

His Highness's Second Wife Chapter 2 - Tips

Raena's eyes darted left and right, but apart from the figure half-hidden in the nearby bushes, there was no one else around. She knew that in the book, the third prince never visited his second wife's chambers during their wedding night, but there was nothing said about meeting her outside of them.

The man stepped forward, tripping and swaying to his left. He steadied himself, barely, and took another two steps in their direction. He was taller than both of them, slim but relatively fit. His hair was dark and straight, falling past his shoulders like a river of black silk. He looked devastatingly handsome, even with a drunken expression and a goofy grin on his lips. His eyes were bleary and unfocused, and even though he was staring at her, she wasn't sure he was seeing her properly.

"Tell me this is not the third prince!" Raena whispered to Kara, who was watching the man with a mix of hesitation and shock.

"No, that's..."

"Hey, what a pretty lady!" The man reached the carefully arranged garden path, tripping on his own feet and flying forward. Raena instinctively raised her hands as he ran into her, his weight making her bend backward. Kara helped her steady him, and he staggered to his feet until he found his balance again. "You smell really nice!" He smiled. "Come here, I'll give you a kiss!"

"No, thank you!" Raena replied, grimacing. "You should go get sober somewhere."

"My, aren't you bold talking to me like that?" He smirked. He leaned his hand on one of the unlit oil lamp posts that were lining the path, striking a pose that he probably thought was seductive, but in his state looked like he was trying to pee only in one of his pants legs. "What's your name, pretty lady?"

"My name is none of your business!" Raena replied with an annoyed smile.

"What a strange name!"

"Kara, let's go!"

Raena turned to leave, but before she could take a step, he moved surprisingly fast for his drunken state, grabbing her wrist and pulling her toward him. Raena crashed into his chest, wondering if he was wearing armor underneath. His hand wrapped around her waist, stopping her from pulling away.

"I haven't seen you before," he murmured, staring down at her with a playful grin. "So pretty!" Picking up a lock of her hair, he brought it to his nose and sniffed it. "Ah, even

your hair smells nice! Which house do you belong to? Kiss me and I'll make you my concubine!"

Without waiting for her response, he leaned down to kiss her. Raena tried to push him back, but it was like trying to move a stone wall with her bare hands. Just before his lips locked with hers, she turned her head so his mouth landed on her cheek. His tongue slid his tongue over her skin and she heard him moan.

"Hey, haven't you heard of consent? Let go!" she snarled, hitting his chest with her fist, but he barely seem to notice.

"I don't want to," he murmured, his mouth continuing its exploration of her neck and shoulders. "You taste nice, too. I like it."

"Last chance, asshole! Let go!" Raena snarled.

"So feisty!" he chuckled, biting her neck teasingly. "I'm going to make you..."

Raena bent her knee, hitting him in the crotch with all her might. Her new body might not have been used to it and pain might have spread through her knee the moment it connected, but her father's self-defense lessons still lived rent-free in her mind.

The drunkard let out a grunt, doubling down and falling sideways on the ground. Panting from the struggle, Raena stared at him with growing frustration while he held his groin with both hands, whimpering quietly.

"God, I hate those kinds of drunks!" Raena murmured, picking up her skirts and stepping away from him as he reached for her with a trembling hand. His face had turned even paler, agony and anger dancing in his eyes, but he didn't even try to get up. "Next time, ask for permission first! Asshole!"

"Mistress!" Kara hissed, pulling her hand. "Let's go! Quickly!"

"Such a waste of a handsome face," Raena sighed, throwing one last glance at the pitiful figure on the ground before allowing Kara to pull her along the path. They half-walked, half-ran for the next ten minutes, and Kara didn't slow down until they finally left the garden behind. By then, Raena was panting so hard, she couldn't even ask her to stop.

Raena leaned on the stone wall that ran on one side of the path, resting her hands on her burning thighs. Every breath felt like a knife twisting in her chest and her feet were shaking so hard, she was actually surprised she was still able to stand.

"Why did you... make me... run?" she panted, glaring at Kara. "He won't be... getting up... anytime... soon!"

“Are you crazy?” the maid snapped, quickly lowering her voice. “Didn’t you recognize him? I even showed you his portrait!”

“It was dark!” Raena winced, trying to recall if she had ever seen his face. Kara had taken the time to describe and even procured portraits of the most important people in Raena’s life — and social circles — but there had been so many that their faces were mostly a blur. “Who was it?”

“That was the crown prince!” Kara said through gritted teeth. A cold chill ran down Raena’s spine that had nothing to do with the evening wind. “Do you know that attacking a member of the Imperial family is punishable by death?” She grabbed Raena’s shoulders, her fingers digging into her skin. “You kicked him in the... What if something happens? What if he can’t have children anymore? We’re dead! We’re so dead!”

“Calm down!” Raena sighed, trying to sound nonchalant. She should have realized it sooner — with such looks and arrogance, of course, he’d be one of the male leads. She ought to pay more attention to their faces. “He was drunk and out of his mind! He won’t remember us or our faces!” Kara didn’t seem comforted by that, her panicked gaze searching the shadows. “Why was he alone? Aren’t royals supposed to have guards with them all the time?”

“How should I know?” the maid snapped. “Maybe there were guards. Maybe they saw us and they are on their way to arrest us! By the gods, I never should have trusted you! How can you be so impulsive and... violent!”

Raena frowned.

“So does that mean that if he’s royalty, he can pick a girl at random, screw her in the bushes and just go about his day?” she asked coldly.

“He is the crown prince!” Kara said, as if that answered the question, then took a long breath to calm herself.

“What a stupid book,” Raena murmured.

“What?” Kara frowned.

“Nothing. Let’s get to the North Palace. We can’t stay here all night. My legs are going to give out soon.”

Kara hesitated for a moment, then took the lead again, striding alongside the crumbling wall. The path wasn’t nearly as well kept as the ones around the Main Palace, and it had holes that made them trip no matter how careful they were. There were no oil lamps either, not even unlit ones, so they walked in the dark, relying on the moon and the stars to find their way.

"We're here," Kara announced a few minutes later and Raena stopped, looking up at the old double-winged gate that seemed a whiff away from falling down. The steps to the door had turned into a single plate of smooth stone that would probably make for a nice winter slide spot. There were holes in the walls on both sides — one of them big enough for her to slide in — and where the facade wasn't crumbling, ivy had claimed the stone.

"Oh, come on! I'm not even the main character here! Why must I suffer this much?" Raena murmured. And she wasn't. The book she had woken up in wasn't about the second wife of the third prince. It wasn't even about the first wife. It was about a pretty young slave girl called Elene who had a very hard life during the war, only to miraculously end up loved by all three princes. "So unfair!"

Kara gave her a weird look, then pushed one of the doors open. A piercing screech broke the silence of the night, sending a flock of birds flying in panic. The place was empty and unkempt, with weeds and wildflowers claiming most of the front yard. There was a giant willow tree hovering between the wall and the three-story mansion, its branches spreading so tall and wide that she was sure it would cover half of the yard in its shade during the day.

Her eyes stopped on the building itself and she gave it a bitter smile.

"What a dump," Raena scoffed.

"It's within our expectations," Kara noted, her voice betraying nothing. "The first wife is probably trying to show her superiority by sticking you in here. Even the third prince's concubines have better accommodations."

"Doesn't matter." Raena sighed, picking up her skirt and heading toward the front door. "This place is still a few steps up from my apartment back in my world. With a little work, it will do. We're staying here temporarily, anyway."

Raena pushed the doors of her new palace open and a flurry of dust rose in the air. Waving a hand in front of her face, she entered the gloomy anteroom, clicking with her tongue as her eyes inspected the peeling paint on the walls and dirt-covered floor. Something shattered underneath her shoe as she took a step forward, so against her better judgment, she looked down. She let out a sigh of relief as she realized it was just a mouse skeleton that had turned into another pile of rubbish.

"They could have at least cleaned!" Kara growled, stopping next to her. "They knew you'd be coming here. What if you raised a ruckus after seeing the place? Or they thought just because you're supposed to be stupid, you wouldn't complain if you were forced to live in this wreck?"

"Bringing attention to ourselves is not something we want right now," Raena said, her smile dropping. She didn't like the idea of letting them bully her, but in this case, it was

necessary. Just for a little while. “Besides, once cleaned, the place won’t be that bad! Spacious rooms, tall ceilings, and that wood carving — it has great potential. This used to be the most gorgeous of all the palaces.” She remembered a paragraph about it in the book where Prince Kassian was telling Elene that the North Palace was the first building in the residence and the builders spared no effort, using only the best materials and most modern interior decoration. But that was over three hundred years ago, so the current state of the place was a far cry from its former glory. “Once money starts pouring in, we’ll turn this place into something sweet. Although I am torn — if I’d be leaving it soon, I’m not sure how much I should invest in it.”

“Let’s worry about that once we actually have money,” Kara said, her eye twitching as she gave the anteroom another long look. “For now, let’s get some sleep. We’ll have a lot of work to do from now on.”