

## His Highness's Second Wife Chapter 10 - Tips

"Your Highness?"

Ka.ssian raised his head from the report he was reading, looking at the Grand Chamberlain standing in front of him. They had already discussed the palace budget, the planned renovations, and other matters that required his immediate attention, so it was unusual for him to be back so soon. He wasn't the type to forget things.

"What is it?"

"My apologies for disturbing you again, Your Highness," the Chamberlain said in his raspy voice. "It was just brought to my attention that Her Highness Raena has requested permission to bring into her residence three slaves. Apparently, she just purchased them at the market."

Ka.ssian slowly lowered the parchment to his desk, looking at the Grand Chamberlain instead. He remained with his head politely lowered, waiting patiently.

"Did you just say 'slaves'?" he asked, and the Chamberlain nodded. "Are we lacking servants?"

"We have plenty of servants, Your Highness," the Grand Chamberlain assured him. "I offered to send her as many as she wants, in addition to the ones Her Highness Sarea assigned to her. She refused and..." He hesitated, stepping awkwardly from one leg to the other. "She said she wanted to have those three because they were pretty and fun to play with."

Ka.ssian raised his hand and rubbed his forehead, his headache intensifying. That woman — no, that child — was proving to be more trouble than he thought. First, she broke the rules in front of servants and left the bridal chamber, then she attacked a member of the Imperial family, and now she bought slaves to play with. He knew exactly what the second prince's faction was going to say about his proposition for a slavery abolition law once they got wind of this.

Still, he needed her father's support, so he had to keep her humored, at least for the time being. Once Yulien assumed the throne, he'd have no need for her.

Ka.ssian sighed. He felt much more comfortable on the battlefield than he did dealing with nobles and dabbling with traders. He had spent most of his life training or fighting along with his soldiers, so apart from his mandatory education as a potential heir to the throne, he knew very little about business or trade. Yet, his brother needed his support, and now that the war was over, Ka.ssian had to provide it in some other way. Putting down insignificant rebellions and petty squabbles was more of a pastime than a job.

He sensed a movement behind him and tensed instinctively, but the person who walked in was too loud to pose any danger. A moment later, Lara appeared in his view, carrying a tray in her hands. He had almost forgotten he had called for her.

Kassian glanced at her as she stopped by his desk and placed a glass in front of him, then a decanter full of wine. Her long black hair fell freely over her right side, leaving her left shoulder completely bare. Her strapless gown fitted tightly over her chest and slim waist, twisting around her long legs in the most flattering way. The fabric was so thin, he could almost see through it, but she didn't seem bothered at all.

Lara picked up the bottle, her fingers working the stopper.

"Men or women?" he asked, returning his attention to the Chamberlain.

"Two men and one woman," he replied quickly. "According to their papers, the woman and one of the men are twins, eighteen years old. The other man is twenty-two years old."

"Did they look dangerous?" Kassian asked, tapping on his desk with his fingers. "Are any of them soldiers?"

"The papers of the older one said he has experience fighting, but it's not unheard of for the slave traders to exaggerate in order to make their merchandise more desirable, Your Highness," the Grand Chamberlain reported. "But he looked weak, probably from starvation and poor care. He acted obediently as well, answering all questions with no hint of defiance." Kassian sighed. He didn't want to have slaves in his residence, but it was a small price to pay. He'd free them later and offer them a job if they wanted one. "There is one more thing, Your Highness," the Grand Chamberlain added in a hesitant voice. "They all looked like they were from Craidal; their accent was from there too."

"Damn that girl!" Kassian cursed. From all the slaves, or rather from all the people in the capital she could have picked from, how could she find people from Craidal? Their kingdom had fallen under the Empire's rule less than two years ago, and the blood of those who survived was still boiling. There had already been over five uprisings and many more skirmishes with their resistance forces. Those slaves could be spies or even assassins.

After pouring wine into his glass, Lara moved behind his chair. He felt her hands on his shoulders as she began massaging him, pressing confidently with her fingers. He didn't even realize how tense he was until his muscles started to relax.

"Let them in," he said. He might actually be able to use them if they settled down under his roof. He'd free them from the bonds of slavery, and give them proper jobs and equal pay. Unless they were army soldiers or nobility, they should be content with his proposal. Most of Craidal's people were suffering a much worse fate. "Assign someone to watch her residence day and night and report to me. Make sure they are not seen."

“Yes, Your Highness.” The Grand Chamberlain bowed again. “I’ll take my leave. Please call me if you need anything at all.”

Ka.ssian picked up his wine, taking a big sip before leaning back in his chair. Lara’s hands returned to work, squeezing harder while he closed his eyes.

“His Highness seems especially tense today,” she said, her fingers moving to his forehead and temples. “You should work less, my love, or you will harm your body.”

Her voice was soothing, as usual, and her hands were soft and warm. It was her voice that caught his attention when he first met her, and that was also the reason he had made her one of his concubines. It didn’t hurt that she had a beautiful face and body.

“It can’t be helped,” he muttered. She slid a finger over each eyebrow, pressing slightly, then moved them between his eyes and back to his temples. As she did that several more times, it felt like his headache was gradually subsiding.

“Is your new wife causing trouble already?” she chuckled, her hands sliding over his neck, and then moving down his shoulders. Her fingers kept caressing his chest, sending a pleasant sensation all over his body.

“She is,” Ka.ssian replied, trying to suppress his frustration.

“Say, Your Highness,” Lara leaned over the back of the chair, rubbing her cheek over his and dragging her lips over his ear. “Is it true that you didn’t visit her on your wedding night?”

“Green is not a good color on you, Lara,” Ka.ssian said, and for a moment her hands paused. “I’m still visiting you, so you have nothing to complain about.”

“As long as I receive His Highness’s affection, I am happy,” she purred in his ear. Her touch disappeared as she circled the chair and slid into his lap, wrapping her arms around his neck. Ka.ssian opened his eyes, staring at her — she was indeed a beautiful woman, probably the most beautiful in his harem, but despite her perfect obedience and eagerness to please, occasionally he could sense danger lurking in her eyes. He wasn’t sure if it was the long years among enemies that had made him so sensitive to people, but his gut rarely lied. Still, he doubted she was any danger to him — it was probably the other women that had to be careful. From what his servants told him, she had the rest of the harem all in a firm grasp. Even Sarea seemed to be cautious with her.

His eyes moved away from her face, stopping on the big red ruby necklace almost disappearing between her breasts. She smiled as she saw him looking, then leaned over and placed a kiss on his neck.

“I was just curious,” she continued, gliding her tongue over his jaw, then biting his earlobe playfully. “I saw her a few days ago — she really is like a doll, much prettier

than me. Long blonde hair, bright blue eyes, and porcelain skin. Even the guards were talking about her.”

“If you’re fishing for a compliment, I’m too tired to care,” Ka.ssian sighed, looking away from her.

“You’re too mean, Your Highness!” she chuckled in his ear. Lara rose from his lap, sliding her hands to his knees. As she guided them apart, she slowly lowered herself between them. Her fingers worked on the buckle with slow, unhurried movements while Ka.ssian watched her smile. Holding his gaze, she slipped her hand into his pants, letting out a quiet moan as her fingers glided over his hardening cock. “Besides, she is too young to know how to please you, my love.”

Ka.ssian gritted his teeth. Frustration replaced the pleasant calm that her voice had brought earlier, and he reached out, grabbing her wrist. Did she have to talk so much?

“Get out,” he snapped, pushing her hand away. Her eyes widened in surprise, and she hesitated. “I said get out!”

Lara got to her feet quickly, picking up her skirts and skittering out the door without turning back. Ka.ssian leaned back in the chair, rubbing his temples as his headache returned.