

War Song 1141

Chapter 1141

Kyle was unaware of the matter. He had assumed David was the previous Earl of Silverstone.

"Didn't David inherit the title? Could it be that the people Sage Adrian sent to investigate made an error?" asked Kyle. "We'll know once we ask Jacob," Rafael responded promptly.

Jacob was invited to the study and asked about the events involving the Prince family from years ago. He did know some details about it—he was familiar with the matters of each noble family, going back three generations, though only to a certain extent.

"Yes, Mr. David never inherited the title. At the time, the then Earl of Silverstone, Vincent Prince, was still ill and hadn't appointed a successor. After Mr. David returned with military achievements, he requested to be made heir. Once he became the heir, Mr. Vincent's health began to improve and he eventually made a full recovery.

"Because of that, the passing of the title was postponed. I'm not entirely sure what happened after that, but Mr. Vincent later appointed his eldest grandson, Mr. Oliver, as the successor. Clearly, something went awry, though it's unclear to outsiders and I'm not certain either. Those who might know are likely the elders from the Silverstone family and, of course, Madam Prince."

The situation had suddenly become much more complex.

If David hadn't inherited the title at that time, could it really be said that Isaac had brought good luck to him? But when Isaac was born, David was made heir to the title. When Isaac was sent away at five years old, David had yet to inherit the title.

It sounded like Isaac actually brought good luck to Vincent instead of David.

In any case, something was off about the situation. It seemed the elders themselves might be unaware of the truth. The only person who might know was Evelyn. "Perhaps we should stop investigating. Let Isaac make the decision. It's enough to know what we do now. Whatever he chooses, we'll support him," Carissa suggested.

This was Isaac's matter to resolve. He had the authority to decide how to proceed, and whatever made him comfortable would be the course they followed.

Still, Carissa couldn't help but feel sorry for Isaac. In the past, they hadn't been particularly close. One reason was his reputation as a libertine, often frequenting places of ill repute. The second reason was that he always acted arrogantly and didn't take anything seriously. Sometimes when everyone was playing together, he would fold his arms, say something childish, and then walk away.

Carissa still remembered the winter of her second year at Meadow Ridge. She had built three snowmen in the backyard-one for her dad, one for her mom, and one for herself. As she was planning to make snowmen for her brothers too, Isaac had come along and kicked them down, one by one.

She was furious. Without thinking,

she charged at

him, determined to

fight. Back then, she had only

recently started learning martial arts and had no real skill to speak of. One punch from Isaac was enough to knock her to the ground, but she didn't fight back. He simply stood there, arms crossed, letting her strike him. After she was done, he walked off.

At the time, she thought Isaac was utterly cruel.

Even when Adrian scolded him, he didn't seem afraid. Instead, he gave Carissa a dismissive smirk. If Everett hadn't come with a rope to tie him up, Isaac would have just taken his punishment with that same careless smile.

"No matter what Isaac plans to do, I suspect he doesn't know the full story himself. If we investigate, we'll at least have a clearer picture," Rafael said, breaking Carissa's reverie.

Everyone nodded. Based on what Jacob and Rafael said, it seemed David had never inherited the title. So, it was possible that some details from Adrian's investigation had been misrepresented.

It was a pity the charlatan priest was dead, or they could have interrogated him.

Determined to get to the bottom of

it, Carissa thought about turning to Zoey for help, thinking the other woman could ask Evelyn about what had really happened all those years ago. But this was a delicate matter. After all, it was an invasion of someone else's privacy. If Carissa didn't reveal Isaac's identity to Zoey, it would be hard to ask for her assistance.

She couldn't bring herself to do that.

They couldn't pretend to be doing what was best for Isaac while actually doing things against his will. That would be hypocritical.

The matter had taken place nearly twenty years ago, and it was likely done in secret. If they investigated themselves, they might not be able to uncover anything.

What troubled Carissa most,

however, was Isaac's current belief

that he had been sent to the temple to recover because no physician in the capital could heal him. He hadn't expected the charlatan to torment him the way he had. But his family's intentions had been good, and that was the part that made it hard to bear.

It was why Isaac had been pacing back and forth outside Silverstone Estate these past few days. He seemed lost in thought, as if reflecting on the bond of family.

Chapter 1142

Jacob and Luke used their connections to dig into this old affair. They began with the relatives from other branches of the Earl of Silverstone's family. When they inquired, they were told that the child had died in a great fire, and that David and Evelyn had mourned for a long time because of it.

It was clear that this information was incomplete, just like the findings of Adrian's previous investigation. It was only the surface of the truth.

While the investigation continued, Barrett and Viola had already parted ways, each going their separate paths. The divorce had been finalized without dispute, with both sides agreeing to the terms. The dowry, which had once been paraded through the capital on their wedding day, was now quietly returned to Viola.

All she wanted now was to keep things as low-key as possible. She told Zoey that since the Warren family was facing difficult times, there was no need to take large items like bedding or chests. They would only take back smaller valuables, such as jewelry, silks, and other fine items. As for the properties and farmland that came with her dowry, she had already sent people to reclaim those first.

Zoey didn't handle this personally but had entrusted it to the estate's steward.

Evelyn and Viola still urged Zoey to see Riley and ask her to clarify the matter. They even offered to pay Riley a thousand gold coins. However, Zoey, along with Luna, had opposed this. It wasn't worth spending such a sum just to clear Viola's reputation.

Once that matter was settled, Zoey fell ill. That night, a sudden high fever gripped her, one so intense it left her delirious. They quickly called for a physician, who explained it was due to excessive stress and internal strain, worsened by catching a chill from the autumn breeze while still dealing with the lingering summer heat.

Her children-both biological and those borne by concubines-rushed to care for her, while the concubines in the household also pitched in.

Though the concubines' daughters had never had the chance to study at the prestigious Gracewood Women's Academy, Zoey had not neglected them. She had hired a nanny to teach them with great care, while the sons all attended the family's school together. Zoey had poured all of her energy into this marriage, doing what most could do and even what many could not. She had given her all.

When Evelyn saw that Zoey was ill, she realized she had pushed her too hard. Feeling guilty, she angrily scolded Viola, telling her to move to the countryside villa and not stay in the main residence where she might cause trouble for her own nieces and nephews. Viola couldn't help but throw a fit, which enraged Evelyn to the point of nearly bursting with fury.

She slapped Viola across the face. "You wretch! Hasn't your sister-in-law done enough for you? How long will you continue to drag this family down? Do you think that just because we brought you into this world, we're bound to care for you for the rest of your life?" It was only because Zoey was so ill that Evelyn's heart softened with pity.

Evelyn was also a woman of pride. Her daughter had married twice and returned to her parents' house both times. It was a stain on her reputation.

Because Zoey was rambling in her

fever, Luna didn't let anyone else care for her. She urged them to leave, saying the boys needed to

attend their lessons at the faminet

school while the girls had

embroidery, sewing, and reading to focus on. Staying there would only

make their biological mothers worry.

As for the concubines, they were tasked with overseeing things in the back courtyard, helping to ease the burden on the lady of the household.

In her feverish haze, Zoey repeated one thing over and over, wondering when she might finally leave this cursed place.

Those who didn't understand might have thought she was trapped in a nightmare, desperately trying to escape. But only Luna and Jane understood Zoey truly wanted to leave the Earl of Silverstone's family and the estate.

Apart from her children, it was a place that demanded too much of her, where there was nothing but endless worries, unceasing household matters, accounting that never seemed to end, and the ongoing issues in her marriage.

She felt like a pearl, slowly being

covered by layers of dust until her luster was completely gone. Had it, been just dust, it might have been washed away one day. But now, the dust had worked its way into her heart, dulling her spirit bit by bit. By the time it could be cleaned off, she would have already faded into nothing.

Luna's heart ached for her

sister-in-law. Since marrying into the family, she had rarely faced any difficulties. At first, Evelyn looked down on her because of her

merchant background and trol net

her coldly. It was Zoey who shielded her, calmed Evelyn, and taught Luna how to avoid making mistakes.

This was especially true when it came to socializing. Zoey had always guided her, taught Luna proper etiquette, introduced her to people, and helped her build connections. Though Oliver led troops on the battlefield, in Luna's eyes, it was Zoey who truly wore the armor of a warrior, protecting the entire household.

But who had ever protected Zoey? Who had noticed that the armor she wore was a false one?

She wasn't invincible.

Viola hadn't wanted to move to the countryside villa, but she panicked when Riley showed up with her family to cause a scene.

Chapter 1143

There was a reason why Riley had come to cause a scene.

First, the rumors outside had become unbearable. With everyone knowing Silas was in charge of the herbs at Arcane Sanctum, the place was packed, not with patients, but with people eager to hurl insults at him.

The constant commotion had severely disrupted the sanctum, to the point where sick patients couldn't even get in. Left with no choice, Sebastian, who had just returned from collecting herbs, had to make a public statement. He announced that Silas was fired and would no longer be associated with the sanctum.

The second reason had to do with the match the Farrell family had carefully arranged for Thomas. His mother, Alice, was quite pleased with the prospective bride, and the young woman's family had agreed as well. The only thing left was for Thomas to consent and the formal engagement would be sealed.

But when the news got out, the young woman's family sent a matchmaker to call things off, saying the marriage proposal was to be considered as if it had never been discussed. The two families had only ever met for coffee and light conversation, nothing more. This enraged Alice so much that she returned to her parents' house to seek their support.

The Lewis family elders called Silas back and harshly scolded him for his careless behavior, noting that he had no regard for family ties. Not only had he failed to clean up his mess after all these years, but he had made his troubles public, dragging down the Lewis family's reputation. And as if that wasn't enough, he had ruined Thomas' reputation and the Farrell family as well.

Having lost his position at Arcane Sanctum and with his name now utterly tarnished, Silas was furious. And when he received further scolding from the Lewis family, he angrily declared that he would return home and divorce his wife.

Perhaps he had said it in the heat of the moment, or perhaps he truly intended to divorce her. But once those words left his mouth, they lit a fire within Riley.

Her family wasn't particularly powerful and her father was only a sixth-rank official. Regardless, how could a father allow his daughter to be so humiliated? Several of Riley's brothers-in-law immediately went to confront Silas. After giving him a beating, they sent their women to find Viola.

The reason for going to see Viola was simple-Riley believed that Viola had intentionally sought out Silas. She was convinced it wasn't a coincidence, but a deliberate action with some ill purpose behind it.

Riley's family the Claude family-was large, with numerous relatives. A group of over twenty, including aunts, uncles, and servants, gathered together and marched to Silverstone Estate.

At first, they hadn't caused a scene, only demanded that Viola come out and explain herself to Riley.

But Viola was too afraid to face them. She hid inside, wishing desperately that she were already at the countryside villa to avoid such humiliation.

Viola refused to come out, while

Zoey was running a high fever and couldn't handle the situation. Evelyn was in poor health and couldn't endure such a scene. With no other choice, Luna had to step in and deal with it.

However, she was not prepared for such a confrontation. As the voices grew louder and the mood more heated, she found herself struggling to keep control.

Fearing a public disturbance, one of

the servants rushed out to alert the authorities. Fortunately, they encountered the Garrison Unit, who had been patrolling diligently of late, and led them toward the scene.

The situation in the capital had already started to settle down after days of gossip, but this commotion stirred everything back up. It drew crowds eager to watch the drama unfold. When the Claude family saw the Garrison Unit approaching, they began shouting that they wanted a fair judgment, or else they would escalate things to an even greater disturbance.

The crowd grew, and the tension in the air thickened. Max was away on duty, and with Carissa stationed at the Capital Guard headquarters, she was the one who had to step in.

The Garrison Unit could handle disputes like this, as long as no one reported it to the authorities. In most cases, it was up to the Garrison Unit to manage things.

Carissa's presence was, therefore, entirely reasonable.

When she arrived, she found out that Zoey had been running a high fever for two days with no signs of improvement. With the noise and chaos going on, she was worried it would disturb Zoey's rest.

With a swift motion, Carissa cracked

her whip twice, the sharp sound

silencing the crowd instantly. Alt

eyes turned toward her, the authority in her stance undeniable as she

stood in her official attire.

Seizing the moment, Carissa sternly said, "Enough! No more shouting. If you have something to say, take it inside. What is this madness, making such a scene here?"

Chapter 1144

The notion of keeping family matters private was something Riley had always held dear, but at this moment, she couldn't care less. Still, she found herself cowed by Carissa's commanding presence. Holding back her tears of frustration, she followed Carissa's instructions and led her mom, sister-in-law, and aunt into the main hall of Silverstone Estate.

Caspian hadn't finished his shift yet, so only Luna was there with a group of servants and maids, facing so many people. She wasn't used to such a situation, so she sent someone to call for Viola. However, when Viola heard that Carissa had arrived, she became even more unwilling to come out. In the end, it was Zoey, despite her high fever, who insisted on coming out to handle the situation. Seeing Zoey's condition, Carissa couldn't help but feel a pang of sympathy. In just a few days, she had visibly lost weight. Her complexion was pale and sickly, her lips flushed with fever, and she was so weak she could barely walk without support. Carissa had always been close to Zoey. Now knowing that she was Isaac's sister-in-law, she felt even closer to her.

Seeing how unwell Zoey was but still coming out to handle things for Viola, Carissa said, "If Ms. Prince won't come out, then please ask Madam Prince to come out. Why should a sick person have to work?"

"My mother-in-law is also ill, Your Grace," Luna replied.

Riley wasn't the type to make unreasonable demands. She had just been holding her frustration in and only wanted to ask Viola one question. Once that was answered, Riley would stop being upset.

With red-rimmed eyes, she said, "I don't want to make things difficult for anyone. I just want to ask Ms. Prince one thing-when she went to Arcane Sanctum that day, was it on purpose to see my husband, or did she go to buy medicine? I just want her to answer me honestly.

"If it was really just to buy medicine and it was a coincidence that she ran into him, then I'll admit I've been unreasonable. I know I've embarrassed my husband and ruined General Farrell's reputation. I'll apologize for all of it. Even if I get cast out, I'll accept it."

She spoke clearly, and it was obvious that she hadn't been able to stop thinking about this matter for the past few days. She kept going over all the details in her mind.

Her eyes were red and swollen, clearly from crying a lot. Her broken heart was evident, making anyone who saw her feel uncomfortable.

Zoey looked at Riley's mother,

Bianca Langley, and said, "Madam

Claude, I've known you for many years. Although we don't interact much, you know the kind of person I am. Let me be honest with you if you and Mrs. Lewis ask Viola about this, you won't get any answers. She'll deny going there to see Mr. Lewis and say she only went to buy medicine. So, all the blame will fall on Mrs. Lewis."

Riley covered her face with her hands and began to cry. Yes, how could Viola admit it?

Now, her in-laws were saying Riley was too jealous, easily upset, and quick to make a scene that everyone knew about. She had regretted it, yes. But the moment Silas had spoken of divorce, she had been left with no choice. All she could do now was seek out Viola. She didn't understand how things had turned so quickly. Somehow, she had become the unreasonable one.

The people outside could curse Viola all they wanted, but as long as she stayed hidden, she wouldn't face any real consequences. But Riley? She was being cast out and sent out to face the consequences alone.

She was unwilling to accept that.

At first, Riley had trusted her instincts completely. She believed that Viola had intentionally sought out Silas. If it had only been to buy Snowdrop Pills, why would a married woman like her show herself like that? She didn't live in Silverstone Estate anymore after her marriage. Besides, there were so many people at Silverstone Estate who could have gone instead!

When Viola had spoken to Silas, her eyes had been red-rimmed, as if she had suffered some great injustice. It hardly seemed like the behavior of someone merely purchasing medicine.

But after the past few days and the advice Riley had received, Silas himself had insisted that she was being unreasonable. Perhaps she had been too suspicious. Maybe it was her jealousy clouding her judgment.

Now, the Garrison Unit was here,

Asking Viola was Riley's last act of stubbornness. She knew it wouldn't change anything, but if she didn't confront her, she would never be able to live with herself. It had already become a joke, so why should Viola be allowed to escape all the blame?

and the Hell Monarch's princess consort herself had come. Even the lady of the Earl of Silverstone's household had come out to handle this matter, despite being in poor health. Though they hadn't said a word, Riley suddenly felt that she had been unreasonable, foolish, and reckless.

Tears streamed down her face as she whispered, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean for things to turn out like this. But if I hadn't caused a scene, I couldn't have gone on living with myself."

Chapter 1145

Seeing Riley cry so desperately, Zoey felt a pang of sympathy. She knew that if Riley wasn't pushed to the brink, she wouldn't be here making such a scene.

"Bring Viola out here. Use any means necessary," Zoey instructed, her face darkening.

Jane and a few servants left the room.

Once they were gone, Zoey turned to Riley and said, "You came here to find closure. No matter what she says-whether it's truth or lies-you must trust your own instincts. Once you've listened, you'll have closure for yourself and will know what to do." Riley wiped away her tears, revealing a pale face. She wasn't exceptionally beautiful, but there was a prideful air about her.

"Thank you, Mrs. Prince," she said softly.

Bianca also explained things to Zoey and Carissa, clarifying that they were just worried about Riley. Even with so many relatives around, they were only here to seek justice and nothing more.

They hadn't known about Silas and Viola's past affair. When Riley found out, she went home and told her family, who had urged her to let go of the past. It had been a moment of foolishness, and Riley shouldn't let it destroy her current marriage. Once the matter was smoothed over, life went on.

Ever since they got married, Silas had been a model husband, not causing any scandals or bringing in concubines. But the other day, Riley came back crying, saying Viola and Silas were still in contact. They were seen pulling and tugging at each other in Arcane Sanctum, and Riley had caused a scene.

As parents and relatives, how could they not stand up for her?

Carissa listened to all this family gossip, which felt like a tangled mess.

Even in her feverish state, Zoey could understand. She said, "I understand your frustrations. While it's in the past, it is still something dishonorable. It wasn't a simple interaction and it went against moral principles. One could even say it was disgraceful. This is the wound Mrs. Lewis has carried. But we can't

blame only Viola for that-it was Mr. Lewis' fault as well."

Bianca quickly responded, "We know this well. That's why Riley's brothers have taught Silas a lesson. But now, Silas insists on casting Riley out. We can't allow that. If it really comes to it, they should get a divorce aft both parties agree to it. We're here today because we had no other choice. Please understand, Mrs. Prince."

Zoey smiled wryly. "There's no need to seek my understanding. All I wish is for this matter to be resolved."

It hardly mattered now-everything had fallen apart, so what difference did it make if it crumbled even more? There would only be more ruin to come in the future.

"Apologies for troubling you today, Your Grace," Bianca said, rising to bow, her voice trembling with unease.

"I'm here today in my capacity as the

commander of the Mystic Army, representing the Garrison Unit. Family matters should not concern us, but this situation has escalated. Someone reported it, so I've come to make sure things don't get there. It's not about administering justice, just about maintaining balance. Let's all speak calmly and resolve this matter," Carissa replied.

From the beginning of this ordeal until now, Carissa had been more of an observer than a participant.

She had a strong feeling that the answer to the question Riley was asking was already clear. Viola had gone to see Silas on purpose. However, Carissa couldn't say this for certain, as it was only her own conclusion based on what she had observed at the time. Jane and two other servants dragged Viola into the room. Her face was flushed with frustration as she yelled at them for being impudent. When she saw the large gathering in the main hall, she was ready to turn and leave.

"Stop her!" Zoey's ordered firmly.

"We've reached this point, Ms. Viola. You can't hide anymore. Madam Zoey has shielded you from everything, and she's sick. Whatever it is, you need to explain yourself to Mrs. Lewis," said Jane, who wasn't about to let Viola leave.

Viola's face remained cold, and she refused to look at Riley. "What's there to say to her? She ruined my reputation. I went to buy Snowdrop Pills that day. I couldn't find them, so I had to ask him for help. I've had no contact with him for a long time, and that previous incident wasn't as you imagine it to be."

Riley wiped her tears away, then asked, "You say you've had no dealings with him, but you still knew he worked at Arcane Sanctum, didn't you? Didn't you know you'd run into him there? If that previous incident wasn't what we think it was, then what exactly happened?"

Chapter 1146

Viola's eyes flickered nervously, and she stubbornly refused to sit down.

"It was a mistake made because of alcohol. I mistook him for Thomas, but he was sober. He knew exactly who I was. While I may have made an error, his fault was far greater," she said coldly.

"That's not what he told me!" Riley shot back, forcing back her tears, her voice trembling with emotion. "He said you were drunk, yes, but not to the point of losing control. He said you knew full well who he was, and when you were together, you even called his name." "He's lying." Viola's face reddened. She quickly glanced at Carissa, then turned and shouted, "He's lying! Does he dare confront me about this? I called Thomas' name, not Silas!" Though Carissa had no experience handling these matters, the conversation stayed with her.

It had been a long time, but Viola claimed she remembered she had called out Thomas' name. Her words proved that she hadn't been so drunk as to confuse Thomas with Silas. Riley was speechless for a moment.

However, Bianca was sharp-minded and let out a cold laugh.

"Weren't you supposed to be so drunk you couldn't remember anything? How is it that you still remember whose name you called? If you were somehow sober despite being drunk, then you must have known the man you were with wasn't General Farrell!" she spat. "That's nonsense!" Viola spun around, ready to leave. When she saw Jane blocking her way, she raised her hand and struck Jane. "How dare you stop me?"

Jane took the slap without flinching. "Madam Viola, you should at least explain yourself before leaving."

Viola's face flushed a deep red. "What is there to explain? I was the one wronged in this matter! Silas took advantage of me. I've suffered so much over this! Why does everyone come after me? They should be looking for him!"

Riley had gradually regained her composure and said with calm authority, "I will deal with him, so don't worry about that. Just answer me honestly-did you go to the Arcane Sanctum to see him that day? I've looked into it. Before you went there, you were already having trouble with Barrett and wanted to divorce him. That's why you went looking for Silas."

Viola's face flushed with anger and shame.

"I went to buy Snowdrop Pills!" she retorted. "What nonsense are you imagining?"

"Silas isn't a physician. He's only in charge of Arcane Sanctum's procurement. Why would you go to him for Snowdrop Pills? You two

see him, you should avoid him, not eagerly approach him. You claim it wasn't on purpose, but who could believe that?" Riley said.

have a shameful past. When you net

Viola opened her mouth, ready to retort, but Riley pressed on.

"Don't say that no one knows about your shameful past. Just because others don't know doesn't mean it's fine for you to approach Silas. Others might not know, but surely you do.

"You should have been more careful

and discreet. If you truly thought he could help you with the Snowdrop Pills, you should have asked

someone from your household net

inquire, not go running to him

yourself. Were you trying to use your past relationship to manipulate him?"

Viola was left speechless, the expression on her face changing quickly. Riley's logical and forceful questioning caught her off guard. All the excuses she had prepared in her mind were meant to deal with Zoey's interrogation. Since Zoey didn't press her, she hadn't thought further. Now, she found herself

unable to respond to Riley directly.

She could only lift her chin and shift the topic.

"Is it wrong to be devoted to one's parents? My mom is seriously ill, and I wanted to buy Snowdrop Pills for her. I couldn't buy it over the counter, and I just asked when I saw Silas.

"What past relationship? Everything you've said is your imagination. I've told you before that the previous incident wasn't what you imagined. It was a lapse in judgment when I was drunk, and it happened before he was married.

"It had nothing to do with you, so I don't understand why you keep dragging it up. Let me ask you- if your mom were sick, wouldn't you do everything in your power to find a cure? Are you telling me you wouldn't? Aren't you devoted to your parents?"

Riley was momentarily thrown off balance by Viola's words. Her mind briefly tangled, and without thinking, she replied, "Of course, I would do anything for my mom."

A glint of triumph flashed in Viola's eyes. "There, then. I was only trying to help my mom. It has nothing to do with that past incident or whatever you claimed. You're the one who barged in and caused a scene. You made accusations without understanding the situation." Carissa shook her head slightly. Viola's clever twisting of the argument had confused Riley.

But Bianca raised her head slowly, her voice cold.

"I didn't want to expose this, but you don't even have a decent attitude, so don't blame me for revealing your dirty secrets. Are you really saying it was just one drunken mistake? How do you explain the child?"

Chapter 1147

The moment those words left Bianca's mouth, everyone was stunned.

The family members Bianca had brought with her were all unaware of the child. Even Riley hadn't known, so she was the most shocked. She almost stumbled back, too stunned to process what she had just heard. Her heart felt like it was shattering. Bianca had also been uncertain at first. But after the incident at Arcane Sanctum, she had sent someone to investigate Viola. They had found a physician who, by chance, had some connections with her husband.

When asked about why Viola's child with the Warrens hadn't survived, the physician shared his theories. One possibility was that she had suffered a miscarriage in the past, which had damaged her ability to carry a child.

Of course, the physician had no idea of the full extent of the situation. He just thought that it was common for women to miscarry. If a miscarriage wasn't properly cared for, it could harm future pregnancies.

Bianca hadn't known whether Viola had ever had a child with Thomas. She had no way of digging into the Farrell family's private matters, and all of her suspicions had been based on conjecture. She just wanted to give Viola a strong warning, telling the latter to stop avoiding the issue and clear things up properly.

The moment she said it, Zoey and Viola had gone pale. With that, Bianca knew her guess was correct.

Viola's body went weak, and she collapsed onto the ground. She didn't realize that Bianca was testing her. She thought the older woman already knew everything.

Riley's tears streamed down. "So I wasn't overthinking or being jealous! You really wanted to see him! Things between you two weren't that simple, and you even had a child together. Your intentions were clear, but he didn't avoid you even when you went crying to him. He should have kept his distance, but he didn't. You two have no shame! You two even blamed me, saying I caused trouble and ruined your reputations!"

Viola felt like she was drowning, overwhelmed with a sense of impending doom-just as she had when she first found out she was pregnant with Silas' child.

It was the same feeling of having nowhere to turn, utterly trapped.

Back then, Zoey had saved her.

Viola looked at Zoey. Suddenly, Zoey's body swayed dangerously before she collapsed forward in a faint.

Carissa rushed forward to catch her but was too late. Zoey had already hit the ground, injuring her forehead.

Carissa's hand came away slick with blood as she touched Zoey. She could feel the feverish heat radiating from Zoey's face and forehead, the latter's body burning with a terrible fever. "Get the physician!" Luna cried, seeing the blood on her sister-in-law's face. She was horrified and began shouting in panic.

Riley was clearly shaken as well. She instinctively moved closer to her mother but quickly straightened up and cried, "I'm so sorry! It's all my fault! I shouldn't have come here to make a scene." Her face was as pale as death as she watched Zoey being carried out, blood dripping from her forehead and staining the floor. The red liquid spread little by little, creating a terrifying sight. Luna stood and bowed deeply to Bianca.

"Madam Claude. Regardless of who

is right or wrong in this, it's clear we're beyond resolution now. You came here seeking an explanation and the Earl of Silverstone's household will give one. But please understand my sister-in-law has been ill for several days, and she has only come out today out of sheer will. Please consider-"

Before she could finish, Bianca quickly bowed back, cutting her off. "There's no need to say more. No talk of explanations or justice. This situation has already gone too far, and we failed to consider the consequences. We apologize. Truly, we're sorry."

Bianca's eyes glistened with unshed tears, realizing how out of hand things had gotten. Even innocent people had been dragged into the mess. She felt a deep sense of regret.

The women withdrew, leaving the room eerily quiet. Riley was left in a daze, needing help to be guided out. As she passed the doorway, she glanced back at Viola, who still sat on the floor, stunned.

For some reason, the words slipped from her lips before she could stop them, "You can have him. I don't want that man anymore. He's yours."

Viola had her back turned to Riley. She closed her eyes, tears falling freely.

Yes, she had deliberately sought out Silas-but she never intended to marry him.

Silas had no official position. He was a procurer at Arcane Sanctum. Many high-ranking officials and nobles had to ask him to buy medicine and send him money, but that wasn't the kind of support she was looking for.

She was simply tired of the constant arguments with Barrett, tangled in endless disputes and feeling trapped. She wanted someone to talk to.

At first, she hadn't planned on saying

those things to Silas at Arcane Sanctum. But when she saw him, he looked as handsome as ever, his eyes tired yet still gentle. Somehow, all the frustrations and grievances she had been feeling came rushing out, and she couldn't control it.

It was such a huge misunderstanding and an unfair accusation.

She never once thought of marrying Silas!

Chapter 1148

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Carissa sent someone to Arcane Sanctum to bring Ivy over.

Thankfully, the wound on Zoey's forehead wasn't deep. The bleeding had stopped quickly with no serious consequences.

However, Zoey had been feverish for several days, and her body was already weak. After getting so upset, her temper flared and she ended up spitting blood. Now, she was feeling lightheaded and faint.

Tears flowed continuously from the corners of Zoey's eyes no matter how much Carissa wiped them away, as though they couldn't be stopped.

"Ivy, how is she?" Carissa asked after Ivy had finished examining Zoey.

Ivy sighed heavily.

"Mrs. Prince has had a high fever for days. I just tapped her back, and it seems her lungs are affected. Her liver is severely stressed, and there's a significant buildup of toxins and poor blood circulation. The medicine she took before this was too mild to have any real effect. I've given her a strong dose now to clear the heat in her liver and regulate her lungs. Once she improves a bit, she'll need to rest and recover slowly. She can't continue working herself to the bone like this."

Afterward, Ivy requested Carissa to step outside.

She lowered her voice and whispered, "The stress on Mrs. Prince's liver is severe, and it's largely due to emotional distress. I sense that she's hiding something-something she's unwilling to speak of. She's bottled it up, and it's taking a toll on her body." Carissa's thoughts immediately turned to Zoey's worries-Oliver and the potential involvement in the treason case that might affect their family.

When Zoey had sent her son Cedric to train with Travis, Rafael had said that she was preparing for the worst. If she had made such preparations, then it was clear that she was constantly worried about it.

"Let's see how she fares with the medicine first," Ivy continued, then turned and headed back into the room.

Carissa stepped out to give instructions to the Garrison Unit, reminding them to keep their mouths shut about the events of the day. Not a word was to be spoken outside the walls of the household. As for what others might say, that was beyond the Garrison Unit's control. Once the orders were given and the guards had dispersed, Carissa turned to find Viola leaning against a pillar, her eyes swollen and red from crying. She just stared at Carissa, looking fragile like a piece of glass, as if she could shatter at any moment. "Lady Carissa, I want to ask you something." Viola's voice was thick with congestion. It seemed her nose was completely blocked.

"Go ahead," Carissa replied.

She smiled bitterly. "You've opened Skye Embroidery, claiming it's to give women a voice. Then, let me ask you-if a man had done what I did, would he have been criticized? Or would people have praised him for his ability to win over so many women?"

Carissa looked at Viola, thinking for

a moment before answering, "Has anyone praised Mr. Lewis for being capable? General Farrell was criticized because of your affair with Mr. Lewis, but he didn't do anything wrong did he? I know you want to say that men and women are treated differently-that we're not given fair treatment, that our status is lower than men's. Yes, that's the truth. But isn't that exactly why we women have to strive so hard?"

Viola's smile twisted into something more bitter. "Does it even matter? Women can't even stand up for one another. Don't you think Mrs. Lewis shouldn't have come to me? She should have gone to Silas and held him accountable."

Carissa said firmly, "You have no

right to say that. Do you remember Amelia? She came from a lower background than you, and you looked down on her every chance you got. You never treated her like a sister-in-law. You may not have been the one to kill her, but her death is on your hands. As for the rest, I won't waste time explaining. You already understand everything. You're just pretending to be confused. I don't have time to play along with you."

Without waiting for Viola's response, Carissa brushed past her. She ignored Viola's desperate sobs as she headed toward the back courtyard to Zoey's room.

Ivy prepared the medicine and gave Zoey needle treatment. Slowly, Zoey began to recover, but her expression remained blank. She mumbled one sentence:

"Now, whatever dignity and reputation this family had is lost."

She was suddenly overwhelmed with a splitting headache. She knew she had to figure out a way to secure a future for her children, for all the concubines' sons and daughters under this roof, and for the children of the second branch of the family. How would they find a match to marry? Did they even have the right to be choosy about whom they wed?

Luna was crying beside her. In a fit of frustration, she muttered, "If she had just gone to the countryside villa sooner, wouldn't that have been better? Even if the situation had reached her, at least it's secluded and fewer people would know."

Carissa didn't know what to say to

comfort Luna. She just glanced at Ivy, who said, "Right now, discussing anything is pointless. The most important thing is to recover your health. Only then can you ensure the future of your children. If not, Wouldn't they be even more pitiful?"

Carissa nodded and continued along the same line, "Yes, you need to get well, so your children will have someone to rely on and someone to protect them."

Zoey looked up at Carissa, tears welling in her eyes. She knew she had to pull herself together.

"Thank you for everything today, Your Grace. I'm sorry for bringing such unpleasant matters to your ears."

Chapter 1149

On the same day, Violet had gone to the Farrell family's residence. Alice had fallen sick, and Ivy had also been called over.

Violet stayed until evening and hadn't left yet when news about Viola's situation spread. Timothy's wife Opal had been kept in the dark, and they wanted to keep it that way. Alas, this could only be kept secret for so long.

The gossip about Viola's actions was rampant. Not only had she been caught in an affair, but there were whispers that she had also been pregnant.

Even though Thomas wasn't her husband now, he was still greatly affected. After all, it had all taken place at the Farrell family's residence.

Some people said he might not be capable in bed, which was why Viola had cheated. Otherwise, why would such a thing happen so soon after he went to the battlefield? Others said it was Viola who couldn't stay faithful and deserved to be punished.

Some even called Silas shameless, saying he had completely disregarded his family bonds. The Farrell family had taken him in out of kindness, yet he acted without any decency-almost as if he had no conscience at all. The gossip went back and forth, with everyone saying that Silas and Viola got what they deserved, while Thomas was the innocent one caught in the mess.

Barrett, however, was hardly mentioned. Once the family name was tainted, nothing about them could surprise anyone anymore. No one even bothered to bring up the fact that Barrett had divorced Viola.

That evening, Violet and Carissa returned to Hell Monarch Estate at the same time. After exchanging a few words about what happened that day, they exchanged glances and sighed in unison.

Before, it was all just entertainment. But now, it had affected the people they cared about, and they couldn't help but feel anxious too.

That night, Cedric still came to practice his martial arts, and he worked harder than ever. He knew he wasn't strong enough yet, and there were many things he couldn't help with. Thus, he needed to become stronger quickly. He had spoken to Travis about this. When Travis came in to have coffee later, he shared the conversation with Carissa and Violet.

Carissa was aware that Zoey's daughter was also diligent in her studies at the women's academy. Zoey's children might not be particularly outstanding, but they were both sensible, strong-willed, and patient.

After the practice, Travis saw Cedric back to the estate. Just as they arrived, they spotted Viola's carriage leaving Silverstone Estate. It wasn't just her carriage-several others were following, likely to move her belongings. She was leaving that night.

As Viola was about to board her carriage, she caught sight of Cedric. She paused, waiting for him to approach and greet her.

To her surprise, Cedric walked straight into the estate, deliberately ignoring her.

Viola froze, then called out sharply, "Cedric, how can you be so rude? You don't even greet your aunt when you see her?"

Cedric was still young and lacked the restraint of an adult. His distaste was plain in his gaze. He stopped, turned around, and spat with palpable contempt, "I really wish I didn't have an aunt like you."

Viola was greatly shocked when she heard that, and the blood instantly drained from her face. "What did you say? Who taught you to speak like that? Was it the people from Hell Monarch Estate?" "Hey, enough with your nonsense," Travis interjected quickly.

Cedric's delicate face paled slightly. "I don't want to say anything harsh to you. Please just go quickly. If you leave, Mom will get better sooner."

Viola let out a bitter laugh, tears

streaming down her face. "So even you have come to hate your aunt? Have you all forgotten how good we've been to you? You used to love sitting by my side, listening to me tell stories..."

"Before... Before, you weren't like this." Cedric didn't want to say more. After nodding to Travis, he quickly ran inside.

Viola stood in the night wind, the jewelry on her clothes faintly jingling. She used to love the sound of the gold and emerald clinking together, but tonight, it felt grating and almost unbearable.

Poppy helped her into the carriage. As they settled in, Viola straightened her posture, determined not to let the people from Hell Monarch Estate see her as a joke. She watched as the man from Hell Monarch Estate turned away, riding off without sparing her a glance.

"Poppy, do you think I was wrong to seek a divorce?" she murmured softly.

It all started because she wanted a divorce. If she hadn't entertained the thought of divorce, she never would have gone looking for Silas. To be honest, she didn't even know why she sought him out in the first place. Sometimes, people didn't even know what they were really after.

But at that moment, she just wanted to see Silas, so she went. She never thought about the consequences after all, Zoey would always cover for her, no matter what happened. Poppy gently wiped Viola's tears away.

"To be honest," she said, "I think the

Warren family wasn't so bad. With Madam Rebecca gone, you could take charge there. You wouldn't

have to follow all those rules on net

worry about serving your

mother-in-law. Even your younger

sister-in-law wouldn't be able to bully you."

Chapter 1150

Viola's tears flowed uncontrollably.

"But Barret is so useless!" she argued, her voice shaking. "He's gone off to become a lowly soldier! How will I ever show my face again? I just didn't want to degrade myself. When Carissa wanted a divorce, she even went as far as to ask for a royal edict. You could see how determined she was. How can I lose to her?"

Poppy wanted to say that it was much harder for Viola to face people now, but she didn't dare to say it out loud. Instead, she said, "There's no comparison to be made. Everyone has their own path. Some may be less fortunate than Lady Carissa, but others might be luckier. Even if she has the upper hand now, does that mean she's unbeatable?"

Viola's bitterness deepened. "Why didn't you ever say these things to me before?"

"Because you wouldn't have listened," Poppy replied. Then, she pulled the curtains down and said to the coachman, "Sir, we may go now."

Viola sank back against the embroidered cushion, her mind heavy with unease. Suddenly, an overwhelming dread gripped her. She realized, with a sinking heart, that she might truly be alone for the rest of her life.

She couldn't be like Carissa, who, after her divorce, still managed to marry a handsome, accomplished prince with great military achievements.

Viola grasped Poppy's hand tightly, her face drained of color. "Poppy, do you think Barrett will ever make anything of himself? Do you think he'll get some military merit?"

"My lady, fate is unpredictable," Poppy replied. "He might rise again and become a general. Or perhaps he'll fall into ruin and never get back up. His Majesty might even take back Valor Estate from them because of that."

"With how he is, he'll never get anywhere. If I stay with him, I'll end up losing everything. His Majesty might even seize Valor Estate, and my life will be truly ruined. No, my choices weren't wrong. I'm not wrong," Viola muttered under her breath.

At first, she admired Barrett. He was handsome and favored by the king, and their marriage was arranged by the prime minister's wife. Over time, she began to see his weaknesses-he was indecisive, easily swayed by emotions, and lacked direction.

On top of that, he had a domineering rightful wife and a dazzling ex-wife. And then there was Viola, the third daughter of the Earl of Silverstone, who felt ordinary in comparison.

Before Viola married into the Warren family, she thought she would be loved by them all. However, reality had been a bitter disappointment. She resented Barrett for failing to live up to her expectations, and that resentment had only grown over time, eventually driving them apart.

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The following day, Barrett ignored his family's objections and set off for the Southern Frontier with orders from the Ministry of Defense in hand.

Before this, he had already applied to re-enlist with the Ministry of Defense. His choices were limited-either the Southern Frontier, Victory Pass, or a military outpost.

He had served in one of the military outposts when he first enlisted, earning merit in the suppression of bandits alongside two generals. Later, he served at both Victory Pass and the Southern Frontier, so he only had these three options.

He chose the Southern Frontier. He

couldn't bear to face the Sullivan

family, nor did he wish to serve under Thomas. The Southern Frontier was his only option. Since he and Violet had a peaceful divorce and he was just a regular soldier, Oliver wouldn't make things difficult for him.

Zoey's illness came on suddenly-swift and harsh as an avalanche, then dragged on, slowly dissipating like a thread being pulled from fabric. Perhaps she had been eager to rest, for even though she felt much better, she still remained in bed. Carissa and Violet had visited her a few

times, and only when they were there did Zoey's face light up with a smile. Yet, despite her ailment, not a single task she had set in motion had been delayed.

She had sold off some property, and

the money wasn't placed in any bank. She hid it in a house that was part of her dowry, buried deep beneath the floorboards. Then, using her status as the Earl of

Silverstone's wife, she set up a soup stall on the outskirts of the city.

People thought she was trying to restore the family's reputation, but that wasn't her real aim. Reputation can mean different things. Even if the Earl of Silverstone's family had a reputation for charity, it couldn't change the damage to its morals caused by Viola. People would only say that the Earl of Silverstone's family had good people, but their household was corrupt.

That was why Zoey had her children and even the concubines' children go out and help with the food distribution whenever they had time-not for anything else, but to keep them from getting too much involved in the mess.

Of course, her real goal was to gain

a reputation for kindness. She hoped that if something ever happened to the Earl of Silverstone's family, someone would remember her good deeds and stand up for them in

court. At the very least, she hoped that someone would speak in their defense and ensure their

misfortunes wouldn't affect future generations.

As for those who had benefited from the earl's family, she hoped that when the criticism came pouring in, at least one of them would step forward to defend them.