

War Song 561

Chapter 561

Throughout the journey, everyone was genuinely on edge.

Lawrence's high fever refused to subside. The military physician, who carried a portable stove and medicine packs, prepared and administered fever-reducing and decontaminating potions to little effect.

Sebastian's pills had minimal impact, though they were somewhat more effective than the decoctions.

Lawrence would occasionally regain consciousness. Each time, he would ask, "Is this our territory?"

Upon receiving confirmation, he would force a weak smile before slipping back into unconsciousness.

The military physician explained that persistent high fever could impair brain function, and memory loss was a normal consequence.

Eventually, Rafael decided to have Dylan lead his horse alongside the carriage, and he joined Lawrence inside.

Even when Lawrence was semi-conscious, Rafael would gently hold his hand and talk to him. He would describe the beauty of the Southern Frontier, update him on his family's situation, and reassure him that his wife was on her way and that they would soon be reunited. Every time Rafael spoke of these things, Lawrence's breathing would become more even. He would open his eyes slightly, his gaze gaining a hint of life, no longer as vacant and hollow.

He was truly clinging to life, fighting with every ounce of his strength.

When they were about twenty miles from Westglade's inn, they had no choice but to halt. Lawrence's breaths had become faint, with more exhalations than inhalations.

The military physician had exhausted all options, and he looked at Rafael with a desperate expression. "I can't do anything else. All the medicines we have are used up, and I've administered acupuncture treatment multiple times. I've done it twice today and can't do it again."

The Septimus Tetra reconnaissance team members stood together in heavy sorrow, their faces etched with grief. They didn't even dare lift the carriage curtain to look at Lawrence. Seeing him so thin and covered in injuries pained them deeply. Rafael glanced at Everett, seeking advice.

Everett sighed. "This is the last resort. But you also know that if you use your inner force to protect his heart, we have to reach Westglade's relay station within an hour. Lawrence will be beyond saving if we don't, or if Sebastian isn't there when we arrive." Rafael nodded, his eyes filled with sorrow. "I understand. Even if we make it to the relay station and Sebastian is there, the outcome will be the same if we don't try to extend Lawrence's life here."

"Also, we'll have to significantly increase our speed to cover twenty miles in an hour. Can he endure that? The risk is very high."

Everyone fell silent. The road might

have been more forgiving if it were smoother. However, the Southern Frontier had endured war. The paths were

uneven terrain. The carriage itself was a concern, as it might overturn at any moment.

ddled with potholes a Paths

Increasing speed posed even greater dangers. If the carriage were to overturn, it would be nearly impossible for Lawrence to survive. Riding a horse with him wasn't an option either—they would likely be thrown off within a few steps.

After some thought, Everett

suggested, "Why don't we do

this—After using your inner force to protect his heart, have two men lie down in the carriage first, then lay down some soft cushions.

Lawrence will rest on top of them. The two underneath will need to use their inner force to absorb the jolts from the ride as much as possible. Make him as comfortable as you can."

Everyone stepped forward.

"I'll lie underneath him."

Jacob glanced at them, noting their injuries and fatigue, and then called Dylan over.

"We'll do it."

"No, we..."

Jacob raised a hand to silence the debate. "No need to argue. Dylan and I will handle it. If any danger arises, our Lightfoot skills are superior. We can ensure his safety."

With Jacob's assurance, no one contested further. Indeed, Jacob and Dylan had impressive Lightfoot skills.

Rafael sat cross-legged, channeling his inner force slowly into Lawrence's body. Lawrence's condition was so frail that the energy had to be infused as gently as a thread of silk.

Rafael directed his inner force to

wrap around Lawrence's heart to enhance its function. As blood flowed from Lawrence's heart, the energy spread slowly through his limbs and body, like a delicate thread holding his broken form together.

Once the energy was transferred, Rafael addressed everyone. "Now, it's a gamble. We must reach the relay station in Westglade within an hour. But even if we get there, we can't be sure Sebastian will make it in time." "That's true. Sebastian will also be coming along with Lawrence's wife, so it might take him longer," Felix said sadly.

Rafael shook his head. "No, they should have departed in separate groups. Carissa will have made proper arrangements."

Chapter 562

Jacob and Dylan lay in the carriage, with a soft cushion spread over them. Everyone then placed Lawrence on top, and Dylan and Jacob each extended a hand to hold him steady. The gamble had begun they were on their way.

With three people now in the carriage, the military physician had to dismount and ride on his own horse to increase speed. If any issues arose, Jacob would immediately call for the military physician to come back up.

The carriage was stifling. Dylan and Jacob were covered with a soft cushion and laid next to Lawrence, and sweat quickly soaked their clothes. Before long, their hair was drenched in sweat, making it cling and itch unbearably. Occasionally, the driver would lift the curtain slightly to let in a bit of fresh air. However, he couldn't keep it open for too long, as someone with a fever shouldn't be exposed to the wind.

The whip cracked, and the horses sped up. On the uneven, bumpy road, the carriage swayed and jolted. However, thanks to their efforts in stabilizing Lawrence, the impact on him was somewhat mitigated. Jacob would periodically check Lawrence's pulse, finding some solace as long as it still beat.

-

Meanwhile, Travis led Sebastian and the others toward Westglade. With thirty miles still to go, they were caught in a heavy rainstorm.

Mira was worried about Sebastian's health, and she suggested taking a break to avoid the rain.

"We've pushed hard all the way; we're likely to reach the Westglade's relay station ahead of them. It's better to rest and wait out this rain before continuing."

However, Sebastian's gaze darkened. "We must continue immediately. It's better for us to wait than to make them wait for us."

Julian wiped away his tears. "Thank you, Sebastian. Our family will remember your kindness."

Sebastian donned a raincoat, even though his clothes were already soaked through. "No need for thanks. Let's go. We keep moving without stopping as long as the horses can run."

Lightning split the sky, followed by a deafening clap of thunder. Dark clouds loomed overhead as heavy rain poured down over the land. A few horses raced down the road, cutting through the fierce wind and driving rain.

-

But ten miles away, the weather was different. Perhaps by some stroke of mercy, Rafael's side remained dry and untouched by the storm.

They finally arrived at the relay station as night fell. Rafael dismounted, and hurried inside. As the station's staff emerged, he brandished his emblem and urgently inquired, "Has any physician arrived here before us?" The station master immediately knelt and replied, "No, Your Highness. None have arrived."

Rafael felt as if he had been doused in a bucket of ice water, his entire body freezing as if all the blood had congealed.

Their worst fear had come to pass.

Lawrence had held on until now, but Sebastian had not arrived.

Everyone who entered the room froze in place. Even though they had anticipated this possible outcome, the hope that came with racing against time had now shattered.

"Let's get him settled first. Move him inside," Rafael said, taking a deep breath and immediately giving orders.

Everyone hurried to help, carrying

Lawrence into a room at the inn. After settling him in, the military physician checked his pulse with a grave expression and forced a piece of rare herb into his mouth

Yet, Lawrence's condition was dire.

With darkness already settling in, it was unlikely that Sebastian and his group would travel through the night. The flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder hinted at an impending downpour.

With the night closing in and rain on the way, the chances of anyone arriving were extremely slim.

In other words, the soonest they could expect help would be tomorrow at the earliest.

As they spoke, a torrential downpour began, extinguishing the last flicker of hope in their hearts. They had exhausted every effort, and the thought of such an outcome was unbearable. They all stood around Lawrence's bed, watching as his breathing grew weaker. The inner force meant to protect his vital organs was no longer effective.

Lawrence could barely open his eyes, but his vision was blurred and unfocused. He could not clearly see any of them.

Yet, he knew his battle comrades

were there with him. He tried to muster a smile, but every movement required immense effort. He couldn't even manage to pull up the corners of his mouth.

Not due to pain-he had been numb to it since earlier.

No one spoke. Any attempt to do so was choked with grief. They crouched beside Lawrence, gently holding his hand and arm.

Thomas struggled to control his emotions, and he finally managed to whisper in his ear, "Law, we're all here. Hold on, okay? Your wife will be here soon." Lawrence had tried his best. Mentioning his wife now had no effect. His eyes slowly closed, and his breathing grew fainter.

The atmosphere was heavy with sorrow.

Suddenly, Rafael and Everett ran outside together.

They had heard the sound of horses' hooves.

Chapter 563

Sebastian was lifted from his horse and carried through the air, and he felt the world spin and darken momentarily.

When he regained his bearings, he found himself set down and standing by Lawrence's bedside.

He turned to see who had carried him, but was interrupted by Rafael's urgent voice. "Sebastian, take a look at him quickly."

All eyes around Sebastian were filled with hope and tears as the men turned to the renowned physician.

He was here-Sebastian had arrived!

Ten people knelt, their voices choked with emotion. "Please, Sebastian, save his life!"

Mira carried a medicine kit and entered. Sebastian took one glance at Lawrence's condition, and knew that stabilizing him was the immediate priority.

He took out the piece of a thousand-year-old Evergreen Root, and handed it to Rafael. "Crush this."

Rafael squeezed the hard root slice until it softened, and Sebastian swiftly placed it into Lawrence's mouth.

The thousand-year-old Evergreen Root was known for its remarkable ability to sustain life, but it could only keep Lawrence alive for the moment.

Mira passed the needle pouch. Sebastian removed Lawrence's clothes, and proceeded to map out a few vital pressure points.

Seeing this, the military physician interjected, "Sebastian, he's extremely weak. Are you sure he'll be able to handle the acupuncture treatment? Isn't it dangerous?"

"It is dangerous, yes, but without taking this risk, we have no chance to save him at all," Sebastian replied without looking back.

After applying the needles, he gently adjusted them. "The heat in his body has accumulated too much, and he's very weak. Cooling him down and expelling the heat is crucial, and the Evergreen Root will stabilize him..." Before he finished his sentence, he already extended a hand toward Mira. "Snowdrop Pill, for heart protection."

Mira handed a Snowdrop Pill to Sebastian. He frowned, looking at Rafael. "Crush it! Quickly!"

Rafael immediately crushed the pill. Mira used a small spoon to administer the powder into Lawrence's mouth.

Vanda, Julian, and Travis had been tying the horses outside. Once they were done, they also ran in. Julian quickly squeezed through, but was pushed back by Sebastian.

"Just call out to him. Let him know you're here, and then wait outside."

Julian's heart ached fiercely when he saw his brother in such a condition. He cried, "Lawrence, it's me, your eldest brother! I'm here. I'm right here!"

Julian's cries of anguish had a somewhat encouraging effect on Lawrence. He opened his eyes, and a glimmer of light appeared in them. But he was simply too exhausted, having persevered for so long that his willpower was entirely spent.

Now, Lawrence could only rely on Sebastian-on his exceptional medical skills, and the fine medicines the older man had prepared.

Sebastian had a notoriously short temper, especially when the patient's condition was critical. He ordered everyone except Mira and Vanda to step back a few paces, and not interfere with the treatment.

The four of them-Sebastian, his two apprentices, and the military physician-worked together to clean Lawrence's wounds. They scraped off the pus, cleaned the area, and applied medicine.

Lawrence's fingers were swollen to an alarming degree. With every squeeze, pus and blood oozed out, causing excruciating pain. Lawrence trembled with every touch, tears streaming down his face as he could no longer hold them back.

Those standing away were unable to bear the sight, and they turned away. The pain was too intense to watch.

Julian rested his elbows on the door, burying his face and weeping silently. He dared not look, unable to bear the sight. Every pang of pain Lawrence bore felt like a stab to his own heart.

Julian thought to himself that it was fortunate his sister-in-law had not come-seeing such a scene would likely have caused her to faint in distress.

Hearing the uncontrollable sobs, Sebastian barked out, "If you need to cry, go outside and do it! He's using every ounce of his strength to endure! What right do you have to be weak here?"

Everyone fell silent, and choked back their sobs. Only Rafael understood that Sebastian's anger signified the seriousness of the situation.

It took a full three hours to scrape out all the pus, clean the wounds, and apply medicine. After washing the wounds, they rinsed them again with medicinal liquid, followed by a coating of white powder.

Sebastian prescribed two remedies.

One was for further cleaning the

wounds, and the other was a

medicinal drink. Since they had been briefed about the situation in

advance, Mira and Vanda had brought the necessary herbat medicines. The post office staff

immediately started preparing the medicine as soon as the

prescriptions were issued.

Throughout the process, Mira and Vanda stayed by the fire and watched attentively. They placed the wound-cleaning solution in the side room to cool naturally, while the medicinal drink was carefully administered spoonful by spoonful to Lawrence.

Chapter 564

That night, everyone except Everett stayed awake.

They were exhausted, but Sebastian had emphasized the importance of the night. If Lawrence could make it through until morning, there would be at least a ten percent chance of survival. A ten percent chance it was so minuscule and so heart-wrenching.

Sebastian slept on the floor, his exhaustion evident from the grueling journey.

Mira and Vanda took turns keeping watch, each taking a two-hour shift.

Throughout the night, they administered medicine five times. Initially, Lawrence could only endure a couple of spoonfuls. But by the fifth dose, they could feed Lawrence nearly half a cup.

The night was a painful ordeal, each moment dragging on unbearably. Everyone awake repeatedly looked outside, hoping for the sun to rise.

In the early hours before dawn, Sebastian woke up. He checked Lawrence's pulse and blew some powder into the man's nose, claiming it was to reduce his fever.

Sebastian's dark circles were pronounced, his exhaustion evident. Julian mentioned that they had been traveling non-stop, catching only two hours or so of sleep during brief stops for changing horses. The younger ones fared better, but Sebastian was in his late fifties to sixties, and he struggled to cope.

After examining Lawrence's pulse and temperature, Sebastian informed everyone, "He has made it through the night, but don't be too optimistic. His fever has lowered, which indicates the treatment is working, but its overall effectiveness still needs to be confirmed. We won't be able to leave immediately. If anyone wants to return to the capital, you may do so now. If not, help out with some chores at the relay station to avoid crowding around here. You're making even me nervous."

Hearing this, everyone collectively breathed a sigh of relief.

They had passed one hurdle!

When morning came, Everett prepared to leave for Meadow Ridge. It was time to collect rent-a task that could not be delayed.

Rafael helped him with his horse, and Everett clapped him on the shoulder.

"Don't worry. I've done a little calculation. He'll be fine."

Rafael's eyes lit up. "Really? You can predict that? When did you learn how to do it?"

Everett took the reins, mounted his horse with a neutral expression, and replied coolly, "I picked it up in a dream after a short nap last night. But I'm sure of it."

Rafael smiled wryly, and called out to his departing figure, "Thank you, sir!"

After the rain, the main road was free of dust. All that could be heard was the sound of hooves gradually fading away, and Everett's silhouette soon vanished from sight. Rafael stood at the entrance of the relay station for a while before sitting down.

He thought about Carissa, and wondered how many more days she would take to arrive.

Everyone had moments of vulnerability, While Rafael had hoped Carissa would not see him like this. he desperately wished she were by his side now. Even just seeing her and holding her hand would have been enough to bring him some comfort.

He leaned against the door and fell asleep.

Inside, the others were scattered around, exhausted from the ordeal. The collective relief was palpable, and the fatigue was finally setting in.

Julian was finally allowed to sit by his brother's bed. He looked at the wounds and swelling on Lawrence's face and gently touched the latter's thin arm, tears streaming uncontrollably down his face.

But Sebastian forbade anyone from crying, so Julian could only keep wiping his tears away.

Lawrence was asleep, but no one could be sure whether he was in a coma or just sleeping. Since Sebastian said Lawrence was merely asleep, they chose to believe him.

Sebastian observed the disheveled

state of the room and its occupants, and shook his head with a wry smile. Despite the many rooms in the relay station that were complete with beds and blankets, everyone insisted on staying in this room to be close to Lawrence.

On the third day, Sebastian announced that Lawrence had made it through another hurdle. He had not had high fever for three consecutive days, and though there was still a low-grade fever, at least he had passed a critical point.

The news brought some cheer, but Sebastian quickly dampened the mood.

"Low-grade fever can still be dangerous."

His words effectively froze the smiles of those around him.

And Sebastian's concerns were not unfounded. The low-grade fever persisted for several more days. Lawrence remained in a semi-conscious state, rarely waking up.

It wasn't until the seventh day after Sebastian's arrival at the relay station that Carissa and her companions finally arrived.

The journey from the capital to Westglade usually took twelve days, which was considered fast, especially given that they had encountered several rainy days that made travel difficult.

Adding to the complications, Violet, who typically had a robust constitution, fell ill after getting soaked in the rain. She was too afraid to board the carriage, worried that she might pass her illness to Kayla. Kayla had been battling motion sickness throughout the trip, struggling through it with sheer willpower.

Chapter 565

Upon arriving at the inn, Kayla collapsed to her knees as soon as she stepped out of the carriage, her legs numb and weak from exhaustion. She had endured so much, both physically and emotionally. Carissa helped her up as Kayla said, "Hurry, take me to him."

The greatest torment of Kayla's journey had not been the motion sickness or the jostling of the carriage, but the constant worry about Lawrence's condition.

Carissa supported her inside, and Rafael approached them. The couple exchanged a glance, and Rafael nodded, a silent assurance that Lawrence was still alive.

Carissa breathed a sigh of relief. Then, she looked at him deeply concerned, noting how much weight he had lost.

She assisted Kayla up the stone steps and to the door of the room. Everyone stepped aside, allowing Kayla to see her husband lying on the bed.

She paused at the door, covering her mouth with her hands. Tears quickly blurred her vision, and they began falling in large, heavy drops.

Just when everyone expected her to break down in tears, Kayla wiped her tears away with determined strokes. She eventually managed a faint, trembling smile as she approached her husband.

She sat at the edge of the bed, first gazing at his face. After all the days of treatment, the swelling had mostly gone down, though bruises remained. The wounds at the corners of his mouth and eyes had largely healed.

His face was covered in bruises, making it hard to recognize him. The sun had darkened his skin, and the bright red medicinal cream smeared across his face stood out against his complexion. His lips were a deep purple, adding to the unsettling look. Seeing his broken appearance, Kayla felt a pang of sadness.

As if sensing her presence, Lawrence stirred from his deep slumber. He opened his eyes, which were initially unfocused. And then, as if something had suddenly grasped his attention, he fixed his gaze on Kayla.

He blinked in disbelief, and only when her hand touched his face did the reality of her presence sink in.

Kayla forced a smile, her trembling hands and lips somehow conveying vulnerability and strength. "My dear, I'm here."

Lawrence tried to reach for her hand, but he couldn't lift his arm. Kayla quickly took his hand gently, noticing the fingers coated with medicine. Each finger was dotted with small punctures, and the nails were missing. Her heart ached intensely at the sight.

Before the tears could fall, Kayla quickly raised her head, regaining her composure. When she looked at him again, her smile remained. "I'm here. I'm right here."

Lawrence had not spoken since arriving at the inn. Now, he moved his lips a few times before managing to utter two words, "I'm sorry..."

His eyes never left Kayla's face, as if they were pinned there. The dreams he had cherished over the years were now realized, and despite his muddled state, he could still feel the encouragement she brought

She had always been like this seemingly fragile, yet stronger than anyone.

"I will... get better!" he said, each word a struggle.

In the crowd, someone let out a sob.

Although everyone watching this scene was on the verge of tears, Sebastian had been adamant these past few days about not crying.

Who would dare to challenge Sebastian's order?

The men looked around for who had started crying, only to see Sebastian jogging out of the room.

It took them a moment to realize that the sob they had heard was from Sebastian himself.

With Sebastian breaking the silence, others couldn't hold back their tears any longer-they began to weep openly.

Carissa stood beside Kayla at the

bedside for a moment, feeling the weight of the situation in her chest. Overwhelmed and unable to hold back her tears, she turned and left the room.

Rafael followed her out, taking her hand. They stood in silence for a while before he said softly, "I've missed you so much these days, more than ever." Carissa wiped her tears with one hand and turned to throw herself into his embrace, her voice thick with emotion.

"I've imagined myself as Kayla so

many times during this journey. I've missed you so much. It's such a relief to know you brought him back. I can't believe he's actually O

Septimus!" she cried.

Rafael held her tightly, as if she were the most precious treasure. This was the first time she had openly expressed her feelings for him. Still, he felt the need to clarify. "Lawrence is Septimus, but there are ten more people inside who are also Septimus."

Carissa pulled back slightly, her eyes wide with surprise. "Wait, do you mean those men standing in the room earlier? I thought they were undercover soldiers escorting him!"

Chapter 566

Rafael shook his head, his voice still charged with excitement.

"No, Septimus isn't just one person, and it wasn't Thomas either. There are eleven of them... Wait, who's that?"

He noticed a horse circling nearby, with someone slumped over its back. The person's hair was cascading wildly, making it hard to tell who it was. Carissa gasped, and hurried over. "It's Vivi! She's been ill all the way, and I forgot about her!"

Carissa carefully helped Violet down from the horse. When Violet dismounted, she nearly fell to her knees like Kayla had, cursing as she went.

"You heartless wretch! I accompanied you the whole way, and you forgot about me! Once I'm better, I'll make you regret it."

Exhausted, Violet leaned on Carissa's shoulder.

Carissa apologized, "I'm sorry. Let's get you inside to rest. I was just rushing to get Kayla inside to see her husband."

Violet didn't have the energy to scold Carissa further, and asked urgently, "How is he? Is he alright? I wanted to see their reunion, but I can't go in with General Ziegler injured and me being ill."

"He's not in the best condition, but I believe Sebastian will treat him successfully. I'll help you inside to lie down. A good rest will make you feel better."

As she spoke, Carissa addressed Rafael, "Please call Vanda. We have a patient here."

Violet was settled in an empty room. She was so tired, she fell into a deep sleep before the medicine was even ready after Vanda examined her.

All the way here, Violet had been so frustrated. Her health had always been robust, and she rarely suffered from even minor ailments. It was embarrassing that she had failed at a critical moment. She felt like an embarrassment to the Inferno Guild! When the medicine was ready, Carissa woke Violet up to drink it. Violet sat up and gulped it down, then asked, "How's Lawrence?"

"I asked Sebastian, and there has been some improvement. After Kayla arrived, his progress has been quite noticeable."

Violet sighed with relief. "Good, I'm relieved. I'm going to continue sleeping."

"There's also good news. Do you want to hear it?" Carissa supported Violet's head, keeping it from falling back onto the pillow. "What else is there?" Violet asked, her eyes still heavy with sleep.

"Septimus isn't just Lawrence. group of eleven people-eleven people who were all rescued all here at the inn."

successfully and are back! Te

Violet's sleepy eyes widened in surprise. "Eleven people?"

"Yes. Septimus Tetra is the name of their team. The entire reconnaissance team consists of eleven people."

Violet sat up abruptly, her

excitement making her head spin

"G-Give me a mask. I want to see

them. need to pay my respects and show the admiration that ordinary people have for them..."

She had gotten up so suddenly that she felt dizzy. Grasping Carissa's hand, she hesitated. "Maybe I should rest a bit first. They aren't going anywhere." "Go ahead and rest!" Carissa said with a smile.

Violet closed her eyes, and exhaustion overwhelmed her like a tidal wave. She fell asleep almost immediately.

Kayla was truly strong. Since her arrival, she had taken on the task of cleaning Lawrence's wounds, applying medicine, and preparing herbal remedies. Mira had only shown her once, but Kayla remembered everything perfectly.

Moreover, she was meticulous and cautious in her care. Under her attentive treatment and encouragement, Lawrence's condition visibly improved.

Violet slept for over ten hours. After a quick wash and freshen-up, she went to see the heroes.

In her role as a member of the Spencer family, she greeted each of them with respect.

She remembered every name and took a special look at Thomas, as she had previously believed Septimus was Thomas.

Several of them looked at Carissa

and Violet with questions they were hesitant to ask. Given the

circumstances surrounding the

remarriage of Thomas' wife, the.net

were curious about whether their own wives had remarried.

Finally, it was Benson who asked, "Lady Carissa, may I inquire if my wife has remarried or is still living with my family?"

Carissa was stunned. She didn't know the answer herself.

But before she could speak, Violet answered, "Your wife hasn't remarried, and is still living with your family. Your brother's wife is also the same." Violet had learned some details about each family from Claire's investigation.

The two men immediately breathed a sigh of relief, their faces reflecting both guilt and longing.

Chapter 567

After a moment of silence, Tobias asked, "What about my wife?"

He had only been married for six months when he went off to war.

Violet also knew about Tobias' situation, and she said with a hint of regret, "She has remarried."

Tobias couldn't hide his disappointment, but asked, "Is she doing well?"

Violet shook her head. "I don't know. I didn't ask."

Tears glistened in Tobias' eyes. "It's my fault. I let her down."

Homer also inquired, "Ms. Spencer, do you know if my wife..."

Homer's father was a commander under Hector, and Homer had fought alongside him on the Southern Frontier. His father was killed in battle, and Homer was captured afterward.

Violet wasn't familiar with the Larkin family situation, as Claire hadn't investigated them.

However, Carissa knew more about the Larkin family and explained, "Your wife fell seriously ill two years ago. Sebastian treated her, but your mother was overwhelmed by the loss of both you and your father on the battlefield. She became distraught, and now barely recognizes anyone. Mira has been treating her. For specific details, you can ask Mira."

Homer covered his face with his hands, utterly distraught.

Felix didn't ask, as he had learned from his elder brother that his fiancée hadn't been left alone and waiting for him.

That brought him some comfort.

Scott and Wilfred were from Stonebrook District, and refrained from asking about their family. They planned to return to Stonebrook District after accompanying their party back to the capital.

Ivan wasn't married, and he asked about his own family. Violet assured him that everyone was well, and he felt relieved.

He looked at his cousin Thomas, who appeared dejected, and went over to offer comfort.

"Thomas, it's not a bad thing if your wife has remarried. After all, we've let our families down, and they're not to blame."

Violet also glanced at Thomas. Perhaps because she had initially thought Septimus was Thomas, she paid particular attention to him.

Noticing his tight lips and troubled

expression, she added, "Viola

married Barrett from the Warren family. Since she's already married, I believe you should wish her well. As

for whether she's happy, that's up to her own choices."

Jacob had said the same thing, and Violet was repeating it. With how they had phrased it, Thomas believed Viola might not be in a good situation.

Without a full understanding of the circumstances, he only felt he had wronged Viola, and his guilt was overwhelming.

Seeing his expression, Violet

continued, "You need not feel guilty. Less than a month after your sacrifice she left your family. Your family gave her your pension, and your mother also gave her two shops. If there is any debt you feel you owe her, your family's kindness has covered it."

Thomas bowed, and said solemnly, "Thank you for informing me, Ms. Spencer."

"Since ancient times, it has been difficult to satisfy both loyalty and devotion fully. Now, you only owe your parents and family," Violet replied. Thomas nodded slightly. "In this world, it's not easy for women to remarry. I hope they will be well."

Rafael approached them and asked, "Those who are uninjured should return to the capital first. Lawrence's condition should be stable by now." They all shook their heads. Although they were eager to return, they decided to go back together. No one would leave first.

The morning after Carissa left the capital, Helen went to the palace. She did not seek out Salvador directly, but went to find Victoria instead.

She handed over a note to Victoria and sighed. "Kiera's wedding is approaching, yet Carissa has gone far away. Who will clean up the mess she left behind?" While calling for the king, Victoria glared at Helen with irritation.

"Did you enter the palace just to enjoy yourself? Kiera is your daughter. If she's getting married, you should handle everything as her mother. If not you, who's supposed to handle it? You can't rely on Carissa for everything! Is Carissa just your servant?"

Helen replied, "You're being biased."

Victoria said, "Look at the wrinkles on your own face. Are you really jealous of your daughter-in-law? You should be careful not to overlook your own flaws."

Helen quickly touched the corners of her eyes. "What are you talking about? I don't have any wrinkles. I take great care of myself."

Victoria looked at her. Despite herself, she smiled indulgently. "Alright, go visit Lady Ruth. She has been ill for several days. The king will be coming soon, so don't stay here." Helen stood up and said, "Then I will take my leave."

Chapter 568

Helen had just left when Salvador arrived. After paying his respects to the queen dowager, Victoria handed him the carrier pigeon note.

"Carissa left the city last night and specifically instructed your aunt to deliver this note to the palace for you."

Salvador glanced at it and smiled. "If she left in the middle of the night, it must be something important. There's no need to inform me of every detail."

Victoria replied, "She's a woman carrying a deputy commander's emblem. That she left the capital in the middle of the night, it is only right that she informs you."

Salvador nodded, his face showing subtle concern. "I hope Lawrence will return safely."

It was a surprise to discover that Septimus was Lawrence. The Marquis of Elderglen's family was indeed a family of military nobility. Even though many of the younger generations had turned to civilian roles in recent years, there were always a few who carried on the family's legacy of honor and resilience.

Victoria watched him, wanting to say something, but ultimately keeping her words to herself. Some things, once spoken, could only deepen her son's suspicions.

Oliver's report arrived at the prime minister's office, stating that the Hell Monarch had disappeared after reaching Simonton City.

Jeremiah had reviewed the report, and pushed it aside. He knew very well that Rafael's purpose in Simonton City was not for negotiations, but to rescue Septimus.

Several days later, another report from Oliver arrived. Jeremiah read it with great excitement, and immediately went to request an audience with Salvador.

Salvador read the report and was overjoyed. "Eleven people-it was actually eleven people! And they have all safely returned to Simonton City!"

Jeremiah's voice choked with emotion. "Yes, thanks to Your Majesty's blessings, they all made it back to Simonton City."

Salvador was thrilled, and issued an order at once. "Bestow them rewards! Make sure they're given substantial rewards! Derek, summon the Minister of Protocol and his deputies to prepare a ceremony to welcome the heroes back. Also, the Civil Minister..." As Salvador was giving the orders, he suddenly paused and looked at the list. "Joshua and Benson-these two are Richard's sons."

Jeremiah replied, "Your Majesty, we should inform each family to share in the joy. The eleven men won't be returning to the capital immediately. Lawrence's injuries are severe, and may delay their return."

Salvador looked at a name on the report, and then at Jeremiah. "Thomas Farrell-Thomas' wife married Barrett, correct?"

Jeremiah suddenly remembered that fact, and said, "Your Majesty, Thomas' wife had already returned to her family long ago. She remarried as the third lady of the Prince family."

"I see." Salvador didn't say much more. That small matter did nothing to diminish his delight.

"Derek, send someone to inform each family individually. There's no need to visit the Farrell family-they should already know. As for the two from Stonebrook District, draft an edict for the governor of Stonebrook District. Have him inform their families first. After the rewards are bestowed upon their return to the capital, they can return home to reunite with their families."

"Yes, Your Majesty!" Derek accepted the order and withdrew.

Jeremiah took his leave, choosing not to show Oliver's initial report to Salvador. It might seem like a simple statement, but it was essentially a complaint. Even if presented to Salvador, it wouldn't significantly harm the Hell Monarch.

However, Jeremiah was worried that certain matters could be rehashed later.

Oliver didn't know about the rescue mission, as Rafael had kept it from him. He had done it likely due to the need for discretion and confidentiality.

But if Salvador took a moment to

consider, he might misinterpret Rafael's silence as a sign of distrust toward Oliver. It would then lead

Salvador to believe Rafael had gone

missing intentionally.

If the Hell Monarch distrusted Oliver, did that imply dissatisfaction with the king for taking command of the Hell Monarch Army?

So, it was best to keep this report away from Salvador to avoid unnecessary complications.

Given that the government ministries were not far from the prime minister's office, Jeremiah planned to inform Richard personally of the news.

When Richard saw Jeremiah arriving at the Ministry of Protocol, he hurriedly gathered his staff to greet him.

Jeremiah smiled and said, "Carry on with your work. I'm here to speak with Mr. Cooper about a private matter unrelated to official duties." Richard was somewhat puzzled. The prime minister was visiting him for personal matters?

Chapter 569

Although puzzled, Richard respectfully led Jeremiah to the inner hall and had coffee served.

Jeremiah was smiling brightly, which eased some of Richard's concerns.

"May I ask what private matter you've come to discuss with me?"

"Congratulations."

Jeremiah put down his cup, looking at him with a beaming smile. Although this matter needed to be revealed quickly, the joy was so great that he feared Richard might not be able to handle the shock of such news. Thus, he preferred to take it slow. "Congratulations?" Richard was even more puzzled. As the Minister of Protocol, there seemed to be no further promotion in sight. "May I ask what it is for?"

Jeremiah replied, "What was once lost has now been found."

Richard's confusion deepened. "Something lost has now been found? I haven't lost anything recently."

"His Majesty has decreed that the Ministry of Protocol should prepare to welcome the heroes of the Southern Frontier campaign. Among them are two heroes from your family."

Richard was struck by this revelation, his face changing dramatically. He took a deep breath, and said, "Has... Has the bones of my two sons been found?"

Jeremiah looked at him. "Bones? The two young men of the Cooper family are still alive. The Hell Monarch brought them back from Sandoria. After they were captured, they escaped, formed the Septimus Tetra reconnaissance team, and provided intelligence for our army during the Southern Frontier battle."

Richard clutched his chest, shaking his head in disbelief. Tears brimmed in his eyes as he choked out, "No, Mr. Murray, you can't joke about this. When they died on the battlefield, it felt like someone had gouged my heart out. It can't be..."

Jeremiah stood up, patted his shoulder, and gave him a thumbs-up. "They did well. I am proud of them and the entire Septimus Tetra reconnaissance team."

Tears streamed down Richard's face as he trembled. "Is it truly so? Are you speaking the truth?"

Seeing Richard's reaction, Jeremiah sighed softly. It's indeed true. His Majesty has issued an edict for the

ovenet

Ministry of Protocol to prepare for their reception. However, they won't be returning to the capital immediately. The Marquis of Elderglen's second son is severely injured, and will need to be treated

before he can come back."

Richard hid his face behind his arms. His shoulders shook, though he made no sound. As the Minister of Protocol, he knew he must maintain composure in front of the prime minister and within the office. However, he couldn't control the tears that flowed like a river.

The pain of losing his sons had been

buried deep in his heart for years,

and had never been allowed to surface. He had buried it under mountain of official duties. His sons had sacrificed their lives in the fight to reclaim the Southern Frontier, and as a father, he was proud of them.

Yet, for a parent, it was still an overwhelming, bleeding sorrow to lose their children.

"I will step out for a moment and ensure you're not disturbed for now," Jeremiah said, his own eyes misty.

It would be good to let Richard have some time to himself to express his emotions.

Once Jeremiah left, Richard

collapsed to the floor and wept silently. It had been many years since he allowed himself such an outpouring of grief. Even during his sons' Sacrifice, he had only dared to shed tears in private. As the head of the family, he was supposed to be proud of their sacrifice and not

display his sorrow publicly.

At the Farrell family residence, Derek personally delivered the news. Thomas' mother, Alice, was so overcome with emotion that she fainted. After she was revived, she wept in Opal's embrace.

"He's alive! He's still alive! Oh, he has such a cold heart. He didn't send any word home..."

Opal also cried, but with Derek still present, she restrained her emotions and quickly comforted the other woman.

"He couldn't send word home. Over there, it was a matter of life and death. It was already very difficult to send news to the military."

Once Alice had calmed down, she stood and bowed to Derek. "Please forgive my loss of composure."

Derek responded kindly, "It's only natural to feel this way. There's no need for such formality."

Derek took his leave. As he exited the Farrell family's residence, he heard Alice's choked voice, "What will we do? His wife has remarried."

Derek sighed softly. The world was full of changes. It was heartening to see fallen soldiers return, yet it was a pity that the seven from the Sinclair family would never come back.

Chapter 570

At this time, the Earl of Silverstone's family received a letter from Oliver.

The letter was addressed to Zoey, his wife. After reading it, she took the letter to find Evelyn, Caspian, and his wife.

Caspian Prince was Oliver's younger brother, and served as a junior official in the Ministry of Infrastructure. It was a comfortable position, but he had remained in this role for four years without any promotion.

His wife, Luna, was the daughter of a merchant, so she had married up. Viola never liked her much, and often complained about how Luna seemed to be all about money.

Evelyn's face changed upon reading the letter. "My son-in-law is still alive? And has achieved merit? That's..."

Zoey gently reminded her, "Mother, you can't call him your son-in-law anymore."

Evelyn sighed. "It was a slip of the tongue. Who would have expected him to still be alive?"

Caspian also read the letter, and said, "Mom, Zoey, this is good news. We should be happy. After all, the fact that he's alive is more important than anything else."

"That's right," Zoey said with a look of sympathy. "When Thomas died, our in-law... Oh, even I have often addressed her wrongly. Alice had fainted several times from the grief of losing her son."

She now has to take medicine regularly, and her health has declined significantly. With Thomas' return, her joy might just restore her health."

Evelyn recalled how she had wept alongside Alice upon hearing of Thomas' death. Thomas was a man of steadfast integrity. Though Evelyn didn't wish to compare him to anyone else, he was indeed the kind of son-in-law every mother-in-law would cherish. Now that Evelyn knew he was still alive, it was truly a reason to rejoice.

Zoey said, "I came to tell you about this because I know Viola will learn about it sooner or later. It might be better to have her return home soon to discuss this matter."

Zoey knew that her younger sister-in-law was not faring well. One of the maids who had accompanied her was someone who used to serve Zoey, so Zoey was well aware of the internal affairs of the Warren family. After a recent quarrel, Viola and Barrett's relationship had become strained, and their life together was far from satisfactory.

Zoey feared that upon learning of Thomas' survival, Viola might seek a divorce from Barrett and attempt to rekindle her relationship with Thomas.

Zoey wouldn't allow this matter to happen.

It wasn't for any other reason, but because Zoey felt that Viola was unworthy and didn't deserve Thomas. Thus, Viola had to be called back to the residence and reminded of this fact to prevent any unwarranted thoughts from arising.

"There's another issue," Zoey

continued. "Now that Thomas has

returned, we're unsure whether the court will reclaim his war pension. Recently, Viola used part of it to

buy

wedding gifts for her younger sister-in-law. Although the gifts were later returned, she will inevitably need to use the money if she

remains in the Warren family for a

long time.

"I was thinking that perhaps we should withdraw ten thousand silver coins from our family's public funds to return to the Farrell family. As for the two shops, we could also convert their value into silver coins and return that to them. What do you and Caspian think?"

"I agree with your suggestion. In

fact, when Viola remarried, I felt we

should have returned the pension and the two shops. I even mentioned this to you before, Zoey. At that time, Viola cried and swore she wouldn't remarry, intending to stay loyal to Thomas for life. The Farrell family was concerned she might suffer in the future, which is why they gave her the pension and the two shops. But now that she has remarried, it is time to return what should be returned," Caspian said.

Zoey nodded. "I remember you mentioning it, Caspian. What do you think, Mother?"

Evelyn pondered for a moment. "Returning the money from our family's public funds is

unreasonable. If we are to return

anything, it should come from our

own resources. I agree that we

should return the ten thousand silver coins and the value of the two shops. In fact, Viola has benefited from this arrangement.

"Those shops have earned rent for many years. If she had chosen to stay unmarried and Thomas returned, it wouldn't matter whether the money or shops were returned, even if they didn't reunite as a married couple.

"But now, she has remarried, and Thomas has returned. I'm sure Thomas will marry again in the future, and we can't allow his new wife to know his pension was spent frivolously. It wouldn't be right."

Zoey turned to Luna. "Luna, what do you think? Do you agree with what Mother and I have decided?"

Luna replied, "Zoey, Viola has always been unwilling to listen to me. You and Mother can decide what to do."

Luna was aware of what had happened previously. If that incident hadn't happened, it wouldn't matter if Thomas' pension and the two shops from the Farrell family were returned to them or not, as Viola had indeed suffered in the years of Thomas' "death". However, because of what had happened, Viola shouldn't have taken Thomas' pension and the two shops in the first place.

"Since that's settled, we should send someone to have Viola return home sometime," Zoey said.