

War Song 58

Chapter 58

Rafael's analysis earned Carissa's deep respect. Only a seasoned battlefield veteran would understand how absurd it was for an enemy to surrender just because their supplies were burned, especially in a long-standing stalemate like this one.

The conflict between the two kingdoms had led to countless battles over the years, both small and large, with decades of strife.

Moreover, Westhaven wasn't without its own supplies. Even if their provisions were burned, they could simply resupply and wouldn't need to surrender. At worst, they would retreat and have a truce. By doing so, the Starhaven army wouldn't invade them.

"So, what's the real issue?" Rafael asked.

Knowing that Rafael's investigation would eventually reveal the truth, Carissa decided to be honest. Aurora Yates killed prisoners and massacred civilians

Rafael's expression changed abruptly. "Does the king know about this?"

"I don't know if the king is aware, but...the Victory Pass reports, including the final victory report, didn't mention

1. it. Of course, what I saw was only a copy from the Ministry of Defense, not the original reports submitted to the king."

"You infiltrated the Ministry of Defense? Rafael looked at her sharply. "Do you know that spying on military documents is a capital offense? You're reckless! You could have asked your husband, Barrett. He was the commander of the reinforcements."

Rafael stood up, his tall figure casting a shadow like a looming beast over the tent. He seemed genuinely angry as he leaned in and spoke in a low, furious voice.

"Even if you did infiltrate the Ministry of Defense, you shouldn't have revealed it. You shouldn't tell anyone, even me. Have you learned nothing from your time at the Pathfinders Guild about the dangers of trust?"

His eyes flashed with severity. "This matter must not be mentioned to anyone, not even your mother."

Carissa lowered her gaze, and nodded slightly.

"Does Barrett know?" Rafael asked again. "He doesn't."

Rafael frowned. "What's going on? You didn't ask him, but went to infiltrate the ministry instead. Did the -orders to kill prisoners and massacre civilians come from Aurora, or was it Barrett's?" Carissa shook her head. "I don't know."

"Aurora Yates..." Rafael said thoughtfully. "I remember she's the daughter of Tristan Yates, a former subordinate of your father. Tristan lost a leg, and she joined the military, showing great ruthlessness and earning a commendation for suppressing bandits. How could she have the authority to issue such orders?"

As the only female general in the court, Rafael was well aware of Aurora.

Carissa remained silent. Under normal circumstances, Aurora would be unable to act alone unless she and Barrett had a prearranged plan. That was also provided Barrett trusted her completely, and allowed her to lead troops independently.

Carissa's eyes flashed with a mix of complicated emotions. She didn't want to discuss unrelated matters

at such a critical time.

"Regardless, the fact remains that there were executions of prisoners and massacres of civilians at Victory Pass. Three hundred thousand Westhaven soldiers are on their way now, and are expected to reach Simonton in about twenty-five days before heading straight for Ilyrian," she said.

Rafael stared at her for a while, before saying slowly, "Have you considered that even if Aurora committed these atrocities, Westhaven wouldn't need to surrender unless she was holding a high-ranking Westhaven figure hostage, which forced Westhaven's hand?"

"If they signed a treaty and this important hostage was released back to them, Westhaven might have suffered a great loss. Even so, they could always seek revenge later. Yet, they chose to ally with Sandoria. Carissa followed his line of thought, her expression changing. "Could the important figure be tortured while in Aurora's hands, and died after being released?"

"Good insight. You're as exceptional as your father."

Though Rafael's words were of praise, his tone was tinged with irritation.

"But breaking into the Ministry of Defense was reckless. Have you thought about the consequences? You even confessed your actions before me. Weren't you afraid of the risk?"

"You wouldn't want me dead, Your Highness. Even if the king knew, he wouldn't execute me. At most face, I'd face imprisonment or exile," Carissa replied softly.

After all, she was the last member of the Duke of Northwa