

## War Song 17

### Chapter 17

Barrett took a deep breath, staring at his wife in disbelief. Was she really serious about wanting to leave, or was this just another way to manipulate him?

But no, he could never agree to a divorce. Divorcing Carissa would bring a storm of public outrage that would drown both him and Aurora.

Plus, his fellow soldiers would be ashamed of him, as everyone in the army revered Carissa's father as a legendary hero. He couldn't afford to lose their respect. "Carissa, I won't divorce you," said Barrett, sounding both frustrated and resigned. "I'll make sure you're well cared for, but you need to stop causing all this trouble. What you did this time was the worst. "How could you use my mother's illness to blackmail me? Don't you think that's too cruel? If you're upset, take it out on me. Stop tormenting my mother. It's disrespectful, and it'll ruin your reputation." Carissa's expression was icy as she taunted, "Is it that you won't divorce me or that you're too afraid to? Divorcing me would ruin your reputation, and people would accuse you of being heartless and unfaithful.

"You're also scared of losing the support of my father's old allies. You want to keep your romance and your career, but you can't have it both ways. Just because my family's in decline doesn't mean we need to rely on your family to survive. You underestimate me and overestimate yourself."

Her words hit Barrett where it hurt, making him furious.

"Enough with the arguments! The royal edict for the marriage is from the king himself. I will marry Aurora. If you have any other conditions, just name them and I'll meet them."

"I have no conditions. I don't need anything from you."

Carissa stood tall, her posture defiant and her eyes dry. Her beauty mark stood out on her fair, stunningly beautiful face.

Angry and exasperated, Barrett said, "Honestly, Carissa, I thought you'd accept this marriage more gracefully. Your father and brothers were all soldiers. I thought you wouldn't make things difficult for Aurora." Carissa let out a sarcastic laugh. "You thought I'd just accept my husband marrying another woman? You think too highly of my generosity, Barrett. Let's end this conversation here."

Seeing her stubborn refusal, Barrett grew even more enraged.

\*Fine, since you're so heartless, I'll take this to the king himself. You're deliberately making things difficult and defying His Majesty's edict. Prepare for the consequences when the king

reprimands you."

Carissa scoffed. "What a joke! I'm just a woman, not some court official. How exactly does the king plan to punish me? Why don't you go complain to the queen dowager instead? Tell her I won't let Aurora marry into the family. Hasn't she always admired Aurora? Go on, run to

her."

"Don't think I won't! You've cut off my mother's medicine-that's disrespectful. I'll have the queen dowager punish you for it."

"Take your time leaving, I won't see you off!" Carissa showed no sign of caring.

"You'll regret this!" Barrett threw his parting words over his shoulder, glaring at his wife's cold face before storming off.

"Perhaps you should worry about the betrothal gifts first. Do you need to borrow some money from me?" Carissa's mocking voice echoed behind him.

Her words made Barrett pause for a moment before he stomped away. He had indeed thought about borrowing money from her. But after this, he'd rather ask Aurora to lower the price of the betrothal gifts than ever turn to Carissa.

After Barrett left, Lulu poked her head around the door. "My lady, if he really asked you to lend him money, would you?"

Carissa rubbed her cheeks, exhausted from all the talking.

After a moment, she answered Lulu's question, "Sure, if he has the guts to ask, I'd lend it to him-with interest, of course. He'd have to pay back every penny, with interest, on time." "Aren't you worried he won't pay you back?"

"If he doesn't, I'll send debt collectors to his door every day." Carissa glanced at the spilled watercress soup in the corner and sighed pitifully. "Lulu, is there any watercress soup left? I'd

like some.

"Yes, there's a whole pot left. We've got chicken soup too. Which one would you

like?"

Carissa's face lit up. "Both, please! You should have some too, and send the rest to the maids. Oh, and they've packed everything, right?"

"Everything's ready. We're just waiting for the edict, then we'll pack up and leave," said Lulu, who was now cheerful, free from the gloom of the past few days.

"Yes, it's all over now. We're just waiting for the edict to arrive. Though, I bet Barrett will go and negotiate with the Yates family to lower the price of the betrothal gifts. Aurora will definitely agree. After all