

## War Song 211

### Chapter 211

After returning from Grand Princess Eleanor's birthday banquet, Rebecca fell ill. She developed a high fever in the middle of the night, and kept mumbling incoherently.

Amelia urgently summoned a doctor, and Benjamin was sent to fetch Barrett, who was staying at an inn. At first, Barrett thought it was a trick, but upon returning and seeing his mother shivering uncontrollably and mumbling nonsensical words, he realized her condition was indeed serious.

It was a rare sight, but Aurora also came over to help. She hadn't seen Barrett for several days. Her pride had prevented her from seeking him out, believing that this was still his home and he would eventually return.

Barrett didn't look at her, but urgently asked, "Why did she suddenly fall ill? Why is it so severe?"

Serena burst into tears. "What else could it be? It's all because of Carissa! She also attended Grand Princess Eleanor's birthday banquet. She took advantage of her upcoming marriage to the Hell Monarch, and had the audacity to berate both Grand Princess Eleanor and Lady Jessica..."

At these words, Barrett and Aurora stared at Serena in shock.

Barrett's voice trembled. "What? She's marrying the Hell Monarch?"

Amelia hurriedly interjected, "Serena, don't speak nonsense! It's clear that Grand Princess Eleanor was trying to use the fact that Mother was harsh toward Carissa to cover up her own issues. That's why she made Mother so angry that she got sick."

Barrett was overwhelmed with mixed emotions-pain, bitterness, and boundless regret.

He smiled bitterly and tried to say something, but found himself unable to produce a single word.

On the bed, Rebecca mumbled the same phrase over and over. "Barrett, I was wrong... I was truly wrong..." "Wrong about what? Do you regret letting Barrett marry me and abandoning Carissa?" Aurora asked coldly. Sitting by the bed and wiping her tears, Serena said indignantly, "Who does Carissa think she is anyway? She's a divorced woman, but she gets to marry into the royal family!"

"Of all the people the Hell Monarch chose to marry, why not pick someone from our family? Why pick someone we discarded? Isn't that an insult to us? The person we didn't want is now being cherished by others. Is it wrong for Mom to be angry?"

Hearing Serena's continued outburst, Amelia felt her anger flare up. Her normally timid demeanor was replaced by an unexpected burst of temper. "Be quiet! Mother's illness is not due to that. Don't speak recklessly and disturb the peace of our home!"

When Serena was reprimanded by Amelia, she wanted to retort but was struck by the unprecedented coldness in Amelia's eyes. Fearful, she swallowed her words and began to cry quietly.

Amelia was truly fed up. As she was in charge of the household now, she had to manage everything. With her husband's lackluster achievements, it was a struggle. Barrett had finally made a name for himself and earned a hundred gold coins, and there was hope he might bring some success to the family. They were depending on him now.

Yet, he had been wandering aimlessly for days. Now that he had returned, he was still fixated on Carissa. Carissa owed nothing to the Warren family, and didn't deserve to be vilified daily!

What was more, bringing up Carissa now would only lead to more discord between Barrett and his wife. Aurora may not be achieving much, but her ability to cause trouble was truly remarkable.

The Ministry of Defense and the Civil Department had yet to assign Barrett any official position. If the couple's discord became public knowledge, who would the officials question if not him?

It was bad enough that Rebecca was feverishly muttering nonsense, but now, Serena was also adding to the chaos.

It was truly exasperating!

As expected, Aurora sneered and glared at Barrett, one side of her face twisted with rage. "Your former wife is marrying into the royal family now. Are you having regrets? It was truly a wrong

decision, wasn't it? You shouldn't have married me, and I shouldn't have married into this family, where everyone despises me.

The bitterness in Barrett's heart surged to his lips, and he was unable to contain his anger. "What are you saying? Who despises you?"

Having not seen him for days, Aurora was overwhelmed by his impatient tone. Her pent-up grievances and emotions erupted.

"Don't you despise me? Do you dare say you don't? You think those Westhaven soldiers messed around with me when they kidnapped me, don't you? You think I'm not pure, right?!" she screeched.

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In the dead of night, everything finally erupted.

Feeling utterly exhausted, Amelia turned and left the room.

Behind her, shouts and screams filled the air, and Serena's piercing cries mingled with the chaotic uproar, Amelia slowly made her way to the main hall of the inner estate. It was the same chair where Carissa used to sit when she was managing the household affairs.

Managing those affairs was no easy task. Carissa had always handled it with patience and a pleasant demeanor, even enduring long nights when Rebecca was ill. She would never rest, and was always attending to what needed to be done.

Carissa had seemed tireless, but who wasn't tired? It was just a matter of persevering through it all.

Amelia had never understood this before, but now, she saw it all too clearly.

She sank into a chair, staring at the empty hall. To conserve oil, only one lantern was lit in the corridor, casting a dim light that illuminated the desolate tables and chairs. Valor Estate felt like a mausoleum. She felt genuinely happy for Carissa, not for any other reason but for how Carissa had cared for her during her time at Valor Estate. It wasn't just the material support-now that she was in charge of the household, she understood what Carissa had endured and resisted on her behalf.

Now, Amelia was truly exhausted, drained by the endless turmoil. Life would be simpler as an ordinary person, where one could live comfortably without unrealistic aspirations that drained everyone's energy and never led to fulfillment.

She fell asleep in the chair, though she had no idea how long she slept.

Eventually, a servant came in to inform her that Barrett had slapped Aurora, and Aurora had retaliated with a slap of her own. Her action caused more chaos, before Barrett stormed out and Rebecca fainted from rage.

After hearing everything, Amelia merely said quietly, "Everyone, go back to your tasks."

Amelia knew this was just the beginning-the start of a continuous state of unrest in the household.

Just as Rafael set off for Meadow Ridge, the Civil Department issued Barrett's new appointment. He was now assigned to the Capital Guard Headquarters. He would serve as the administrative overseer, which was a fifth-rank position.

This position was held by two individuals, one of whom was Michael from the Mystic Army. The Capital Guard was derived from the Mystic Army, and the Hell Monarch was the commander of the Mystic Army, with Carissa serving as the deputy commander. Below them were the assistant commander, commandant, and then came the administrative

overseer.

Of course, Carissa's appointment was largely ceremonial. While the kingdom allowed women to go to war, it didn't permit them to hold substantive positions.

Moreover, although Rafael had given up his military authority, he remained the commander of the Mystic Army. With Carissa as deputy commander, the Mystic Army and the Capital Guard were effectively under their control, which made some people uneasy.

Arranging for Barrett to join the Capital Guard Headquarters, even in a fifth-rank position like the administrative overseer, was a strategic move. Over time, with a potential for promotion, he could become a

thom in Rafael's side.

Salvador was cautious, and preferred to prevent issues before they

arose.

He knew Rafael wasn't currently ambitious, but it was best not to provide any opportunity for such ambition to grow and risk damaging their brotherly bond.

Barrett was deeply dissatisfied with this appointment. He would rather return to the garrison guards in the capital than serve under Rafael and Carissa. Even though he knew Carissa wouldn't come to the Capital Guard Headquarters, her nominal title meant that he would always be considered her subordinate.

However, a fifth-rank official position was still respectable. It was better than being a mere idle general with no responsibilities after the Victory Pass battle.

In the Capital Guard Headquarters, at least, he held genuine authority.

His personal life was a mess, and he just wanted to focus on his career. His direct superior was the commandant, Caleb Gibson. Caleb hadn't participated in the battlefield, but was a close friend of Michael. So, he was informed about battlefield events.

Caleb was quite displeased with Barrett and Aurora. On Barrett's first day in office, he was left waiting and was subjected to a round of sarcastic remarks.

Barrett endured it, and offered to treat his new colleagues. Michael stepped in to defend him, pointing out that Barrett had indeed earned merit on the battlefield and had received the king's commendation. This intervention prevented Caleb from further harassing him.

Michael wasn't protecting Barrett out of personal loyalty. He had done it because Salvador and the Ministry of Defense had recognized Barrett's achievements. Michael preferred to avoid unnecessary trouble,

knowing that Rafael disliked such

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As Barrett began his new role, Aurora hoped to secure an official position for herself, even if it were just a minor role in the Capital Guard or as a small team leader in the Mystic Army. She knew her past mistakes would limit her to a lower ranking post, but given her significant contributions in the victory at Victory Pass, she thought finding a position wouldn't be too difficult.

All she wanted was to have a position that would allow her to hold her head high.

However, Aurora's expectations were overly simplistic. Even Carissa, who held only a nominal title, didn't need to report to the Capital Guard Headquarters or participate in Mystic Army training unless specifically required. She had the option to go if needed, but she didn't have to.

Aurora waited several days, only to receive a document from the Ministry of Defense stripping her of her military rank and erasing all recognition of her achievements at Victory Pass.

She was no longer a general or even a soldier. All her contributions were nullified, as if she had never been on the battlefield. She was required to return the general's armor, the military insignia, and her weapons. She couldn't even keep her military uniform.

This shattered her emotional barrier.

She considered herself superior because she was different from other women-after all, she had been on the battlefield. She was a soldier, a centurion, a general. She had endured many hardships, and had eventually married into the Warren family.

She thought her journey was only the beginning and that she would soar to greater heights, pioneering a path for women so they could serve as

officials in the future.

Instead, marrying into the Warren family marked the end of everything she had hoped for.

Aurora went mad, smashing things in the courtyard. She destroyed everything in sight, and the servants dared not approach. They sought out Amelia, who dismissed their concerns, saying she wouldn't interfere with Aurora's outburst in her own courtyard.

As Rebecca was still ill, no one dared to tell her.

Even those who knew wouldn't approach Aurora. Serena took a glance and, with venom in her eyes, cursed Aurora. If it weren't for this vile woman seducing Barrett, Carissa would still be her sister-in-law and wouldn't be marrying the Hell Monarch.

This woman was nothing but a calamity!

Eventually, Rebecca learned of the situation. Her gaze was blank for a long time, before she let out a bitter laugh.

"Oh? Not only is she no longer a general, but not even a soldier too? What exactly did our family gain from her? We spent so much money to have her marry into our family, and she's turned out to be utterly useless -just a worthless shrew."

Her tone was both malicious and helpless. Besides, she was right.

Despite coming from a distinguished background, Carissa was well-educated and cultured. She was also trained in martial arts from a young age. She was considerate and dutiful, always taking initiative in her responsibilities.

However, Aurora was quite different. She would get angry when things didn't go her way, and although there were many in the residence who resented her, no one dared to voice their criticism openly. The thought of that night, when Aurora was smashing things and

fighting with Barrett, was enough to give Rebecca a heart attack. She deeply regretted her decisions.

Carissa's audacity to speak boldly at Harmony Palace was proof of her substantial influence and power.

In contrast, Aurora only dared to be domineering within the confines of her own household. When faced with outside criticism, she wouldn't dare to respond. She lacked the confidence and capability to stand her ground.

In the capital, power determined everything. Before the many influential figures, Aurora was nothing.

Rebecca had been bedridden for days, and Aurora had never once come to attend to her. Aurora couldn't even display the most basic respect to her in-laws. Her own family had left the capital, clearly avoiding her like the plague.

It was baffling that someone like Aurora had been brought into the Warren family household.

Rebecca grew increasingly infuriated, which aggravated her condition. However, there was nothing she could do to change the situation. She even found herself resenting Carissa for concealing her affiliation with her guild.

If Rebecca had known that Kyle was Carissa's senior, she would never have allowed Carissa to leave the family!

In truth, Rebecca didn't fully grasp Kyle's influence. She had only seen the admiration people had for him, with a single painting fetching a fortune. Even Eleanor had been stunned for a long time after knowing the torn painting was a genuine piece. It was clear that Kyle was a remarkable figure.

Chapter 214

After Rafael had gone to the Pathfinders Guild, Helen had once again summoned Carissa to the palace.

Following the events at Eleanor's birthday banquet, Helen's view of Carissa had changed. However, it wasn't enough to change her mind about accepting Carissa as her daughter-in-law.

Helen considered various approaches; she realized she had no effective means to sway Carissa through coercion, especially given how Carissa had dared to defy Eleanor. It was clear that strong-arm tactics would not work.

Thus, Helen decided to appeal to Carissa's emotions and reason with her, hoping she would voluntarily withdraw. Upon arriving at the Evergreen Palace, Carissa was greeted with a table set with an array of snacks and coffee. Helen was known for her haughty demeanor, but she managed to force a smile, though it was clearly strained and unnatural.



After Carissa paid her respects, Helen dismissed the attendants and began to chat with Carissa in a casual

manner.

"I genuinely mean well for you," Helen began. "Rafael has deceived you. He already has someone he loves. He once swore he would marry no one but her, so he will never give you a place in his heart. What happiness can you expect from marrying a man who doesn't love you? You've been married once already. Why let yourself be played and deceived by another man?"

Helen expected to see heartbreak on Carissa's face, but was surprised to find no change in her expression.

Carissa replied calmly, "His Highness didn't conceal this from me. I've long been aware of it."

Helen was surprised. "Since you know, why still marry him? If he doesn't love you, and you don't have feelings for him, why go through with it? Is it just for the title of a princess consort? The Duke of Northwatch's family's reputation is already high enough. There's no need to trade your lifetime happiness for it."

"Lady Helen, why do you think that among so many women, he chose me?" Carissa asked with a smile.

Helen pondered this for a moment, and replied, "To him, as long as it's not the woman he loves, it could be anyone."

"Indeed, anyone would do," Carissa agreed. "But why is it me?"

This question left Helen momentarily speechless.

Helen couldn't understand why her son was so insistent on marrying Carissa. If he needed a wife to manage the household, there were countless noblewomen in the capital to choose from—women who were pure, dignified, well-educated, and of distinguished families.

Why choose a divorced woman?

Helene looked at Carissa, stunned, and asked, "You're right. Why indeed?"

\*There are two reasons," Carissa began. "The first is that I am the one he loves...

Helen couldn't help but scoff, "Don't be absurd! That's impossible. You haven't been in the capital for long, and have only met him a few times. How could you be the one he loves?"

Carissa knew full well that she wasn't his true love. She used this statement to lead into her second point, encouraging Helen to think deeper.

"The second reason is that he believes I am a suitable choice as the Hell Monarch's consort, and also a very...safe choice."

Carissa emphasized the word "safe," dragging it out deliberately.

For Helen, the concept was baffling.

Safety?

Helen frowned. What did that even mean? If she didn't understand it, it must involve something from the previous era or power struggles-areas outside her expertise.

Her mind wandered to the rumors she had heard from Gillian, who had investigated and reported that Kylie had once summoned Carissa to the palace, mentioning that Salvador wished to make her his concubine.

The news had seemed ludicrous then. Despite Carissa's respectable background, military achievements, and good looks, she was a divorced woman. Even if she were to enter the palace, her rank would be limited. It was inconceivable for a divorced woman to be given such a high position.

If the rumors were true and Salvador had taken an interest in her, then by marrying her, Rafael would be effectively taking the king's woman.

How could that be considered safe?

It would lead to endless trouble!

Helen scrutinized Carissa, contemplating the possibility of the first reason. She recalled how she had initially tried to arrange a marriage for Rafael, only to be told that he already had someone he loved and would decide upon his return from his campaign.

However, when Helen later wrote to him, he replied that his beloved had already married, and there was no need for anyone to concern themselves with the matter.

That was odd.

If it were Carissa, Rafael would have expressed his feelings before going to war. And if Melanie knew about this, she would never have married Carissa to Barrett.

It was indeed strange and puzzling.

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Helen gazed at Carissa's stunningly beautiful face, and then at her slender figure. It was hard to believe that someone who looked so delicate could possibly be as ruthless as Rafael described- someone who could cut a person into three pieces.

Recalling Carissa's actions and words at Eleanor's birthday banquet, Helen asked, "You offended Grand Princess Eleanor that day. Aren't you afraid of her retaliation?"

Carissa remained unperturbed. "Her bark is worse than her bite. Why should I fear her?"

Helen's voice turned cold. "You're too young to understand her

methods. She has many ways of getting back at people. Such people often strike you from behind. You'll find yourself in trouble."

"If she tries to come at us from behind, we'll respond openly and twice as hard. We conduct ourselves with integrity-we're upright and unashamed of our actions. We're not afraid of her, whether she comes openly or covertly. It's the things she does secretly that we should be wary of. Once we have a handle on a person's weakness, it's easier to deal with them."

As Carissa spoke, she crushed a cup in her hand. Then, she nonchalantly placed the shattered pieces on the table.

Seeing this, Helen involuntarily straightened up. But then she quickly relaxed her posture, realizing it was a gesture of weakness.

With a casual flick, Carissa brushed a small piece of the broken cup off her intricately embroidered skirt and said, "At the Pathfinders Guild, we have rules. If someone doesn't offend me, I won't offend them. But if someone dares to offend me, we eliminate them at the root!"

Helen shivered at the words, but Carissa's smile remained gentle and

her tone soft

"Of course, this is a matter of personal vendettas and the ways of the martial world. As a noble family, we don't act in such a manner. We always resolve things with reason. For instance, today, you invited me to speak with me and treated me with reason. If you had truly been harsh-like leaving me under the blazing sun, making me walk in circles, or slapping me-I could endure it the first time, but not a second. There was a cold, sharp light in her eyes.

Helen felt an inexplicable chill, but she was at a loss for words. Carissa's casual remarks were laced with threats, and the way she spoke made it clear she remembered the events of their last meeting with disdain.

How bold of her!

Helen had an intense desire to slap Carissa across the face. She wanted to grab Carissa by the hair, drag her out, and trample her! She wanted to crush each of her fingers one by one!

Carissa noticed the myriad emotions flickering in Helen's eyes. Turning her head to gaze at the sunlight streaming through the hall, she smiled faintly.

This old woman needed to be intimidated, or she might cause trouble.

After a moment, Carissa turned away and asked, "By the way, you summoned me to the palace, Lady Helen. Was there something specific you needed?" Helen rolled her eyes inwardly.

Carissa was playing the fool. If there had been a specific matter, Helen would have mentioned it when they first met. It was clear that the intention was to have her marry someone else.

Yet, the conversation had reached this point, and it was awkward to bring it up now.

"I was merely feeling bored and wanted some company, I thought it would be nice to have you here to talk," Helen said.

Carissa smiled warmly. "I'm more than happy to keep you company. If you're still feeling bored, why not accompany me to Harmony Palace?"

Helen's expression changed abruptly "Why would you go to Harmony Palace?"

"Just a visit. After all, she'll be my aunt-in-law in the future."

Helen looked at her as if Carissa was an idiot. "You would dare to visit her? There are no guests today."

Carissa maintained a dignified demeanor, and said gently, "That's exactly why I want to go today. There were too many people the other day, and it was difficult to talk freely. With no one around, I can speak openly. It's best to avoid any future misunderstandings or trouble. I detest unnecessary trouble."

Helen felt that Carissa's words might be aimed at her, but couldn't be certain. Carissa's serious demeanor suggested otherwise.

As soon as Carissa left the palace, Helen hurriedly sent someone to follow her, to see if she actually went to Harmony Palace.

If Carissa dared to go there despite having offended Eleanor, it would mean two things-first, she was reckless, and second, she had no regard for the grand princess.

Either way, Helen couldn't afford to antagonize her future daughter-in-law.

## Chapter 216

After leaving the palace, Carissa boarded the carriage bound for Harmony Palace.

Today, she had originally planned to visit Eleanor, but the sudden royal summons had delayed her. However, the delay wasn't a major setback. By afternoon, Eleanor would have awakened from her nap and would be full of energy, so Carissa expected not to be disappointed.

In recent days, Carissa had been organizing the storerooms, sorting out the dowry items brought back from Valor Estate. Some items needed to be sold, while others were to be stacked in a corner. Since she was marrying Rafael, she couldn't use those items as part of her dowry. After tidying up the storerooms, she needed to make a list of what new items were necessary. Frederick was to prepare this list.

Among the clutter, she discovered the miniature sculpture of the chastity belt sent by Eleanor. It was exquisitely carved and made from a rare, precious type of marble.

Such an expensive "gift" obviously had to be returned to Eleanor. When Eleanor had sent the miniature sculpture, the news of Carissa's father and brothers' deaths had just reached the capital. She was still in Meadow Ridge and had not yet returned, so she had never actually seen the miniature sculpture.

She had thought her mother would throw it away. Instead, it had been hidden in the storeroom. Perhaps Melanie had been too grief-stricken at the time to give proper instructions, and the servants, hesitant to dispose of it recklessly, had simply left it in a corner.

Carissa picked up the miniature sculpture, and examined it closely. It was the size of a jewelry box, with the words "Chastity" intricately carved on the front and "Legacy" carved on the back.

She could imagine how enraged and helpless her mother must have felt upon receiving this miniature sculpture. The helplessness came from having lost all the men in the family, leaving her to care for her orphaned grandchildren.

How could Melanie dare oppose Eleanor then?

Previously, Carissa had assumed the miniature sculpture had been discarded and thus hadn't visited Eleanor. Now that it had been found, it had to be returned with proper respect.

During Eleanor's birthday banquet, when Carissa mentioned that everyone could come see the miniature sculpture, she hadn't actually known it was still there. She had been confident that no one would be interested in seeing it. Even if people felt deep down that Eleanor was cruel, they wouldn't go out of their way to visit Northwatch Estate to view such a cursed object.

As the carriage arrived at Harmony Palace, Carissa instructed Lulu and the others to wait in the carriage. Then, she took the miniature chastity belt sculpture and leaped out.

The gatekeeper recognized her, and hurriedly tried to stop her. Carissa brushed him aside, and strode forward.

The palace guards weren't idle. Seeing someone break in, they quickly took their positions. After the incident at Eleanor's birthday banquet, the guards were well aware that Carissa was considered an enemy of the grand princess.

The head guard maintained a semblance of courtesy. Before taking any action, he said, "Lady Sinclair, Grand Princess Eleanor has instructed that you are not to set foot in Harmony Palace. Please leave immediately, or we will have to use force, and you may be injured."

Standing before the head guard, Carissa calmly replied, "Go ahead and do what you must."

With a nimble leap, she stepped onto their heads and sprang onto the rooftop. With a series of swift jumps, she made her way into the inner courtyard in no time.

The head guard was taken aback, but he quickly shouted, "Quick, to the inner courtyard! Protect the grand princess!"

But the guards were too late. Carissa had already burst into the courtyard, and was now standing before Eleanor.

Eleanor was enjoying her coffee and pastries. Every afternoon after her nap, she would savor a cup of bitter coffee paired with a sweet treat.

Just as she raised her cup, a figure flashed before her eyes and landed right in front of her, causing her cup to clatter to the floor.

When she saw that it was Carissa, her face turned red with anger. "Carissa Sinclair, how dare you? Have you no respect for me?!"

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Carissa looked up coldly, observing Eleanor's furious expression. Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed the serving maid rushing forward to shield Eleanor as they shouted for help. "Guards, come quickly!"

Carissa smiled. "Your Highness, there's no need for such a commotion. I'm merely here to return something."

Eleanor's eyes narrowed as she fixed her gaze on the miniature chastity belt sculpture in Carissa's hands. Her expression darkened immediately.

Had Melanie kept such an item?

Such an object should have been smashed to pieces in anger upon receipt. Eleanor had thought it was just an empty threat, but to her surprise, it had actually been kept.

The head guard, leading his men, was about to rush in when Eleanor snapped, "Stay back and guard the door."

Only a few trusted individuals knew about the miniature chastity belt sculpture. Although it could be discussed, it must never be seen by others-especially since these were not her most trusted guards, but rather lower-ranking guards who were less discreet. After a few drinks, they could easily spill secrets.

Her maids remained behind. As the door was shut, Eleanor's eyes narrowed in fury as she looked at Carissa. "It seems you have a death wish. Do you think marrying Rafael will protect you? Your intrusion into my residence is a grave disrespect. I could have your head for this."

Carissa met her gaze without fear, only disdain.

"Anyone can make threats, but while you can have my head, I can just as easily end your life. I have seen many wicked people in my life, but few are as vicious and narrow-minded as you."



"My father and brothers sacrificed their lives for the kingdom. As a royal princess, not only do you show them no respect, but you also sent such a cruel, cursed object to my family. You have bullied my mother and sisters-in-law. Even now, you continue to strike them when they're gone. You are less than human-not even fit to be called a beast! Even beasts wouldn't act so despicably!"

Eleanor was so enraged that her chest heaved. How dare you You are being utterly

"So what if I am? Carissa's voice was cold and filled with contempt.

"How do you deserve to be a grand princess? How do you deserve the people's support? A person as vicious as you will eventually face retribution for your own actions. I didn't just come here to return this cursed object. I also want to let you know that I'll be watching you like a hawk if you make even the slightest mistake, ' ensure you're held accountable. You practically drove a knife into my mother's heart. I'll make sure to repay you with each and every wound you inflicted"

With that, Carissa hurled the marble miniature chastity belt sculpture to the ground As the marble shattered and scattered, she sneered and turned around. Then, she kicked the closed door open and strode out

At the door, she turned back to glare at Eleanor

"Remember what I said today. I'm always ready for you. Whether it's a sneaky, underhanded, or vicious trick, I make sure it backfires on your"

Having said her piece, Carissa leaped into the air. She landed on the roof, and quickly reached the entrance of Eleanor's residence. She jumped into the carriage and commanded, "Let's go!" Eleanor clutched her chest, her face dark with fury. She stared at the fragments of marble scattered on the ground, barely able to make out the inscription of the miniature chastity belt sculpture.

Taking a deep breath, she exhaled slowly and ordered, "Prepare a carriage. I need to go to the palace to see the king."

Dealing with someone like Carissa didn't require any underhanded tactics. Eleanor would simply report her to Salvador, and Carissa would have nowhere to hide.

While she might not interfere with major court matters, she was still the king's aunt. Getting Salvador to punish Carissa was more than feasible.

Shaking with rage, Eleanor reflected on the only disgrace she had ever suffered- being rejected by Hector years ago.

Little did she know that after all these years, she would suffer another humiliation at her birthday banquet and now, again. If she tolerated this any longer, wouldn't it embolden Carissa to become even more audacious?

Chapter 218

Derek entered the king's study, and reported, "Your Majesty, Grand Princess Eleanor has come to the palace and requests to see you."

Salvador looked up from the mountain of reports before him. He tossed aside his pen, and rubbed his temples. "Did she say what it was about?"

"She didn't specify, but she appears to be quite angry," Derek replied cautiously.

Salvador sneered, "My aunt has always been domineering. During festivals, she visits the palace and treats me like a child. However, she seldom comes to see me alone. After all, what could be so significant that a great princess like her can't handle? Its likely related to the events at the birthday banquet."

He had heard about what happened at Eleanor's birthday banquet, though he was unsure of the full details. It had been several days since then-was she still aggrieved by that event?

"Show her in," Salvador said.

Derek hesitated before adding, "Grand Princess Eleanor is at Serenity Palace. She has also summoned Lady Helen."

"Summoned?" Salvador's smile was shallow, and lacking warmth. "Very well. As a younger member of the family, it is my duty to pay my respects to my aunt."

Derek bowed, then instructed, "Prepare the litter for the king."

The journey from the study to the inner palace was a bit of a distance, and it was too hot to walk.

After helping Salvador into the litter, Derek said softly, "I heard that at the birthday banquet, Lady Sinclair mentioned that Grand Princess Eleanor had sent a miniature chastity belt sculpture to Madam Sinclair. It sounds rather unsettling."

"I've heard about it," Salvador said, his usually composed expression darkening. Even the sun could not dispel his gloom. "If this is true, she, as a royal, has not only disgraced herself but also betrayed the favor my grandfather bestowed upon her."

Derek continued, "It might be due to old grievances."

"Old grievances?" Salvador pondered the rumors he had heard amidst his busy schedule. "Are you referring to her desire to marry Hector?"

Yes, it seems so. The matter was quite a scandal at the time. Grand Princess Eleanor has held a grudge ever since. Even though she has maintained a facade of harmony with her husband, there have been ongoing conflicts beneath the surface

Salvador glanced at Derek, who quickly lowered his head in alarm.

ve spoken out of turn," he apologized.

"You usually don't say much, but you seem particularly concerned about Hector's family," Salvador said calmly.

Derek remained uneasy. "Im only being considerate of the duke's family. Now that only Lady Sinclair is left, it's hard not to feel some sorrow. After all, the duke and his sons sacrificed their lives for the country." Salvador sighed, his gaze reflecting a hint of sorrow. "It is indeed a loss for our kingdom. I'm deeply pained whenever I think of it."

Derek sighed in sympathy, but dared not speak further.

Salvador's intentions were difficult to predict. He had a special affection for the Duke of Northwatch's family, but this affection was something that only he could give it couldn't be demanded.

Just like when Carissa entered the palace to request a divorce, and then came back to see him again. He had grown impatient, then. In fact, he felt impatient even before knowing why she was there.

If Hector's name wasn't occasionally mentioned, Salvador might weigh his options more carefully. That would lead him to choose the easier or more conciliatory path, which could unfairly affect Carissa. However, bringing up Hector too often was also not advisable. Derek understood the need to tread carefully and maintain the right balance.

Upon arriving at Serenity Palace, Salvador saw Victoria seated in the center, her brow slightly furrowed.

Eleanor sat on the left side, her demeanor haughty and cold.

Helen was on the right side, her expression somewhat tense and cautious.

When Salvador entered, he first greeted Victoria and Helen. Victoria gave a slight nod while Helen stood, offered a respectful bow, and then sat back down.

Then, Salvador turned to Eleanor. Noticing her stern expression, he smiled and teased, "Aunt Eleanor, you are usually one to only visit my Tiimitty Palace for important matters. What brings you here today? Trinity Palace was the man palace, and also served as Salvador's residence.

Salvador was a younger member of the family. Yet he had not greeted her properly, and Eleanor felt a twinge of displeasure. However, he was the king, and she couldn't criticize him harshly.

She maintained a cold expression, her anger palpable. "Your Majesty, I have come today to request that you issue an edict to punish someone."

"One Salvador looked at Derek as he arranged a chair next to Victoria, and then settled himself into it.

As the palace servants served chilled drinks, he took a sip before inquiring, "I'm curious. Who has such audacity to anger you to the point you would ask me to issue an edict to punish her?"

Eleanor gritted her teeth, and spat out the name with venom, "Carissa Sinclair!"

At the mention of this name, Helen lowered her head slightly, her gaze becoming evasive.

She had sent someone to follow Carissa to see if she had gone to Harmony Palace. However, before the report could come back, Eleanor arrived at Trinity Palace and even summoned her.

From Eleanor's demeanor, Helen could already guess that Carissa had indeed gone to Harmony Palace and must have said something outrageous but likely satisfying.

What exactly did she say? It must have been something to infuriate that old vixen! Helen had never seen Eleanor come to the palace to seek Salvador's intervention before.

Victoria frowned. "Carissa? What happened? Why does Salvador need to issue an edict to punish her?"

Eleanor's voice was full of fury as she replied, "She trespassed into my palace and insulted me!" Victoria had always been protective of Carissa, and disapproved of Eleanor. "If she trespassed into your palace, you should have had her driven out. As for the insults, what exactly did she say? Tell me more about it."

Eleanor's face darkened, and she could not reveal the exact words. Instead, she clutched her chest and said angrily, "She caused a commotion at my birthday banquet. I was lenient, considering her youth and ignorance, and chose not to hold it against her. But today, she came directly to my palace and verbally abused me. She even threatened to never let it go."

Verbally abused her?

Helen's eyes brightened. She was keen to hear more about what was said.

Victoria furrowed her brows deeper. "This seems rather unfounded. Why would she come to provoke you? You're the grand princess, and everyone knows your reputation. How could she dare to act so recklessly?"

Eleanor sensed a hint of sympathy for Carissa in Victoria's tone, and was further enraged.

"It's because she's relying on her military achievements and her upcoming marriage to Rafael. She thinks she's risen to a higher position, and thinks I'm insignificant! Regardless, I won't stand for it. I demand an explanation!" Eleanor spoke with terrible fury. Her eyes were dark and venomous, and even Helen felt a shiver of fear.

However, Salvador asked, "Is it an explanation from Carissa that you seek, Aunt Eleanor? If that's the case, wouldn't it be better to go directly to Northwatch Estate? Why come to my mother? How can she intervene in your personal grievances?"

"This is not a personal grievance. Carissa has insulted the royal family! This is a grave disrespect!" Eleanor's eyes were filled with rage.

Victoria's expression darkened. "How has she disrespected you? You haven't provided any details. What exactly did she say? Why did she trespass into your residence? What happened at your birthday banquet? And is there any truth to the matter of the miniature chastity belt sculpture?"

Eleanor's sharp, menacing gaze fixed on Helen, who hurriedly said, "I didn't speak a word about that incident." Seeing her own sister being scolded so fiercely, Victoria's irritation grew. She was also speechless to see her sister, who seemed to stir up trouble in the palace and disrespect everyone, being so fearful of Eleanor.

"She didn't need to say anything. The entire capital knows of this matter," Victoria said, her gaze stern as she focused on Eleanor. "And now, I'm asking you. After Hector and his sons sacrificed themselves on the Southern Frontier battlefield, did you send a miniature chastity belt sculpture to the Sinclair family? If not, then her disrespect is inexcusable. If you did, then you are unworthy of the honor and privilege of being a princess."

Eleanor sneered. "I almost forgot that you and Melanie were close. I thought you could get justice for me, but that was foolish of me!"

She turned to Salvador, and said sharply, "Your Majesty, Carissa is a fifth-ranked general appointed by the court. She is not yet royalty, yet she dared trespass into my residence and insult me. According to the law, what should be the punishment for such a crime?"

Before Salvador could respond, she added coldly, "As for the miniature chastity belt sculpture, whether it's true or not has no bearing on her trespassing and insulting me. Not to mention, it is a baseless fabrication she made up to slander me."

The miniature chastity belt sculpture was already shattered, and Eleanor denied its existence.

So, what could be done about it?

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Salvador raised a hand to calm the room, and said, "Aunt Eleanor, please try to calm down. It is indeed improper for Carissa to have trespassed and insulted you-it shows a lack of the grace expected from a noble lady.

"What exactly did she say to you? Are there any witnesses? If you provide details, I will take charge. As for the accusation of her fabricating the miniature chastity belt sculpture, I'll have the Royal Citadel officials investigate. If it turns out to be false and an attempt to slander you, I'll ensure she is punished accordingly."

"Witnesses? There are plenty! The entire staff of my palace can testify. She barged in without any restraint, and the guards couldn't stop her. As for her insults, the people in my palace also heard them," Eleanor replied in a firm tone.

She paused before continuing, "As for the sculpture, having it investigated by the Royal Citadel officials is unnecessary. Conducting a large-scale investigation would only stir up more commotion. The common people are easily swayed. They might believe any scandal that arises, even if it is later proven false. Clearing my name would be nearly impossible then."

Victoria grew impatient, and demanded, "What exactly did she say to insult you? Just tell us."

Eleanor scowled. "The specifics of her insults are not important. What matters is that she dared to insult me. I am the current Grand Princess. Even if she marries Rafael, she will still be a younger member of the family. Disrespecting an elder is a punishable offense. And since she isn't married to him yet, her actions are a direct affront to the royal family-a grave disrespect!"

Victoria waved her hand dismissively. "Stop with the talk of grave disrespect. You haven't specified what exactly she said. Are we to believe if she had called you stern- looking, that would be an insult? If that's the case, it's just stating the truth. I need to know exactly what she said to determine if it was truly an insult."

Eleanor's face turned a deep shade of anger. "Victoria, you're clearly biased in her favor."

Then, Eleanor said to Salvador, "Your Majesty, you must understand that even if it were a high-ranking minister insulting the royal family, it would warrant punishment." Salvador noted Eleanor's unwillingness to clarify the nature of Carissa's insults, and he made up his mind.

"You're right. That's why I suggested you provide evidence, Aunt Eleanor. At the very least, you should state clearly what Carissa said or have the witnesses from your residence come here. We can then summon Carissa for a direct confrontation. This way, the matter can be clarified, and we avoid punishing her based solely on your word, which could undermine the morale of our loyal subjects."

"You want me to confront her?" Eleanor suddenly stood up, her face furious. "Your Majesty, do you know what you're asking? Who do you think she is? How dare you suggest that I confront her directly?" She suddenly grasped the implication, her gaze snapping to Salvador. "Wait, are you suggesting you don't believe me? Do you think I'm fabricating accusations against her?"

"Aunt Eleanor, why would I think you're lying?" Salvador replied calmly. "However, every matter requires evidence. You claim she insulted you, but haven't provided any specifics. When I said to summon her to the palace for a confrontation, you say she's unworthy of it. So, on what grounds should I punish her?"

Eleanor responded harshly, "It's about her trespassing into Harmony Palace and insulting the grand princess-acts of grave disrespect!"

Salvador smiled slightly, and asked in a probing tone, "Aunt Eleanor, are you sure you want me to punish her on these grounds?"

"Of course..." Eleanor's voice faltered.

She suddenly realized there might be a problem. The scandal involving the miniature chastity belt sculpture had only recently emerged. If they decided to convict her of trespassing and insulting the grand princess, the public might connect it to the miniature chastity belt sculpture scandal.

Wouldn't that imply she had indeed sent the miniature sculpture? Such a scandal could incite public outrage and military discontent. How would the officials and soldiers under the command of the Sinclair family view it?

Understanding this, Eleanor finally saw why Carissa had dared to storm into Harmony Palace and break the miniature sculpture in front of her.



The miniature sculpture itself wouldn't have ever been displayed. Even if it were, Carissa wouldn't have claimed it was given by Eleanor.

But if the charge of trespassing and insulting the grand princess was confirmed, combined with the rampant speculation by storytellers, the public would believe the scandal to be true.

Thus, Carissa had broken the miniature chastity belt sculpture openly because she knew it would be impossible to hold her accountable. Even if she were punished, it would only be a few warnings at most since she just came back with military achievements.

This wouldn't be enough to deter anyone, and might even make Eleanor a joke.

In other words, Eleanor could only suffer this insult quietly. That was, unless she chose to risk her reputation and let the public believe that after the death of Hector and his sons, she had sent the miniature chastity belt sculpture to the Sinclair family.

In that case, she would be drowned in public scorn without even needing to leave her residence!