

Flying the Nest

By Charlotte Booth MA



Today has been a long day. Ra went below the western horizon some six hours ago and the last guest has only just left. The house is finally silent but for Na Na the goat at the back of the house. It was a fantastic party, one Hathor would have been proud of. I think we sent our eldest daughter to her new husband's house in style. My little girl has finally grown up.

I suppose I should tidy up the house. Or at least put the good table ware in the cellar out of harm's way. Oh, damn, I've knocked over a box. More things to clear away, but what's this? Oh my goodness, it's my daughter's rag doll.

I feel quite overwhelmed. I remember making this for her when she was only five or six years old. It didn't take long but I remember cutting a section of my own hair to weave into the head, and spending an age drying out the rushes to stuff it. My daughter went everywhere with it, which probably explains its condition. I lost count of how many times I had to sew the head and the arms on after an accident.

She would comb the doll's hair and beg me to make new clothes from scrap linen around the house. Now, what did she call her? Oh yes, Mwti-neferet – My beautiful mother. I remember one day she sat with Mwti-neferet and tried to teach her to sing, and was ever so frustrated that the doll seemed to be sleeping.

Such a happy memory, although why does it make me feel so sad? Time passes and people move on, and I guess my little hoopoe bird has flown the nest to pursue her own family and live a life of adventures.

I think I should wrap this little doll up in some linen and pass it on to my daughter so she can one day give it to her own daughter, should she be blessed with one.

Perhaps I will keep it just a little bit longer. I don't think I can hand over my daughter and my memories in one day.

Object number: UC28024 Petrie Museum, UCL, London