

## His Highness's Second Wife Chapter 5 - Tips

"Your Highness, the crown prince is here to see you. Should I let him in?"

Ka.ssian looked up from the paper he was reading, staring at Blaine, his aide, as he waited by his desk. He thought his older brother would have returned to the Imperial Palace, considering it was already late afternoon. His presence here could only mean something had happened.

Ka.ssian hesitated. He was done with his tedious work, and he had planned to have an early rest after the exhausting wedding ceremonies the previous day. The whole thing was so bothersome, he would have skipped it if he could — but that would mean humiliating the Prime Minister, which was not something he could currently afford.

"Lead him into my private reception room and bring some food and refreshments," Ka.ssian ordered, putting the last paper on the pile. "Take those away. I'll be retiring to my chambers after my brother leaves so you can have the rest of the night off."

"Yes, Your Highness." Blaine bowed, taking the papers from him. "Have a good rest, Your Highness."

Ka.ssian nodded, getting to his feet as the other man left his office. He headed toward the reception room, cracking his neck in an attempt to chase away the stiffness in his muscles.

Taking a seat on one of the soft couches, he stretched his legs under the table. His brother arrived a couple of minutes later, walking awkwardly and with a pained expression on his face. He looked pale and grumpy, and as he reached the table, Ka.ssian noticed his eyes were red and there were dark shadows under them.

"How many drinks and women did you have last night?" Ka.ssian asked, an amused smile appearing on his lips. At least one of them seemed to have enjoyed themselves yesterday. He had been so annoyed by the excessive length of the ceremonies and all the wishes for love and happy marriage that he ended up leaving his own residence to get some peace and quiet. "And why do you walk like you have something up your a.ss?"

"Brother, you seem to forget who you're speaking to," Yulien grumbled, taking a seat beside him. Despite his grouchiness and sour expression, there was no harshness in his words.

"Why do you walk like you have something up your a.ss, Your Highness?" Ka.ssian asked with a mocking smile, his tone heavy with forced politeness.

“The battlefield definitely didn’t improve your manners, Ka.ssian.” Yulien pointed out, wincing as he adjusted himself in his seat and pulled a few more cushions behind his back.

“You look terrible. What happened?”

“I was violated last night,” Yulien said through gritted teeth. Ka.ssian opened his mouth, but then his brother added, “By a woman.”

Ka.ssian closed his mouth, trying to hold back his laughter. Those were not words he had ever expected to hear from the crown prince’s mouth.

“What did she do, ride you too hard?” he asked instead.

A pair of servants appeared from one of the doors, filling the table with silver trays overflowing with food. One of them brought a decanter of wine while the other set down a teapot with two cups. The first one poured some of the wine and tea into separate containers and took a sip while the other separated a little from the food on the plates and started tasting it. When neither of them showed any signs of poisoning, they looked at Ka.ssian expectantly. He waved his hand and they bowed, silently leaving the room.

“So?” he asked, reaching for the wine and pouring some into their glasses.

Yulien sighed, pushing his long hair over his shoulder. Ka.ssian stared at him for a moment, wondering how much time his brother’s maids spent tending to it. The silky black strands fell perfectly straight to the middle of Yulien’s back and looked better than the hair of most of the women Ka.ssian knew. As someone who had spent a lot of their time fighting, Ka.ssian couldn’t even imagine himself with long hair. Moreover, long hair would only get in the way on the battlefield. Not that there was that much need for fighting now that the entire continent had been united.

“She kneed me in the balls.”

Ka.ssian’s hand twitched, and he spilled the wine on the table. He set the decanter down and turned toward the other man, torn between frowning and laughing.

“I’d like to meet that bold woman before you send her to prison.” Ka.ssian laughed, leaning back in his seat. “Who is she?”

“I have no idea!” Yulien groaned, picking up his glass and gulping it down in one go. “All I remember was that she was gorgeous and smelled nice.”

“Well, that sure narrows it down.” Ka.ssian scoffed, bringing his own wine to his lips. Despite Yulien’s sharp mind, which was surely going to turn him into a great emperor one day, his mental age degraded to that of a horny teenager every time he drank. “So,

what do you want me to do about it? Do you expect me to find her with that vague description?"

"I think there was a maid with her," Yulien said, a line forming on his forehead as he tried to concentrate. "Her name was Kira or Kora. Something like that. Can you check if you have such a servant and who she is serving?"

"You really want to find her, huh?" Ka.ssian asked, raising his hand, and one of the guards rushed to his side. "Ask the Head Maid if we have a servant girl named Kira or Kora and find out who she is serving."

"Yes, Your Highness," the guard replied readily and rushed out of the room.

"Do you really want to punish her that badly? I doubt she kicked you without a reason," Ka.ssian said, turning back to his brother.

"Have you ever been kicked in your jewels, Ka.ssian?" Yulien asked, wincing.

"My women are always willing, so no."

Yulien grimaced as if he still felt the pain.

"Then you wouldn't understand!"

"What do you plan to do with her?" Ka.ssian asked, leaning his head on his hand. "Give her twenty lashes? Break her legs? Or go all the way and k!!l her?"

Yulien tilted his head, staring at him as if he was wondering if there was something wrong with him. His gray eyes, which they both got from their mother, pierced him like little cold arrows.

"Do I look like a man who beats and k!!ls women?" Yulien asked, sounding offended.

"She didn't do it with ill intent, I think. I was really drunk, and I jumped her. She kept shouting something about consent, so I guess she wasn't as willing as I thought. She didn't even use my t!tle, just kept calling me an a.ssh0le. Now that I think about it, I've never heard a lady use such vulgar language before! I really want to meet her again!"

"Make up your mind. Are you angry or are you in love?"

"Human beings are capable of complicated emotions, brother. Not that you'll understand with your stuck-up views." Yulien sighed. "She was really something. She had the bluest eyes and I think her hair was blonde or light brown. And she smelled really nice. And she even tasted nice."

Ka.ssian shook his head.

“And you wonder why she kicked you. How far did you go?”

“I only felt her a little.” Yulien groaned, closing his eyes.

“Don’t you have enough women already? What was it? Ten? Fifteen?”

“Seventeen, but most of them are my concubines for political reasons,” Yulien replied nonchalantly. “I think I even offered to make her my concubine. I guess she didn’t like that. But she was really feisty — she was so tiny, yet she fought the entire time, hitting my chest with her tiny cute hands. It was kind of invigorating.”

“I thought you said you didn’t remember...” Kassian pointed out, smirking behind the edge of his cup. He doubted they’d find his mystery woman — none of his own concubines attended the wedding and none of them would have touched his brother or, gods forbid, kicked him. That woman was probably one of the guests that were now, fortunately, long gone.

“Your Highnesses.”

Kassian turned. The soldier he had sent earlier had returned and was now waiting patiently by the table. Kassian gave him a sign to speak.

“The Head Maid said that there was only one servant with a similar name, called Kara, currently working in His Highness’s residence.” Kassian glanced at his brother, who had perked up on his spot, staring at the soldier expectantly. “The servant is serving... Her Highness Raena Magrath, your second wife.”

Kassian blinked in surprise, turning toward his brother, who covered his face with his hand. Kassian looked back at the soldier, his mind still processing the information.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

“Yes, Your Highness.” The soldier nodded. “Also...” He licked his lips and Kassian tensed in his seat. “The Head Maid said that Her Highness Raena left the bridal chamber around midnight and went to the North Palace.”

“She did what?” Kassian growled. The soldier quickly looked down. “You’re dismissed.” Kassian sighed, dropping back in his seat. He looked at his brother, who was now watching him with his hand on his mouth, as if he regretted saying anything at all. “I guess we found your mystery woman.”

“I had no idea she was your wife, Kassian!” Yulien said, running a hand through his hair. “I’ve never even seen Lady Raena. If I’d known, I wouldn’t have touched her!”

“It’s fine,” Kassian sighed, waving his hand dismissively. “It’s her fault, anyway. She should have stayed in the bridal chamber.”

“So you didn’t visit her at all on your wedding night?” Yulien asked, eyebrows raising. “You should have at least seen her before the wedding. Why would you turn down a gorgeous woman, even if the marriage is not for love? You need an heir, and it looks like Sarea can’t give you one.”

“I am not interested in her looks,” Ka.sasian murmured, picking up his wineglass again. “I married her to gain access to her family’s connections. Besides, I have no intention of sleeping with a child.”

“What?” Yulien frowned. “She is nineteen, isn’t she? You have just five years’ difference. You can hardly call her a child! She didn’t look like one either!”

“You really don’t know?” Ka.sasian asked, raising an eyebrow. “Her age may be that of an adult, but her mind is not. It would be like sleeping with a child. I’m not into that.”

“Ah, that’s too bad.” Yulien sighed, picking up his glass and raising it. “Here is to your terrible luck with women, brother. May the day come when you find true love.” Yulien grinned as he saw his expression, then raised the glass to his lips, murmuring. “And may she be willing or you’re in for a world of pain.”