousand, five hundred years! Amun was alive when the Egyptian pyramids were built. It is quite possible that he even ordered some of them built.

Though Amun and Kebi joined us when Carlisle requested it, we were never sure if he would stand with us or not. He stayed, though as far I could tell, he did so because he wished to know the outcome of our dispute and whether the Volturi would be coming after dissenters. He told Carlisle outright that if it came to "blows," he and Kebi would join with the Volturi.

Carlisle wasn't surprised, since Amun and Kebi are the lone survivors of an ancient Egyptian coven that was destroyed by the Volturi. Amun defected to the Volturi in that dispute to save his own life. The Volturi let he and his mate live as an example of their beneficence.

So Amun was showing his true colors in Forks, but none of us held it against him particularly, especially since his coven member, Benjamin, had feelings more aligned with ours and vowed to lend us his considerable talent if he was needed. Having Benjamin's support helped us win the day.

What I didn't realize before then was that Demetri, the famous tracker who can find anyone—except Bella, of course—was created by Amun! I guess Carlisle knew, but he never thought about it around me—why would he?—and so I never read it in his mind. I got it directly from Amun, whose mind is a simmering cauldron of alliances, betrayals, and vengeance. In his scheming to ally with the winning side of any conflict, Amun was always thinking about something interesting. When he found out I could read minds, he and Kebi began putting physical distance between themselves and us at night, but I have a pretty big range once a mind has become familiar to me.

Amun helped Demetri develop his natural abilities after he created him, so from Amun's thoughts I learned that Demetri tracks his targets much as I read minds. Once Demetri has been exposed to a particular vampire or person, he can find him easily by remembering his "essence," just as I can find a mental voice by remembering it from a previous encounter. But Demetri does something even more surprising. He can identify and track an entirely new target if he meets someone who has met them or if he goes to a place the target has been. In effect, he can absorb the essence of someone by proxy. That makes him nearly impossible for anyone to dodge—except Bella, of course.

Amun found Demetri on the Greek Island of Rodos (Rhodes) nearly a thousand years ago. (In our family, we think of Carlisle as old, but most of the European vampires are at least three times older and some are more than ten times older than Carlisle. It boggles the mind.) Fair Demetri—as Amun refers to him in his thoughts—was born into a family of fishermen that supplied seafood to the Crusaders who passed through Rodos on their way to Constantinople.

A beautiful, slightly delicate boy, Demetri had never taken to the sea or even to the outdoors, which was considered almost sacrilegious in the Greek Isles. He did not enjoy the rough, physical world of the fishermen and preferred to stay home with the women. As the youngest, much-beloved son of a doting Greek mother, he was coddled and allowed to

trail after the women and entertain them with songs and dances and little theatrical productions starring himself.

His mother, who had no interested daughters, even taught him the traditional art of Greek needlework and he became an expert at embroidering the gorgeous bed tents that were part of a rich girl's dowry. Because his skills brought in steady money from wealthy patrons, he was not pressed to work on the boats which easily could have ruined his hands for the intricate work.

All of this galled his father, who considered Demetri unmanly, embarrassing in his over-attentiveness to his appearance and hygiene, and possibly even *énas pouístis*.<sup>1</sup> Demetri knew from the thousands of travelers who passed through Rodos that others like himself existed in the larger world, though. So he was not overly concerned about his father's apparent disgust, because plenty of men were not disgusted by him. Quite the contrary.

Demetri set his sights on escaping to Athens as soon as he could pull together enough money to buy a ship's passage. He secretly squirreled away small amounts of his embroidery money by pretending that patrons paid slightly less than they actually did. When he deemed that his secret stash was growing too slowly, he decided one night to accept the cash that was often offered to him down by the docks when the sailing ships came in. He viewed his new sideline as just another way of servicing the Crusaders—his father and brothers sold to ships' pursers; he sold to the sailors.

This is where Amun found him sometime around the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> century—late at night, down on the docks. Immediately, Amun was drawn to Demetri, a Greek god as far as the Egyptian was concerned, and young enough to fall into that category of “protégé” that the Egyptians coveted before the Volturi wiped out their coven.

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<sup>1</sup> A faggot, a poufter, light in the loafers, a Nancy, a Nelly, etc.

What the Volturi objected to wasn't the Egyptians' mating habits, but their ostentatious lifestyle. For one thing, they had set themselves up as gods to be worshipped. They made golden images of themselves and compelled humans to bow at their feet and pay them tribute. They engaged in grandiose displays of wealth, building temples and monuments to themselves in the desert, and keeping hundreds of human slaves. All in all, the Volturi thought it was a matter of time before that kind of behavior incited the humans to revolt, thus endangering covens everywhere. The Volturi believed in discretion—still do.

The slaves are one thing that Amun has missed over the centuries and he thought about them a lot when he was in Forks. He had especially enjoyed the ready availability of human sexual partners in infinite variety and quantity—of both genders and the in-betweens too—to use as he saw fit. And when he was through with them, he could drain them or not according to his mood. When Amun decided to take a mate, he chose Kebi from among his harem expressly because she had learned to accede to his every whim as a slave girl.

As a vampire, Amun still can command the services of virtually any human he wishes, but he does not enjoy having either to charm them or force them. He misses being worshipped and adored. If Amun could have what he truly wants, he would return at once to his former state of glory. It's something he fantasizes about.

Amun spent a millennium plotting to reverse the changes brought about by the Volturi. In that effort, he always kept his eyes open for talented humans who, if changed, might provide him with some advantage in an eventual standoff against the Volturi.

When Amun found Demetri, beautiful and willing and dying to escape his provincial circumstances, he'd found a match made in heaven. Amun loved him for his effeminacy, his delicacy, and his prolonged clinging to the splendor of his youth. Amun kept Demetri human for a time, but decided to change him when he became worried that Demetri was aging past his peak of sexual desirability.

*It was only after Demetri became a vampire that Amun discovered he had always had a talent for finding lost things. As a vampire, the talent was greatly enhanced, so Amun decided to train him as a tracker. Much to his delight, the nature of Demetri's gift was perfectly suited to tracking and it didn't take long to channel it toward finding individuals.*

*I never caught Amun thinking about how long Demetri was with him, but I'm guessing it was several hundred years before Aro got wind of Amun's acquisition and set about stealing him away. Demetri was happy with Amun and had no desire to join the Volturi guard when Aro first approached him in Egypt. He and Kebi lived like sister-wives, sharing everything, including Amun, and the arrangement suited everyone—or if it didn't suit Kebi, Amun never knew.*

*Unfortunately, with the Volturi guard's talents at his disposal, Aro succeeded in luring Demetri away by asking Chelsea to break his bond to Amun and re-bind him to the Volturi. To Amun's bitter disappointment, Demetri left to join the Volturi guard shortly after Aro extended the offer.*

*Once I'd pieced together most of this story, the relationship between Amun and Benjamin began to make a lot more sense to me. Amun chose and changed Benjamin when he was only fifteen. Benjamin is boyish and beautiful, much like Demetri, and I think Amun hoped that Benjamin would become his "protégé" as Demetri had been. But Benjamin is not made that way and after five years, he ran away from Amun in search of his own mate, changing Tia for himself.*

*Now, though they love each other, Amun and Benjamin maintain a mildly quarrelsome relationship. Benjamin is as a son to Amun, and like a son, has frequently rebelled against Amun's strictures, particularly his tendency to keep Benjamin hidden from others in the vampire community. Why Amun was so obsessed with that finally makes perfect sense to me. Aro is Amun's nemesis.*

*But back to Demetri...as far as Eleazar knows (I asked him), Demetri's been happy with the Volturi. He's never taken a mate, of course. Eleazar*

says that Demetri prefers men in both quantity and variety, very much like Tanya, I suppose.

So why did I bother listening to Amun's thoughts about Demetri in the first place, and even go so far as to throw him the odd question or two to prompt particular thoughts? I would say it goes back to my first encounters with Demetri in Volterra, which even in the wretched condition I was in, very much got under my skin (and "not in a good way," as Renesmee would say). I've always wondered whether he was seriously pursuing me or just having a bit of fun at my expense.

I'll never know for sure, I guess, but I've come to the conclusion that he was serious in his admiration and just had a crass way of showing it. A lot like Tanya, actually. Alas, for them both, I am no notch on anyone's bedpost. I am a one-woman man. Full stop.

## Edward

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Demetri's Other Gift: Embroidery

Bed tents are more properly called marriage beds, because they fully surround the bed of a newly married couple, giving them a private "room" in a multi-generational home that otherwise has none. Silk thread embroidered on cotton.

