

## War Song 57

### Chapter 57

At this moment, Carissa felt utterly exhausted. Her legs trembled as she sat down on the mat. She was too tired to worry about proper etiquette. It had been a long time since she had been so rushed, and she was struggling to keep up.

Rafael saw her state, and smiled. "You're worn out, aren't you? How many days did it take you?"

"Five days," Carissa said, catching her breath. "I'm fine, but my horse is really exhausted."

"Impressive!" Rafael said with admiration. Then, he called out loudly, "Feed the horses and prepare the meals!"

A booming voice responded from outside. "Yes, sir!"

Carissa quickly asked, "Aren't you going to devise a strategy? Or send someone to urgently notify the capital and request more reinforcements?"

Rafael leaned against the desk, tapping his long fingers on his leg as he narrowed his eyes.

"We will recruit soldiers. Reinforcements won't arrive quickly. To handle the first battle, we need to first recruit soldiers and gather provisions."

He looked at Carissa with clear appreciation in his eyes. "You made the right choice by coming to the Southern Frontier yourself. It gives me enough time to come up with a plan. I'll have someone show you where you can rest. Stay for two days and regain your strength before you return to the capital."

Carissa shook her head. "I'm not going back. My father and brothers died on the Southern Frontier battlefield. I've already sent word to my friends, asking them to come here and fight."

Rafael's eyes darkened, and his demeanor grew stern,

"This is nonsense. Going to the battlefield isn't as simple as you think. Several high-ranking officers and generals have already died.

"If something happened to you, how would I explain it to your mother? Besides, I heard you married Barrett... Wait, that's right. You're married to Barrett. With the victory at Victory Pass, he should have already returned to the capital. Why hasn't he reported to the king? He's a hero, and the king would believe him. Even if the king didn't, he should have brought the news, not you." Rafael's words left Carissa momentarily stunned.

It was no surprise that Rafael was keeping track of the Victory Pass battle. With the ongoing conflict, updates between the two sides were essential.

After the death of her father and brothers, Rafael had taken over Hector's position as commander. He had been fighting the Sandoria people at the Southern Frontier for the past three years.

While Rafael might be aware of significant national events, it was surprising that he also knew about her marriage to Barrett. After all, that was considered insignificant information.

Still, it was strange. Though Rafael knew she was married to Barrett, he had no clue that her entire family had been slaughtered.

Carissa didn't answer immediately. She lowered her gaze, then looked up and asked, "Your Highness, shouldn't you be asking why Westhaven allied with Sandoria? Westhaven had just signed a non-

aggression peace treaty with Starhaven, but they immediately broke it. They disguised themselves as Sandorian soldiers, and joined forces with Sandorla to attack us at the Southern Frontier." Carissa felt that Rafael had accepted her words too quickly, without asking any more questions. It seemed a bit hasty and rash.

However, Rafael had reclaimed over twenty cities from the fierce Sandorian people. He wasn't known for being reckless.

Why did he believe her so easily, then?

Even if he trusted her senior, this information was coming from Carissa, not directly from Winona.

Wasn't he worried it might be false news? After all, even the king had doubts.

Rafael scratched his tangled beard, trying to smooth it out. But the knots were stubborn, and he could only get his fingers through it, not straighten it.

His brows were furrowed, and his eyes gleamed with a sharp intensity.

"There's something wrong with the Victory Pass battle I sent someone to investigate as soon as I heard about the victory, but we haven't received a report yet. Do you know what the issue is?"

Carissa didn't answer, but countered with another question, "Why do you suspect there's a problem with the Victory Pass victory, Your Highness?"

Rafael explained methodically. "In the Victory Pass battle, your seventh uncle died, your third uncle lost an arm, and General Sullivan was severely injured.

"The main commander on the battlefield was the reinforcements' leader, Barrett Warren, who had little combat experience. Following General Sullivan's orders, he led troops into Fawnrune City to burn supplies and spread news of an imminent victory at the Southern Frontier.

"This was meant to be a delaying tactic. It was supposed to give General Sullivan time to recover and adjust strategies. But somehow, the tactic forced Westhaven to surrender. I don't believe it."