

# The War God's Favorite by Jhonny Fox

## Chapter 8

### #8 The Death Sentence

It took all of Cassandra's willpower to not stare at the dragons, to keep looking down and wait behind Kairen. They were like his majestic Black Dragon, but smaller ones and differently colored. She remembered the slaughter they had inflicted just hours earlier in the arena and shivered. They weren't calm. Even while standing right next to their masters, one could tell that only the chains were really holding them. They were agitated, glaring at the people around them, and pulling on their restraints. The purple one in the cage kept growling for no reason, frightening the Fifth Prince's concubines each time.

"That's right, Kairen. I heard you were enchanted by a slave from today's games?"

Cassandra jumped. She had almost forgotten the "slave" in question was herself! What would the Emperor say? She didn't dare move from her spot, waiting to see how Kairen would respond. But instead, the Second Prince clicked his tongue.

"To think, after presenting him with countless concubines, our brother's interest would be a slave... You really do have odd tastes, Kairen."

"Brother, is that true?" A young, feminine voice suddenly asked, "A slave?"

Cassandra hadn't realized Princesses, other than Shareen, were there too. From what she recalled, there were six Princes and at least twice as many Princesses, but she only counted five women present, each with their own golden seat like Shareen's. The one who had spoken appeared to be among the youngest. Kairen ignored her, but another Princess, this time in a seat closer to him, raised her voice.

"This is inappropriate. How can we allow lowly, filthy slaves in our presence? Brother, you are far too lenient. That kind of dirt belongs to the lower classes. You should have proper concubines and proper servants."

From where she sat, Cassandra could see the Princess's black hair and as she turned her head, Cassandra looked down just in time. She hadn't been caught staring, but nevertheless, she felt the cold glare of the Princess.

"As high and mighty as ever, Phetra..." sneered Shareen, while taking a seat close to the Emperor.

"You and Kairen should be ashamed of yourselves. Meddling with lowly servants and, worse, slaves!"

But Shareen snickered at her angry sister.

"Someone needs to stop talking out of her ass..." she muttered.

But she had said it just loud enough for most people to bear. A few concubines and servants chuckled.

But what happened next silenced them all. In a sudden and swift movement, Phetra took out a whip and lashed it in the direction of one of the servants. She caught a man by the throat and his laugh died right away, leaving only an expression of pure terror on his face. Phetra snapped her whip and threw him right into the cage of one of the colored dragons. The Purple dragon inside jumped on the man, instantly ripping his body in half. All the concubines nearby were splattered with blood.

An ice-cold silence befell the room, apart from the dragon's loud chewing. Cassandra was frozen in complete shock. She only dared a glance towards Kairen and Shareen. While her master hadn't moved an inch, both he and his sister were glaring at Phetra.

But the Princess looked satisfied with herself as she pulled back her whip. The Emperor sighed.

"Phetra, not while we're eating."

"Sorry, Father."

She didn't look apologetic at all though, only giving her siblings a prideful smirk. Meanwhile, Cassandra was still terrified. This family was far too scary. They killed without a shred of remorse or restraint, and for such ridiculous reasons too. Moreover, she felt like Phetra had only done this to infuriate Shareen, whom she couldn't confront directly.

Princess Shareen was glaring at Phetra, not hiding her annoyance very well. Cassandra had a feeling that the hatred between all the siblings had deeper roots than a mere confrontation about servants and slaves. She observed them more carefully now. Phetra had a lot of common traits with the Second Prince. Just like Kairen and Shareen, could those two be siblings from the same mother?

"Enough killing already, all of you. Let's see the next dancers. And Phetra, do not kill your siblings' servants. I'm fed up with your little squabbles."

"Yeah, how about you just kill your own servants instead!" protested the Fifth Prince, clearly annoyed.

Cassandra looked around. Despite staying silent, the other Princesses seemed either shocked or annoyed at Phetra's display. It wasn't just Shareen. It didn't seem like that Princess was particularly popular amongst her siblings at all.

"Mine know their place, Brother. But Kairen seems to need help teaching his," stated Phetra, before turning to Kairen. "Do you need help, Brother?"

Cassandra immediately felt the Princess's venomous glare and wicked intent. Even if she was only a disposable slave, that woman's bloodlust was definitely not normal! But Kairen just glared back.

"Mind your own business, Phetra."

"I only mean to help. Maybe, Kairen..."

A growl suddenly resonated through the hall. Cassandra looked up by reflex as the sky was suddenly covered by a dark shadow. Around her, several people gasped or shrieked. The Black Dragon landed right behind its master, next to Cassandra, and growled furiously at Phetra as if it was echoing its master's anger.

"Try me again," threatened Kairen.

But this time Phetra stayed silent. Her proud attitude from earlier had disappeared as soon as she had fixed her eyes on the Black Dragon. The Princess gulped and stopped boasting, her head and shoulders dropped down as the dragon continued to growl at her. 2

Shareen snickered.

"That's my son!" exclaimed the Emperor, visibly proud. "Kairen, why didn't you summon him earlier?"

"I didn't have a reason to..." Kairen hissed, still glaring at Phetra.

Shareen and the Emperor were the only ones happy with the Black Dragon's arrival. Everyone else seemed uneasy or scared and for good reason. Its size was far more imposing than the other beasts, as were its claws and fangs. The other dragons became agitated seeing their peer. Cassandra wondered if they naturally feared it.

"How impressive... She really isn't scared at all."

Cassandra suddenly realized one of the Princesses was talking about her. She felt several eyes on her and looked down hard, feeling anxious. Indeed, the large dragon was standing with its head right next to her, its huge body so close that she could feel the heat. Its presence wasn't scary for Cassandra. She was more frightened by the human beings in the room than the beast who had its red eyes on her –

eyes filled with the same curiosity as before.

"That's an interesting one you have there, Kairen," said the Fifth Prince. "To be able to stay so close to your beast and not be scared at all."

Cassandra again felt several stares on her, wishing she could hide, when a low growl suddenly got her attention. Curling himself up around her, Krai, the Black Dragon, gently pushed her with its head and rubbed its warm scales against her

arm. How could she ignore the beast? She dared a glance towards Kairen but he was ignoring her, his eyes focused on his siblings. For once, she wished her master would spare a glance her way, giving her some clue as to what she was supposed to do.

Krai nudged her arm again and, with a discreet movement, she gently caressed its scales. He growled,

- a very deep sound that was an obvious display of satisfaction. Cassandra blushed slightly, surprised to have a dragon almost purring from her touch! "Look at this! The woman is obviously a sorceress! To charm an Imperial dragon like so! Let's just behead her now and put an end to this..."

"Silence..."

Before the Second Prince could finish his sentence, Kairen's words cut him off.

"Or would you like to try and take her from my dragon?"

Hearing this, Krai growled threateningly. Several women cried in fear and the whole place dissolved into chaos with the other dragons growling back and the servants trying to calm everyone down. Still,

The Black Dragon was so large that it didn't even realize it was shoving Cassandra around. Forced to the ground, she suddenly feared it would stomp on her like a mere ant under its claws. The scales over her were moving so frantically, she couldn't tell what was going on.

Suddenly, a large hand grabbed her out of the chaos, pulling her from under the dragon. It took her a second to realize Kairen had brought her to safety, holding her against his chest. Behind them, the Black Dragon was still growling and stomping around, but she barely noticed it now. All she could hear was her own heart, beating too fast in her ears. (2

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Cassandra slowly opened her eyes.

Where was she? It took her a few seconds to recognize the room and remember the prior events. The Prince's chambers! It was still dark though. What happened at the banquet? She could only remember up to the point where the dragon was going wild.

She realized she was laying in a real bed and feeling... warm. She couldn't remember the last time she had felt so content or slept in real sheets.

However, she couldn't move an inch. Something hot was pressed against her body and Cassandra gasped – it was a man's arm! Moreover, she recognized the

scaled braces! She froze, almost unable to breathe. She wasn't just in the Prince's bed, he was in it too!

"...How are you feeling?" the deep voice next to her ear surprised her.

How did he even know she had woken up? He was holding her from behind, his strong body right against her skin. As Cassandra attempted to move she realized someone had bandaged her injured wrist and it smelled of herbal medicine, too.

"My Lord, what happened?" she inquired in a whisper.

"You collapsed at the banquet."

She tried to remember, but the void seemed to confirm what he was saying. It wasn't that surprising. She hadn't eaten in two days, and she wasn't in great condition to begin with, and then to have had so many emotions in one day. It was a lot to deal with.

"You didn't answer."

"I'm better, my Lord," she replied right away, afraid he might become angry.

"...I see."

He stayed silent after that and Cassandra wondered if he had gone back to sleep; she definitely couldn't! This situation was just unbelievable.

She should have died as a nameless slave mere hours ago. So why was it that now she was comfortably laying in a Prince's bed, sheltered from the cold and the whip? She even had brand new clothes, something a slave couldn't ever dream about in a hundred years! What kind of Prince showed interest