

War Song 1101

Chapter 1101

The sound of a donkey's bell rang out along the main road, clinking in the night. The man had a blade of grass in his mouth, humming a tune. He loved traveling at night.

There was something about the darkness that felt mysterious, as if anything could happen in the blackness. It was a thrill that couldn't be matched.

It would be perfect to run into a few strange creatures-maybe sit down with them for a drink. His flask was filled with Everett's wine. To steal some, he couldn't even ride his horse. He had to borrow one from the Lunar Guild.

But how could the Lunar Guild have a horse? The guildmaster had hesitated for a long time, then reluctantly led out a donkey. She warned him repeatedly to walk with it instead of riding, saying that the old donkey couldn't carry his weight and might collapse from the strain. It could carry his things, though.

It was ridiculous. If he was going to walk down the mountain, he might as well carry his things himself and not bother with the donkey.

But he had to admit, sometimes you couldn't underestimate the elderly. The donkey might be old, but it was faster than a person when it ran, and it had great stamina. All the way from Meadow Ridge to Riverstone, it seemed it hadn't even gotten winded. Another two hours or so, and he figured they would be in Riverstone.

Isaac Prince hummed his tune louder. The capital was bustling with life, full of fine wines and plenty of good company. Plus, his little guild junior would also be there wasn't that the peak of life?

He lifted his stick and moved the carrot hanging in front of the donkey back a little. Now the donkey could eat, chomping away happily.

Isaac wasn't planning to stay at an inn. He found a scenic spot outside Riverstone and cracked open the wine, hoping to encounter a strange creature or two to share a drink with. What could be better than that?

"This mountain's high, the river's wide, the donkey munches on its carrot. The night's so dark, the wind so soft, mosquitoes buzzing along with the song..."

He spread out his mat and laid it on the ground, giving himself two quick slaps to kill four mosquitoes.

He tied the donkey up, lit some herbs to ward off the bugs, and pulled out a wine bottle. Lying down on the mat, he propped his legs up and uncorked the bottle, gulping down a generous swig.

The rose wine last year's batch-was crisp and fragrant, a taste that truly intoxicated him.

He was so drunk that he almost thought he could hear the sound of hooves, the steady rhythm of many horses.

He squinted, looking down the small hill. His eyes were strangely gifted, and he could see in the dark-not perfectly, but if there was a cart with a lamp, nothing was hard to make out.

Strange. Up ahead was Riverstone,

so why were the travelers in such a hurry, pushing on through the night? The carriage looked incredibly luxurious, clearly from a wealthy family. Was it necessary for these privileged people to endure such hardship and travel overnight like this?

Isaac looked carefully. No coffin in sight, so it wasn't a funeral procession.

And then they stopped, pulling off the road to a small grove by the side. They didn't seem to be resting-more like they were waiting for something. What could they possibly be waiting for at this hour?

Well, this was something. It looked

like a whole squad, maybe dozens of them. From the way they moved, they definitely seemed trained. However, their fancy clothes didn't exactly scream bandits.

What kind of decent people would be stopping here this late?

It didn't add up.

Isaac loved a good mystery.

He put his wine away, rolled up the mat, and blew out the lamp. Fortunately, this little hill was nestled in a dip, so it wasn't easy to spot.

They hadn't moved. They had set up camp, of all things. Now that was strange. They had passed through Riverstone just as the sun was setting, so they should've found somewhere to stay there. So, why had they set up camp here?

Even stranger, they built only one

tent for so many people. Was there just one leader? That didn't seem

right. A few of them were wearing

luxurious clothes too. Though it was 小

hard to see clearly from this

distance, a few women had their hair

adorned with jewels and ornaments-certainly not?

maidservants.

Isaac took another swig of wine and kept his eyes on them.

There was definitely something off about this. He loved a good spectacle.

He had been watching for nearly an hour. Why hadn't anyone gone into the tent to rest? A whole group of them just standing around, swatting at mosquitoes? That was strange.

Not lighting a campfire made sense-it was so hot. Even in the woods by the road, the air still felt stifling when the wind died down.

Isaac opened his folding fan and waved it lazily, sipping his wine. He was starting to think there wasn't much left to see and that maybe it was time to lie down on his mat and get some sleep.

Chapter 1102

Isaac had barely settled down when he heard movement in the distance-soft footsteps accompanied by some muttered curses.

He sat up abruptly, squinting in the direction of the noise. From the opposite hill, a group of people was descending. He could hardly make them out as they were all dressed in black, with one exception-he couldn't exactly see what color that was, but it was definitely not The curses quickly stopped, as if someone had silenced them.

black.

The distance was still too far, much farther than the group camped nearby. Despite Isaac's sharp eyes, he couldn't make out any details. All he could sense was their quick movements. It seemed they were heading to meet up with the camped group. Isaac stood up, his expression turning serious. It looked like he wouldn't be running into any strange creatures, but perhaps a conspiracy was brewing. There was something dark going on, and it looked like they were holding a woman who had cursed earlier. He reached behind the donkey and pulled out the sacred firearm Adrian had given him, wiping it off carefully. He wasn't yet fully proficient with it, but he knew the story-Adrian had laughed for two hours on the mountaintop when he created it. All the snakes, insects, and rodents in the area had scattered in fear.

Moving silently, Isaac made his way down. However, that weapon alone wouldn't be enough. He had other weapons on him too.

There were thick bushes along the road, so he crouched down and hid in them, keeping his eyes on the two groups that were about to merge. He still couldn't make out their faces, though he could roughly tell the difference between men and women.

As he crawled forward a bit, he suddenly saw a glimmer of light reflecting off something nearby. He looked up and saw a woman standing on a tree branch, staring anxiously ahead. Probably

because she couldn't see clearly either, she hadn't made any move yet. That figure... Why did she look so much like Claire, one of Winona's subordinates?

A cold feeling spread through Isaac's chest. Winona had left Claire with Carissa. Could the woman the black-clad group held be his guild junior?

Isaac immediately tensed, his mind

spinning as he counted the people in the group, his gaze fixed on the black-clad figures drawing nearer. From their footsteps, he could tell how skilled they were in their

Lightfoot Skill.

Good God, there must be over a hundred of them! If Carissa had truly been taken, sacrificing his life here wouldn't be enough. Even after death, Adrian would make sure his corpse was punished.

As Isaac strained to see whether it was indeed Carissa, the branch where Claire stood creaked. He glanced up and saw Claire preparing to leap down and move forward.

He quickly made some soft sounds to catch her attention.

Claire whipped around, her eyes scanning the darkness. In the pitch black, she couldn't tell if someone was hidden in the bushes, nor could she tell if it was friend or foe.

Isaac sprang up and landed lightly on a branch next to her, grasping the tree trunk with his left hand. Claire stiffened, her body coiled, ready to strike if she suspected it was an enemy. "Meadow Ridge, Pathfinders Guild's fifth apprentice!" Isaac called softly, identifying himself. Their voices were low enough that no one would overhear from a distance.

Claire almost cried in relief when she

heard it was someone from Meadow Ridge. However, there was no time to explain further. A group of black-clad figures dragged a woman toward the carriage. The light from the lamps revealed her face, and Isaac's heart stopped cold.

It was Violet-Violet Spencer!

Claire quickly filled in the details, "Prince Yuvan's suicide soldiers took Ms. Spencer. He plans to dishonor her, ruin her reputation, and force her to marry him." The weight of her words hit Isaac hard.

Carissa's good friend had been

captured and was about to be violated. If they didn't save her,

Violet's suffering would crush

Carissa. And if she was heartbroken, Adrian would be furious, which

meant Isaac would end up

punished-probably even after

death!

Chapter 1103

Isaac didn't bother to count the enemy's numbers.

"How many of you are there?" he asked.

"It's just me and Iris. She's over there." Claire pointed across the road to a patch of dense trees where a figure was slowly making her way toward the convoy.

"We're dead meat," Isaac muttered, his face darkening. "You two and me-three against over a hundred, plus the suicide soldiers."

He ran a hand through his hair, frustrated. How had everything gone so wrong so quickly after he descended the mountain?

His handsome face furrowed in concentration as he quickly ran through possible plans in his mind. Okay, the chances of success were zero-but he couldn't just stand by and do nothing.

Violet had already been dragged into the tent. She seemed drugged, her body limp, and the only sign of resistance she had left was the curse she muttered earlier. After that, she had gone completely silent.

The men moved out of the tent, and Yuvan entered.

Isaac felt his blood rush to his head.

Earlier, he had figured there was no chance of success and had stopped Claire from acting. But now, he rushed out without a word.

He didn't have a plan, but he couldn't just watch Violet be violated. She was a woman of great pride-no man could impress her, not even the finest. If Yuvan, this vile scoundrel, sullied her, she wouldn't just cause chaos-she would probably wish she were dead. Isaac shot forward, with Claire and Iris following behind. The three of them landed outside the tent, only to be met by dozens of drawn swords and knives.

Isaac quickly drew his sacred firearm and used a flute to parry the attacks, spinning around as the clattering sounds rang out, briefly shielding Claire and Iris.

But before the two women could push through the tent's entrance, whips lashed out, wrapping around their bodies and throwing them back.

Inside the tent, Violet was barely conscious. She sensed someone moving toward her, his breath hot and rancid, making her stomach churn. But his closeness also sparked a fire inside her, making her body burn uncomfortably.

It was too hot. She instinctively wanted to clutch something cold, but the place was stuffy and only made it hotter.

"Vivi, it's me."

A hand grazed her collarbone. It was hot-too hot-so hot it made her want to scream. She couldn't make out the man's face, but his voice was foul and grated on her nerves.

Her temper flared; without thinking, she slapped him across the face.

But Violet's body was too weak, and the slap she managed to land had no strength behind it. After striking him, she was quickly overpowered, her hands seized in his grasp. She stumbled back, falling to the ground, and the man was on her in an instant.

His foul breath came close again, and Violet felt like she was drowning in a nightmare, the urge to vomit overwhelming her.

A sharp hiss rang out as her shoulder was exposed to the air. She felt a brief, cool sensation-a welcome relief. She began to tug at her clothes, twisting her body as if in a daze. "Why is it so loud?" she mumbled weakly.

Her skin was smooth and luminous, with a subtle glow, like freshly fallen snow. Her eyes blended both allure and innocence, radiating an irresistible charm that was hard to look away from.

Yuvan stared, mesmerized. In all his

years, he had never encountered such beauty. Her usual defiance had melted into a soft, tender allure. The delicate curve of her shoulder made his throat tighten. He lowered his gaze to her pale skin and swallowed hard.

"Vivi, be good. After tonight, you'll be mine. We'll be united in marriage, and I swear I'll never mistreat you."

He leaned down to bite her smooth, slender neck. Suddenly, there was a loud bang and something whizzed through the tent, grazing the top of his head. The noise froze everyone in place.

Isaac rushed in to deliver a swift kick to Yuvan, then grabbed Violet and ran for the exit.

His Lightfoot Skill was usually exceptional, but Violet refused to cooperate. She swung her hands wildly, slapping him repeatedly across the face. He was forced to the ground; within moments, they were surrounded.

Just when it seemed like all hope was lost, the sound of hooves grew louder.

Carissa rode in fast with her whip in hand. Upon seeing the scene, she nimbly dismounted and leaped into action. With a swift crack of her red whip, she sent over a dozen men flying back.

She glanced at Violet in Isaac's arms; noticing Violet's disheveled clothing, she instantly assumed Violet had been harmed. With a furious yell, she swung her whip like a serpent toward the black-clad attackers. "Isaac, take her and go! Get her to safety and return to help me!" Carissa called out while fending off the attackers.

Chapter 1104

How could Isaac dare leave his guild junior behind?

Even while carrying Violet, he was still capable of fighting.

As Isaac turned around, he saw Carissa's whip loop around Yuvan's neck, pulling him forward. She slapped him hard across the face, her strikes ringing out with fury.

Good. Capturing the leader came first. If they had Yuvan, they could at least escape once they tied him up.

Without hesitation, Isaac tightened his grip on Violet and ran. Her flushed face and the heat rising from her skin told him she had been drugged. He needed to find a way to insert silver needles to disperse the blood and break the toxin's grip.

Carissa had captured Yuvan, but Claire and Iris had been taken by the guards as well. Their throats were pressed against the sharp edges of swords, the blades nearly cutting into their skin.

Yuvan finally dropped his pretense and sneered. "If you have the courage, kill me. Go on, kill your uncle-in-law! Let's see how Rafael explains that to the world!"

Carissa tightened her grip on the whip, fire burning in her eyes. "Do you think I won't?"

Yuvan's eyes rolled back as the pressure on his neck caused his breath to falter. He tilted his head back, struggling to breathe, but the tightness around his neck made it impossible to get any air.

Fiona stepped forward briskly, her voice cold as she asked, "Lady Carissa, what crime has Prince Yuvan committed? You're kidnapping him without cause-where's the law in that?"

"What crime?" Carissa snapped, her voice venomous. "He tried to ruin Violet! A royal prince, committing such a filthy act. Killing him would rid the world of a menace!"

"You're mistaken." Fiona's gaze shifted as she spoke, her eyes sharp. "Our people found that Ms. Spencer had been drugged. Knowing she is Lady Molly's cousin, we brought her here to help her. His Highness has a reputation to uphold and cannot tolerate such slander." She reached out and tugged Molly, who had been standing stunned, into the conversation.

"Lady Molly, tell them. Isn't that right?"

Molly nodded numbly, her lips trembling. "Y-Yes, that's true."

Carissa swung her whip at Molly. As the whip cut through the air, she grabbed Yuvan's neck, easing his breath just a bit before swiftly restraining him again.

The whip struck Molly across her head and face, causing her to cry in pain. Despite the blow, she instinctively shrank behind Fiona, her eyes full of guilt.

"They are wolves, and you are no better-a beast! How dare you treat your cousin like this?!" Carissa spat, fury burning in her voice.

"I didn't... I didn't," Molly stammered, her voice trembling as tears welled in her eyes. She shook her head violently. "She's my cousin! I would never hurt her!" Wayne stepped forward and positioned himself in front of Fiona, his gaze fixed on Carissa.

With a soft sigh, he said gently, "This is a terrible misunderstanding. No matter what you believe, we had no intention of harming Ms. Spencer Lady Carissa. Just as Lady Fiona said, we found her poisoned

"We have a physician with us, and we intend to help her. His Highness only entered to check on her. When we opened the tent earlier, what we saw was Ms. Spencer, dazed from the poison, tearing her clothes and holding onto His Highness. Had you

arrived a little earlier, you would've

heard His Highness call for the physician to assist."

Carissa's eyes were cold and deadly, like the gaze of a predator. Her eyes swept over everyone, including the group of black-clad suicide soldiers. At last, her gaze fell on them and she sneered.

"Your words are nothing but deceit. I don't believe a single one of them."

Her grip on Yuvan's neck tightened, making a sickening crack, but she didn't ask them to release Claire or Iris. She knew that if she spoke first, she would lose the upper hand.

Iris and Claire, undaunted, said in unison, "If we must die, we will die seeking justice for Ms. Spencer!"

They both lunged forward, aiming for the sharp blades of the swords, forcing the guards to hastily pull back.

Wayne frowned, surprised. He hadn't expected such courage from two women, ready to throw away their lives for someone else.

Chapter 1105

Wayne felt a headache coming on. His thoughts clouded with irritation at Yuvan's blind obsession.

Wayne had thought this matter was nearly settled. He had expected a smooth departure from the capital, only to have Yuvan insist on a new arrangement. Yuvan even sent some of the suicide soldiers to carry out this task when they were supposed to remain in the city. What was more, Violet's involvement had completely shattered their plans.

A flicker of anger crossed Wayne's gaze. If Carissa had been eliminated that night and buried quietly, no one would've known. As luck would have it, she had escaped and was now holding Yuvan hostage.

This was not something easily dealt with.

Fortunately, Wayne had already anticipated such a situation and had taken precautions in advance. He was prepared for what would come after the task was completed, and to smooth things over with the Spencer family. But now... No matter how this played out, it would cause a significant rift with the Spencers and make future dealings difficult.

Carissa's heart seethed with frustration, her eyes burning with rage as she glared at the two county duchesses hidden in the carriage. This vile man-Yuvan-didn't even move his daughters away. He was brazenly attempting to violate Violet while they were around! Fiona was a lost cause, and Molly wasn't much better.

They were all scum!

"Lady Carissa, please don't misunderstand. Ms. Spencer is Prince Yuvan's cousin-in-law. He couldn't possibly have improper intentions. We're leaving the capital. Why would we stir up more trouble? This only harms our relationship with the Spencer family," Fiona insisted, trying to placate Carissa.

Her words fell flat, lacking any conviction. But as long as they all stuck to the same story, even if the matter reached the king's ears, it would only result in a mild reprimand-nothing more.

What worried Wayne was Carissa's fury. If she truly killed Yuvan in a fit of rage, it would be a disaster.

Yuvan's voice rang out in protest, "Lady Carissa, you've misunderstood! If you don't believe me, ask Ms. Spencer herself!"

Fiona quickly motioned for one of the suicide soldiers to step forward. "Tell Her Grace what really happened. Explain everything to her."

The soldier removed his mask, revealing a plain, unremarkable face. His expression was neutral as he recited his words, almost as if he were reading from a script.

"Your Grace, we've been staying at

the courtyard at the western mountain pass. Yesterday, we received word to prepare for our

departure to Valken. As we were net

getting ready, we saw several people dragging Ms. Spencer up the mountains. We recognized her as Lady Molly's cousin, and we feared she might be in danger.

"We intervened and later discovered that she had been drugged with an aphrodisiac. We hurried her back to the capital, worried that her condition might cause misunderstandings, and brought her straight to Prince Yuvan." Another suicide soldier removed his mask, his voice steady as he added, "This whole situation has caused quite a stir. The villagers nearby saw everything. Some even came out with hoes to help. This can all be verified."

It was clear that everything had been planned in advance. Once the Spencer family was told the story, they would have no choice but to allow their daughter to marry Yuvan.

Carissa let out a cold laugh. "Well, the plan is certainly thorough. Mr. Wayne, your strategic skills are impressive."

Wayne sighed, his tone resigned as he said, "If you insist on thinking this way, there's nothing more I can do, Your Grace. Perhaps we should send someone to investigate and clear Highness' name. As for those who kidnapped Ms. Spencer, they should be thoroughly questioned and turned over to the authorities."

"That's right. You should at least have thanked us, Your Grace! How can you blame us? Where is the logic in that? You're being unreasonable!" Fiona added.

Carissa listened to their words, understanding that they had already prepared for any outcome.

Whether Yuvan had succeeded in his plan or not, they would spin the story to claim that Violet had seduced him while under the effects of the aphrodisiac. He would maintain his righteous stance, claiming he was saving her.

And when the matter grew larger, no one would pay attention to this thinly veiled lie. All the gossip would turn against Violet, and the scandal would bury her.

From how calmly Wayne and Fiona were talking to her, they clearly had no fear of things escalating.

Carissa's heart burned with fury, but as she considered her next move, she forced herself to calm down. She stepped forward, letting the cool night wind brush across her face as a cold smile curled on her lips.

"In that case, I seem to have

misjudged His Highness. It turns out

he was trying to save the innocent

girl. While don't know her identity

she was kidnapped and

drugged-such a sad fate!

relieved she has escaped

I'm

unscathed. It's truly a great comfort to know she's safe now."

Chapter 1106

At Carissa's words, both Wayne and Fiona's expressions shifted slightly, as if they hadn't expected her to deny that the woman was Violet.

Carissa turned her gaze toward Fiona and changed the topic. "It seems your earlier comments were a bit odd, Lady Fiona. Why should I thank you? What relationship does that woman have with me?"

Fiona's expression stiffened, and she faltered. "Well... then, Your Grace, you have even less reason to be holding His Highness hostage. We're all family, and making a scene like this doesn't do anyone any favors." Carissa smiled, but it was a cold one.

"Then, I apologize. It turns out this was a misunderstanding." She didn't release Yuvan, but kept her gaze fixed on Fiona. "However, why were these men in black staying near the western mountain

pass? Are they from Prince Yuwan's household?" "Yes, they escorted His Highness back to the capital. Edgeview Estate couldn't accommodate so many, so they were placed outside the city," Fiona replied.

Wayne was about to speak, but Carissa interrupted, "They've been staying outside the city all this time, so how did they come to know Violet? Judging by their martial arts skills, are they perhaps the estate's guards? Why are these guards dressed in black? Is there something shady going on?"

Fiona's face tightened as Carissa pressed on, catching her off guard.

Wayne shot a look of reproach at Fiona before trying to shift the conversation, saying, "Your Grace, perhaps it's time to release His Highness now."

Yuwan had been held by the neck, alternately loosened to allow him to breathe and tightened to induce suffocation. After several cycles, he was dizzy and his vision blurred.

"Of course, I will release him," Carissa said with a calm smile, though she made no move to let go.

Her eyes narrowed, becoming much more composed.

"You've gathered here with so many people in the middle of the night. You're not staying at an inn or a post station. Though it's along a main road, it's still a remote area. And with the garrison outpost nearby, it makes one wonder what you're plotting.

"Surely you didn't foresee that the woman from earlier would need saving, did you? So, let's wait for the Supreme Court and the Capital Guard to arrive. That way, we can explain everything thoroughly and avoid causing unnecessary rumors and suspicions among the officials."

Without making it about Violet's situation, Carissa skillfully turned the focus onto their suspicious gathering near the garrison outpost. It was a delicate move—they hadn't chosen to stay at any inns although women were traveling with them. Then suddenly, there were unfamiliar black-clad men appearing close to a military outpost. It was a setup that could easily fuel rumors, and those could quickly spiral out of control.

The king and the entire court may not have cared much about a woman being violated, but if Yuwan was gathering troops near a military outpost in the dead of night, it would be a matter of grave concern. Such an incident would demand attention and would surely draw a great deal of scrutiny.

Claire quickly regained her composure and cried loudly, "Your Grace, my friend and I discovered they were camped here. That's why we came to investigate. We didn't expect them to capture us! We had no idea what they intended to do." So, it wasn't Violet that mattered, but the fact that they were amassing troops here with ill intent.

Wayne's face paled, his expression filled with helplessness. "If you insist on twisting the truth like this, there's nothing I can do, Your Grace."

"Of course you can't do anything," Carissa sneered coldly. "What can you do at this point?"

"Carissa, you are wrongfully accusing me-" Yuvan began, but his words were cut off as Carissa's fingers tightened around his throat. His breath faltered, and no air passed through.

Having his plans ruined and being humiliated repeatedly by Carissa had completely shattered his pride and composure. Any remaining rationality was gone. His head tilted back, his eyes flashing with a cruel determination. Though his throat was gripped tightly, his hands were free.

From his sleeve, a dagger slipped into his grasp, its silver gleam flashing...

Carissa's eyes flickered.

Good. This was what she had been waiting for.

"Your Highness!"

Wayne's face went pale with shock. Before he could even shout, Yuvan let out a scream. The dagger had sunk into his abdomen, but not deeply enough to cause serious damage. The blade was still in place and blood started to trickle out, but not in a large amount. "Dad!"

The group gasped in alarm. Upon seeing the blood, Molly nearly fainted and her body collapsed weakly against Fiona. Carissa's voice was as cold as ice.

"Your Highness, if you truly had no ill

intentions, no one would believe it now. You actually tried to murder me? I am the commander of the Mystic Army, sworn to protect the capital-both inside and out. You've gathered troops near the outpost, which raises serious suspicions. I have every right to detain you and bring you to the capital for questioning. Not only do you refuse to cooperate, but you also dare to draw a blade against me?"

Chapter 1107

Wayne, seeing an opportunity, quickly spoke up, "Prince Yuwan is injured. If we don't stop the bleeding soon, he may be in grave danger. Lady Carissa, please release him so the physician can tend to the wound."

His eyes were on Carissa, waiting for her to loosen her grip. The moment she did, he would signal the suicide soldiers to attack. He needed to act fast before reinforcements arrived. The plan was simple-kill them all and escape quickly. But Carissa still held Yuwan's throat, though she had loosened her grip just enough to allow him to breathe. "It's just a minor wound. As long as the dagger stays in place, it won't be fatal."

Yuwan gasped for air, the pain in his abdomen sending tremors through his body. This woman had no hesitation or mercy-she was ruthless. He struggled to stay upright, his body swaying as if it would collapse at any moment.

Carissa's voice was cold and steady as she said, "Your Highness, you might want to stay steady. With a slight movement, the dagger will go deeper. If you're not careful, you might lose your life."

"Attacking a royal-do you even realize the crime you're committing?!" Yuwan spat furiously, glaring.

Carissa laughed coldly. "How curious. Are you suggesting this dagger belongs to me?"

"Tell me, what do you want from me?"

Yuwan's voice was strained, veins bulging as pain and desperation began to take their toll. He wasn't completely at his end, but the agony was pushing him to the brink. His patience was running thin.

Her tone calm and calculating, Carissa took her time in saying, "I want to know why you've set up camp here. What are you planning? Do you intend to raid the outpost?"

She wasn't about to let Yuvan go easily. Even if Violet's involvement in this was cleared up, Carissa wouldn't let him off the hook. She would wait until Violet returned and the drug was dealt with before making her move. She needed to see this through, for her peace of mind. Otherwise, the bitterness of this situation would gnaw at her for the rest of her life.

So, she would drag it out. She would wait for Violet and Isaac to return.

...

Meanwhile, Isaac had taken Violet up to the hillside across from the main road, where he had planned to rest earlier. The mat had yet to be rolled up, and it was the perfect place to leave her.

He sealed a few of her pressure points, rendering her unable to move. Then, he removed a bundle from the donkey's back and took out a black-glazed ceramic bottle. He opened it; a foul stench immediately wafted up, filling the air.

Isaac pressed his hand on Violet's

pressure points, causing her to stir violently, her body writhing as

though she were some kind of

octopus. He let her struggle for a

moment before seizing her chin, forcing her mouth open, and dripping a few drops of medicine into it. Then, he shoved her away roughly.

"Throw it up, Violet!"

Violet gagged, her stomach turning violently. The foul stench of the medicine churned her insides;

before she could stop herself, she

dropped to the ground and began vomiting uncontrollably. The world spun around her as she expelled everything, her body jerking with the force of it.

While Violet was throwing up, Isaac climbed the nearby tree to get a better look at the situation. Carissa was still holding Yuvan captive, while Claire and the others remained in the guards' hold. They were locked in a standoff. However, with Yuvan now in Carissa's grip, they were hesitant to make any bold moves.

Isaac needed to move quickly and join them.

Violet was exhausted and weakened from her violent retching, her body as limp as a rag doll. She fell backward and ended up lying beneath the donkey, opening her eyes just in time to see its tongue sticking out. With a jolt of panic, she rolled away in a hurry. Her senses slowly began to return, and with them, her memories started to clear.

She remembered riding alongside the person delivering silk threads to the workshop. The carts carrying grains and cloth had already gone ahead, so they decided to take a shortcut through a narrow alley in hopes of reaching their destination faster.

Once they entered the alley, Violet suddenly felt weak all over, losing all strength. She fell from her horse-and then, everything went dark. When she woke up, she was being dragged along a mountain path in the dead of night.

A sharp chill ran through her, freezing her in place.

A wave of memories hit her like a tidal wave, fury rushing in as she recalled the stench of that disgusting breath against her neck, the feeling of her clothes...

Looking down, she saw her clothes were still half undone. She quickly fixed herself.

"Beast! I'll kill you!"

With a roar of fury, Violet sprang to her feet, shaking with rage.

Chapter 1108

Rafael, Kyle, and Travis led the soldiers from Hell Monarch Estate as they galloped down the main road, quickly reaching the small grove. Torches lit the area like it was broad daylight, casting flickering shadows across the trees.

Even without wearing armor, Rafael sat tall on his massive steed. He commanded an air of authority, like a general ready to claim victory on the battlefield.

His sharp gaze swept over the area, but before he could speak, he heard Violet charging toward them, her furious shouts cutting through the night air.

"Beast! I'll kill you!"

She was unarmed, but the fury in her eyes made her seem like a wild animal charging forward with all her strength. She slammed into Yuvan's chest with a force that sent him stumbling back.

Carissa was quick to react. She moved aside but didn't intervene letting Violet release her rage instead.

Yuvan was sent flying several feet, hitting the ground hard. He coughed violently, blood spilling from his mouth. Violet pounced on him, her hands landing mercilessly on his face, slapping him again and again. Though she had only just recovered from the poison, her fury pushed her beyond her limits. The strikes were swift, and within moments, she had slapped him into unconsciousness.

"What are you all waiting for? Help him!" Fiona shouted in alarm.

The suicide soldiers and guards moved forward to assist, but Rafael swiftly rode into their path, blocking them.

Travis raised his iron staff in front of him, a clear warning. "I dare any of you to try!"

The soldiers of Hell Monarch Estate stepped forward, forming a protective line, swords drawn and ready.

Seeing the tension rising, Wayne quickly called out, "It's a misunderstanding! It's all a misunderstanding. Release them!"

He ordered his men to free Claire and Iris, who both had traces of blood on their necks. Thankfully, it seemed like only minor injuries.

Carissa stepped forward and addressed Rafael, saying, "Your Highness, the Capital Guard discovered that Prince Yuvan set up camp here last night, not far from the garrison outpost. We don't know what they intend to do."

Rafael glanced at her, his expression distant. Regardless, he understood her intention-to shift the focus of this matter onto the nearby garrison outpost.

"Mr. Mullen, send someone to notify General Farrell at the garrison outpost," Rafael ordered. "Tell him to keep a close eye out and prepare for any suspicious activity."

If they were going to redirect the blame, they had to go all in. Involving Thomas was necessary to make the act convincing.

Travis nodded in acknowledgment, stealing a glance at Violet. When he saw Carissa moving toward Violet, he felt reassured and quickly rode off.

Carissa wrapped her arms around Violet, who, still consumed by rage, kicked Yuvan several times.

Violet's face was a dark shade of fury, her entire body trembling with the rage she could barely contain. She had never before endured such humiliation. She wanted to cry, but she couldn't crying would only make her look weak. Carissa held her tightly. "Luckily, you and Prince Rafael arrived in time. Otherwise, Claire and the others, along with myself, would have no chance against so many of them."

Violet still had the memories from earlier-how Carissa had barged in to save her. Hearing what she said, now, it was clear Carissa was trying to protect Violet's reputation. The anger in Violet's heart had mostly subsided, so she blinked away the tears in her red-rimmed eyes.

"Lillian told me what happened, so we rushed over. I'm relieved you're unharmed."

"It was close. He tried to stab me with a dagger, but I managed to turn it around."

As Carissa spoke, her gaze instinctively shifted to Rafael.

She couldn't help but feel something was off-he seemed upset.

Sure enough, when he heard her words, his gaze grew even colder. He shot her a brief look before quickly looking away.

Meanwhile, Fiona was already

pulling the physician over to tend to

Yuvan. The wound from the dagger wasn't deep, and it didn't bleed

much after it was removed. However, his face was swollen and Violet's kick had broken two of his ribs. Even though he regained consciousness, every breath sent waves of pain through him, causing tears to spill from his eyes.

"We've been wronged!"

Fiona suddenly began crying uncontrollably, burying her face in her hands.

"Lady Carissa, I know you've been powerless as a court official and you want to blame us to make yourself look good. But even if you're desperate to prove yourself, you can't injure your elder and humiliate a prince!"

"We were just resting here! We never expected this to happen!" she shouted, anguished.

Violet's fury flared once again. She shoved Carissa aside and stormed forward, grabbing Fiona by the hair and delivering a sharp slap to her face.

"How dare you say you've been

wronged? Do you think she cares about a trivial achievement? You know exactly what you've done! Even if I don't make a fuss in the capital, I'll make sure this whole thing blows up when I get back to my family and the Inferno Guild!"

Chapter 1109

Fiona's hair was a tangled mess, her cheek swelling from the force of the slap. The blow sent her tumbling backward, and she crashed into Yuvan. He winced in pain, gasping for breath. Violet's fury was barely contained, and she didn't hesitate for a moment. She turned and marched toward Molly, her steps swift and determined.

"Violet, what do you think you're doing?" Molly shrieked in terror, stumbling back. "I'm your cousin! I would never harm you-ah!"

Before Molly could protest further, Violet grabbed a fistful of her hair, lifting her off the ground and slamming her into a tree. Molly's entire body seemed to crack with the impact; she collapsed, gasping in pain as tears streamed down her face.

"The last thing you said to me was that the scent on your body was the poison you used against me," Violet hissed, her eyes flashing with murderous intent. "Molly Spencer, what do you gain by helping that vile man? Did you think you could keep the title of princess consort after this? You're stupid and vicious!"

With a sharp motion, Violet snatched a blade from one of the nearby soldiers and pointed it directly at Molly's chest. The cold edge glinted under the moonlight-there was no mistaking the deadly purpose behind Violet's eyes.

"I didn't...!" Molly wailed in fear, her sobs uncontrollable. "I didn't want this, but Prince Yuvan made me! Lady Fiona also forced me! They're both insane!"

In her desperation, Molly spilled everything, her words tumbling out in a frantic confession. The terror in her voice was raw-she truly believed Violet would kill her.

Wayne let out a barely audible sigh. This wasn't how he had expected things to unfold. There was no such thing as a flawless plan, only well-laid ones. If Yuvan hadn't been so impatient and had taken the path through the forest to the mountain, they might not have been found so quickly. At least then, the plan might have succeeded.

Yuvan's children were huddled inside the carriage, too frightened to move. They had no idea what was unfolding, and the shock on their faces was evident. They had been well protected, kept from

the realities of violence and danger. As such, they were unprepared for ruthless people like Rafael, Carissa, or Violet.

Wayne stood quietly, his mind racing. How would he fare if it came to a confrontation with Rafael and the others? And how long until the Capital Guard arrived?

He knew it would take Thomas' troops at least an hour to reach them. That meant they had to deal with Rafael and his people and possibly the Capital Guard-within the next thirty minutes, or their fate would be sealed.

Once they dealt with Rafael and the others, they could make a swift escape. If they could get back to Valken, they would be safe. This seemed like their only option now.

Wayne cast a quick glance at Yuvan, silently hoping for a signal.

Yuvan lay on the ground, his mind working along the same lines as Wayne's. But the wariness he felt toward Rafael kept him from acting too rashly, especially since he felt guilty. So, when he noticed Wayne's glance, he didn't give an order. Wayne's frustration flared. He couldn't believe Yuvan's indecision! Why act impulsively when it was time to remain calm, and then falter when the moment to act came?

How could anything get done this way?

Rafael slowly approached Yuvan and crouched beside him. His gaze was cold, filled with a quiet menace.

"Uncle Yuvan, it seems it's time to return to the capital and face the king," he began, his voice almost mocking I've heard rumors... Rumors that you have quite the taste for women, and that you abducted one here with the plan to indulge yourself. But, of course, the girl was rescued by a passing hero, wasn't she?"

Yuvan's bloodshot eyes fixed on Rafael, his teeth grinding in fury.

"You're trying to ruin my reputation," he spat through clenched teeth.

Reputation was everything for a man like Yuvan. He was a man with important matters to attend to, and his reputation could not be tarnished. If news of him abducting a woman with the intent to violate her spread, his reputation would be ruined even if he was punished for it.

If that happened, how could he pursue bigger goals?

Rafael sneered. "Oh? Have I misunderstood? Or maybe, it's not the woman you were after. Was it instead an attempt to raid the garrison outpost with your suicide soldiers-something much more nefarious?" His tone was mocking, but the words landed like a blow.

Yuvan nearly choked on his breath, pain seizing him as he struggled to speak. Through clenched teeth, he hissed, "Rafael Sanford!"

"Save your breath, Uncle Yuvan. You can explain yourself to the king when you return," Rafael said as he stood up. He turned back and gave Wayne a cold look.

"Mr. Wayne, you should advise my uncle-what's more important, his reputation or his head? As his nephew, I'm doing what I can here. Consider it an act of mercy on my part."

Those words completely wiped out any thought Wayne had of striking out. Rafael knew better than to back someone into a corner-he was well aware that a desperate move could turn deadly.

Besides, Salvador's goal in sending them back to Valken was clear-to uncover where the private army was hiding.

Yuvan's ambitions were already

clear to all, but the questions about

his allies in Valken remained

unanswered. And it wasn't just about the private army-there were weapons, supplies, and more that needed to be found.

If they were going to root Yuvan out, it had to be done all at once to prevent any future trouble.

Chapter 1110

In short, this situation could blow up, but it couldn't get too out of hand-at least they still needed to let Yuvan and his group return to Valken.

Violet exhaled a long breath, but her anger was far from quenched. She would get her chance for payback-there would be another time.

The Garrison Unit and the Capital Guard arrived first. Alistair had intended to lead the Royal Guard out of the city, but the soldiers couldn't leave without royal orders. He had snuck out in disguise instead. Though they didn't know all the details, they had an idea of what had happened, and they had never been so angry in their lives. Violet was their mentor, and to harm her was like harming their own parents. This was unforgivable!

When Claire had quietly told them what had happened and what Rafael and Carissa's plans were, they held their tempers in check for the time being. However, they still ordered the Garrison Unit and the Capital Guard to surround Yuvan and his men.

The focus was on the black-clad suicide soldiers-scoundrels who killed without a second thought. They had managed to capture some of them at last.

Then came Kevin. His future was something he cared deeply about, but after hearing the full story, his fury was palpable. Without thinking, he lunged at Yuvan and started beating the latter.

"The woman you kidnapped is my godsister!" he shouted, his face twisted in rage. "Even though she was rescued, you nearly violated her! You disgusting pervert! I'm going to avenge her!"

Kevin didn't aim for Yuvan's face or body-he knew where to draw the line. Instead, he aimed for Yuvan's legs and also landed a few brutal strikes to his groin.

Violet had wanted to do the same, but she found it too filthy.

Watching Kevin take her place and deliver the blows she had wanted to land, something in her stirred-her eyes grew wet, and her nose tingled.

So, this was what it was like to be someone's mentor. When she had first taken them in, she had seen them as little more than burdens.

Fiona was wailing, pulling Molly along in her grief, hoping to shield Yuvan from the worst of it. After all, they were women, and Kevin couldn't bring himself to hit them. But Molly was already terrified by Violet and kept trying to hide. So, Fiona took a few punches while Molly curled up nearby, trembling in fear.

Finally, the two county duchesses

descended from the carriage, rushing to Yuvan's side. The three women stood in front of Yuvan, and Kevin couldn't bring himself to hit them. He had already vented his anger, so he stepped back, frustration somewhat eased.

The guards and the suicide soldiers, however, hesitated. If they made a move, it would mean going up against Rafael and the Mystic Army. The latter were official troops executing their duties. If a

confrontation broke out, he

men wouldn't know if they could win. However, they would certainly lose if it became a matter of political fallout.

Despite his concern for Yuvan, Wayne could only watch helplessly as he was beaten up.

Yuvan was grievously injured, but

none of the strikes were

life-threatening. Everyone had exercised some restraint in their

actions except for Violet. Her

outburst, though powerful, had not drawn on her full inner force, resulting in only broken ribs for Yuvan.

Rafael stood before Wayne, his presence exuding a natural authority that made it hard for the latter to maintain his composure. He could only force a strained smile, bowing and offering apologies,

pleading for a misunderstanding. Just then, the sound of iron-hoofed cavalry thundered through the night air, the rhythmic clatter of hooves announcing Thomas' arrival. The well-trained group held torches as they rode swiftly toward them.

Thomas dismounted and immediately greeted Rafael and Carissa, offering them a respectful nod. His gaze then swept over Yuvan and Wayne, cold and calculating.

"What's going on here? Why are you gathered near the garrison outpost at this hour?"

Travis had already briefed Thomas. He knew that his godsister had nearly been violated, and anger simmered in his chest. However, since Rafael had initiated this drama, Thomas understood the need to play along. Wayne stepped forward, eager to explain. "General Farrell, we were just resting here. We weren't gathering troops here."

"How many of you are there?" Thomas retorted sharply. "Count yourselves. Does that not look like a gathering of troops?"

Without a hint of mercy, Thomas turned to Rafael. "Your Highness, this concerns the safety of the garrison outpost. While you may be the Chief Judge, it's better that I handle this matter." Growing desperate, Wayne blurted out, "No! General Farrell, listen to us! Prince Yuvan was only interested in a woman he didn't mean to cause trouble for the garrison outpost!"

At the smile that tugged at Rafael's lips, Wayne lowered his gaze. In the end, he had no choice but to follow the plan Rafael had set up. Now, Yuvan's reputation was as good as ruined.