

## War Song 601

### Chapter 601

Viola returned to her old room, the one she occupied before her marriage. Unbeknownst to her, Zoey had gone to the Farrell family. Viola assumed Evelyn was still discussing ways to support her with Zoey and Luna.

No matter how angry Evelyn might be, Viola knew her mother couldn't bear to see her struggling in the Warren family. That place was suffocating. After all, Julia and Yvonne had both met their end there.

Moreover, Evelyn had always been particularly fond of Thomas. If Viola could mend things with him, Evelyn would eventually be pleased after her initial anger faded.

After a while, she asked someone about Evelyn's condition and learned that it wasn't too serious. Deciding to return to Valor Estate first to avoid a scolding from her sister-in-law, she felt a wave of annoyance wash over her. She couldn't stand Zoey's lecturing face. What kind of authority did Zoey hold? It was only because of Viola's brother Oliver's title that Zoey could act like the mistress of an earl's household.

Besides, if Viola was going to stay at Silverstone Estate, she needed a plausible excuse. Claiming she was unwell would do the trick-she could say the family physician understood her constitution, and knew how to treat her. Staying at home for a month to recuperate wouldn't raise any suspicions from the Warren family.

To be safe, she took Poppy to Arcane Sanctum, the largest medical establishment in the capital, to have the physician check the maid's health and prescribe some tonics. When she returned, she could simply say she was feeling unwell and needed to take the medicine. Of course, Poppy would consume the medicines on her behalf. The credibility of the medicines from Arcane Sanctum was unquestionable, as there were more than twenty physicians practicing there.

She took Poppy inside to have her checked and get some medicine. Although Poppy was perfectly healthy, the autumn heat in August was intense, and the lingering summer heat had built up in her body. After examining Poppy, the physician prescribed a few herbal teas to clear out the heat and cool her down.

As Viola waited for the attendant to prepare the medicines, she noticed Carissa and Violet entering Arcane Sanctum. A wave of irritation washed over her. The capital was truly small, and she encountered people she wished to avoid in the most inconvenient places. As Viola turned her head

away, she caught a glimpse of a familiar figure out of the corner of her eye. Suddenly, her blood rushed to her head, and a buzzing filled her ears. The memories she desperately tried to bury began to resurface, sending tremors through her entire body.

It was Silas Lewis. It was really him!

But why was Carissa with Silas at Arcane Sanctum?

A wave of anxiety washed over Viola, but she quickly reassured herself that it was impossible. There was no way Silas could disclose what had happened in the past. Doing so would only harm himself. Violet spotted Viola, too. She leaned in and whispered to Carissa, "Viola's also here."

Carissa followed her gaze and saw Viola anxiously turning her head away, clearly unwilling to acknowledge them. She then turned to Silas and said, "Mr. Lewis, go ahead."

Silas didn't respond right away. His gaze remained fixed on Viola, and his expression darkened noticeably.

Carissa's heart raced with suspicion. She called out again, "Mr. Lewis?"

Finally snapping back to reality, Silas replied, "Right... Let's go to the sanctum."

He didn't glance at Viola again, but his footsteps quickened, betraying his unease. Carissa fell a step behind, turning sharply to steal a glance at Viola, who was staring at them with an ashen face. Carissa exchanged a knowing look with Violet. Something was definitely off.

Silas was Ivan's older relative, Thomas' cousin, and Alice's nephew. He and Viola should know each other. Now that Viola had remarried, the Farrell family's attitude towards her hadn't changed much.

So why did Silas look so grim? Viola seemed just as unsettled.

Did these two have a history?

As Silas led them toward the sanctum, they entered a special room designated for Sebastian. It housed the medicines he had developed, as well as some rare herbs like the precious

thousand-year Evergreen Root. After a portion of it was used to save Lawrence, the balance of the root

was now kept safely in the sanctum.

Sebastian was out on rounds, but since Silas managed the procurement for Arcane Sanctum, he had access to the sanctum. Sebastian placed great importance on him. Silas began slicing the Evergreen Root.

Carissa said, "Slice a few more pieces, then see if there are any tonics for strengthening the body for women after childbirth. And don't forget to prepare some labor-inducing medicine as well."

Silas replied, "I can bring the

labor-inducing medicine when it's

time. Let's prepare these Evergreen

Root slices first. Some medicines can enhance physical strength which will be useful during delivery."

His voice carried a faint tremor, as if he had been rattled by something unexpected.

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Violet smiled, and asked, "Are you sure it's okay to take so much? Won't Sebastian be upset?"

Silas forced a chuckle. "Not at all. Lady Carissa came personally to collect it, so he won't mind. Anything she takes is fine. He instructed this before."

"I'm jealous. Sebastian's incredibly generous with Cari," Violet remarked.

Silas nodded. "He treats Lady Carissa like his own daughter."

"That much is true. When we were at the Southern Frontier, Carissa came loaded with medicine, claiming it was all from Sebastian." Violet hooked her arm through Carissa's, and added, "By the way, I saw Viola outside earlier. Mr. Lewis, you know her, right? She used to be your cousin's wife."

At her words, Silas' knife slipped, and he accidentally cut his finger. Blood instantly welled up from the wound.

"Why were you so careless? Hurry and wrap that up!" Violet urged.

Silas hastily pulled a roll of gauze from the drawer and wrapped it around his finger, his tone noticeably strained. "It's nothing. Just a small injury. Are these slices enough, Lady Carissa, Ms. Spencer?"

"Yes, of course," Carissa replied, taking a piece of paper to wrap up the Evergreen Root. "This should do. I think there are about seven or eight slices. Let's grab some other things-I don't know much about herbal medicine, so just choose what you think I need, Mr. Lewis."

Silas fumbled for two vials of medicine. But as he handed one over, he exclaimed, "Wait! Sorry, that's the wrong one!"

He quickly set one vial back, and retrieved another matte glass bottle before presenting it to her.

"This is the right one. It's a blood-nourishing tonic to help replenish energy. The other one is for palpitations. If she can't sleep well at night, just take one or two. It's fine either way. The most important thing before delivery is to build up her energy and strength." As Silas spoke, he avoided making eye contact with Carissa. He simply hurriedly rattled off the details. Carissa accepted the bottle, and resolved to confirm the instructions with Ivy later.

As she and Violet stepped outside, Viola had already vanished. Violet approached the sanctum attendant, and asked, "What was the illness of the lady who was just standing here?" Violet had visited Arcane Sanctum several times, so she recognized the attendants. Since the lady Violet mentioned hadn't come for treatment herself, the attendant spoke freely. "Her maid was getting some herbal tea. It was to dispel the heat in her body. The lady was just accompanying her."

"Oh, I see." Violet thanked him, and rejoined Carissa as they left the building.

They climbed into a carriage, which was understated in its design-more a reflection of modesty than royal opulence.

Their destination was Gracehold

Estate, and they were on their way to

visit Leona. With the days ticking

down, Leona was nearing her

delivery, so Carissa had come personally to request a few slices of thousand-year Evergreen Root to aid

her during childbirth.

"Don't you think there's something... I don't know, hard to explain, between Viola and Silas?" Violet asked as they traveled. "It's like they're hiding some big secret."

Carissa narrowed her eyes, recalling

Zoey's attitude toward Viola. "I

noticed that too. There's definitely something going on, but it's not our concern. It seems more like an internal feud or perhaps some inappropriate relationship.

"Inappropriate relationship?" Violet frowned. "Well, I won't bother asking Claire to look into it then. We don't need to get tangled in something like that."

"That's right." Carissa didn't want to dwell on it. Before long, the carriage arrived at the entrance of Gracehold Estate.

Carissa rarely visited, but she knew Leona's situation well. Alana and Leah kept her updated.

With Leona's pregnancy

progressing, she had put aside her thoughts of getting a divorce. She would try to endure until the baby was born. Afterward, she planned to use her health as an excuse to move out with the child for some peace and quiet-far away from Samuel and his family.

Aside from Samuel and Dorothy, everyone else at Gracehold Estate was not difficult to deal with. They simply didn't genuinely care for Leona. Disheartened by their indifference, Leona figured it would be safer to leave. She had shared this plan with Alana, who had then informed Carissa about it.

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When Carissa arrived at Gracehold Estate, the servants came out to greet her. After all, they were mindful of her status as a princess consort.

That was precisely the kind of attention Carissa found bothersome, which was why she rarely visited. She waited for the formalities to conclude before seeking out Leona.

When Leona saw her cousin approaching, her face lit up with joy. She waddled out with her prominent belly to meet Carissa.

Carissa naturally took Leona's hand, gently placing the other on the latter's belly. "How are you feeling with such a big bump? Is it uncomfortable?"

"Not too bad, just a bit restless at night," Leona replied with a smile. "The hardest days are behind me. Back when I had to stay in bed to keep the baby safe, I ended up feeling so nauseous from lying down all the time." "Once the baby arrives, it'll all be worth it," Carissa reassured her.

Once inside, she found Alana and Leah in the inner room-one sewing clothes, the other working on a net. They looked up and greeted her as she entered.

"You're here, Carissa."

"Hello, Alana, Leah." Carissa returned the greeting with a respectful nod.

There was another woman in the room who was embroidering. Upon hearing that the Hell Monarch's princess consort had arrived, the woman quickly stood and bowed.

"Greetings, Lady Carissa."

Carissa recognized her as Nora Wagner, the concubine from the merchant family who had entered the family with Ruby. She appeared kind and demure.

Carissa nodded slightly. "No need for such formalities."

"She often comes to keep me company," Leona said, looking noticeably more cheerful. "She shares many amusing stories with me. Her dad used to take her and her siblings with him on his business trips, so she's quite knowledgeable." Nora smiled shyly. "Your Grace, I wouldn't say it's knowledge. It's just some experiences."

Seeing the rapport between them and Leona's newfound cheer made Carissa relieved. She handed over the Evergreen Root slices and medicine to Alana, mentioning they would be useful during the delivery. Alana promptly locked them away in the cabinet. Samuel, who had been cursing Carissa daily, fell silent upon learning she had arrived. He hid in his study, not daring to emerge, which allowed the cousins to chat uninterrupted.

At the Farrell family's residence, Zoey's arrival surprised the Farrell family. The last time Zoey visited, she returned the death pension and money for the shops, so they didn't expect her to come back.

After Zoey chatted with everyone for a while, Thomas returned home. When he heard that Zoey was there, he stepped in to greet her.

Zoey looked at him and skipped the pleasantries. "I need to speak with you privately for a moment. Is that alright?"

The others exchanged surprised glances, but Thomas seemed to grasp the situation. Perhaps it was about what Viola had mentioned the other day. Given that he was already investigating the assassination attempt at Valor Estate, he nodded. "Sure, let's go to my study."

Alice felt a bit uneasy, and asked, "Is something wrong?"

Zoey smiled reassuringly. "No, not at

all. Thomas just returned from the Southern Frontier, and I wanted ask about... the situation there not something I can inquire about with anyone else, so I thought it best

It's

to ask him directly."

Her deliberate hesitation was intended to make them think she was curious about whether Oliver had any women on the side-after all, a wife at home would naturally worry about such things.

Alice picked up on this, and smiled knowingly. "Alright, you two go ahead."

Thomas' study was furnished in a simple manner. There was a large black desk, matching black chairs, and two towering bookshelves filled with books. A few swords hung on the walls, and a long axe stood in the corner to the left.

There were four chairs in front of the desk, two on each side. Thomas gestured for Zoey to sit down while he took a seat opposite her.

Zoey got straight to the point. "Viola has contacted you, hasn't she?"

Thomas was an upright person, and

he had no intention of hiding anything. "Yes, she mentioned the assassination attempt at Valor Estate. She also told me that Julia and Yvonne are both dead. I've been investigating and have uncovered some details. The assassin killed several people in Valor Estate, but their real target was Aurora."

Zoey didn't pursue that line of conversation. Instead, she fixed her gaze on him and asked, "Did she tell you she plans to divorce Barrett and rekindle things with you?"



"She did mention that." Thomas acknowledged with a nod.

"If she does divorce him, are you really going to marry her?"

Thomas fell silent for a moment, then looked up. His eyes were filled with a sense of resignation.

"I had thought that I was the one at

fault first. If she can't make it work with Barrett and decides to come back to me, then I should take

responsibility. But there are som

things I've learned that make it complicated. I believe you know this as well. You're here today to tell me, aren't you?"

Zoey was taken aback. "You know? What exactly do you know?"

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Thomas met Zoey's gaze, feeling a knot in his throat. It was a matter of a man's dignity, and he wasn't sure how to articulate his thoughts.

"Do you know everything?" Zoey asked, studying his expression.

"I can't say I know everything." He sighed deeply before asking outright, "After I left for the Southern Frontier, did she develop feelings for my cousin? Did they exchange tokens of affection?"

"Tokens of affection?" Zoey wasn't aware of that detail.

Thomas stood and walked to the drawer behind his desk, pulling out an emerald pendant. "I found this under the bed where she used to sleep. It was wedged between the foot of the bed and the wall. I recognize it. It belongs to my cousin." He laughed bitterly.

"It was under her bed. She must have taken it out at night to look at as she thought about him. When did she start liking my cousin? I always thought we had a loving marriage, but it seems she was hiding someone in her heart all along. You knew about this, didn't you?" Hearing him speak like that, Zoey felt a pang of bitterness. Here was a man so pure-hearted, he couldn't even bring himself to consider the darker implications of finding that pendant. He could only imagine Viola had pulled

it out during a sleepless night. He was a man who had escaped captivity and helped build a spy network-someone who had fought through hell. He should have been capable of the most meticulous and skeptical thinking about everything.

Yet, he had never once questioned Viola.

Zoey didn't dwell on the sorrow in his eyes. She took a deep breath, and laid it all out.

"About six months after you went to the Southern Frontier, she returned home and knelt before my mother-in-law. She said she wanted to stay at Silverstone Estate for a month. At the same time, she asked for medicine to induce a miscarriage." The emerald pendant clattered to the floor, and Thomas' face turned ashen. "What?"

Zoey turned her head away, and continued, "My mother-in-law called me in. Viola was crying and explained that during the Farrell family's head's birthday banquet, she had drunk too much and went to rest in her room. Your cousin was also present at the residence at the time. He had gotten drunk as well, and accidentally stumbled into the backyard. Viola felt dizzy and went out looking for Julia, since all the servants were busy in the front yard. Somehow, the two of them met in their drunken state, and

she... mistook him for you. That's

what she told us."

Details could cut deeper than any blade, which was why Zoey chose not to share them. When Viola returned, she hadn't divulged the specifics either. She had just given a brief explanation of what had happened. It was only because Zoey felt that something didn't add up that she pressed for more answers.

In truth, Viola hadn't mistaken Silas for Thomas. She knew exactly who he was. She had been feeling so lonely for so long, and the alcohol clouded her judgment. She had seen Silas' handsome face and had drunkenly tumbled into his arms, calling out for Thomas in a daze. She was the one who had initiated the kiss.

Zoey's words hit Thomas like a lightning bolt. His mind went completely blank, and for a long moment, he couldn't say a single word.

Seeing his stunned expression only tightened the ache in Zoey's chest. Yet, some truths had to be spoken boldly, or they would fester in silence and become even harder to voice.

"As her sister-in-law, I shouldn't be telling you any of this," she began, "I should be burying these sordid details. But if she weren't planning to divorce Barrett and remarry you, Iè would've never said a word. Do you know she returned to Silverstone Estate today, just like she did back then, begging for medicine to abort the baby? After the abortion, she plans to divorce Barrett and reunite with you. I had no choice but to

come and tell you-if there's no hope from your end, she won't go through

with the abortion."

Thomas was in shock, unable to comprehend what he had just heard. He stared at Zoey; he opened his mouth several times, but was unable to form any words. It was as if something was lodged in his throat. Despite the sweltering summer heat, he felt a chill run through his entire body.

He would rather Viola had developed feelings for his cousin, yearning for a love that could never be, than face this harsh reality.

Zoey turned her face away to wipe her tears before looking back at him.

"Thomas, this concerns the

reputation of the Earl of Silverstone's family. If you have any grievances or feel you deserve some form of compensation, I can arrange that But please, keep this matter private. I don't want anyone to know. I'm telling you this to prevent her from continuing to deceive and hurt you time and again. Just consider that I'm looking out for you and agree to keep this to yourself, will you?"

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Thomas nodded mechanically. He took a moment to gather himself before finally uttering in a slightly trembling voice, "I won't say anything. You have my word."

Zoey's gaze fell to the shattered emerald pendant on the floor, and a wave of anxiety crashed over her. She had deliberated long and hard about whether to share this truth, wrestling with her conscience. This secret felt like a buried landmine inside her, one that could detonate over her head at any moment.

Now that it was out in the open, she felt a strange sense of relief.

She trusted that Thomas would keep her secret. If he ever did share it, however, there would be little she could do. The chaos that the Earl of Silverstone's family had sown would be theirs to bear.

Ultimately, Thomas was a man who had endured the brutality of the battlefield. He slowly regained his composure, and said, "You risked your family's honor to share the truth with me, which shows your genuine concern for my well-being. I won't let your family fall into the whirlwind of accusations and insults.

"This ends here with me-no one else will ever know. I won't confront my cousin or her about it. Whether she chooses to divorce or stay with Barrett is no longer my concern. My mom mentioned recently that she wants to arrange a match for me. I plan to first spread the news, and we'll see then if I find someone suitable."

As he spoke, Zoey pulled out a handkerchief and covered her face. She had held back her tears for so long, but now she could no longer contain them.

If all men in the world were like Thomas, it would be a blessing for every woman.

Thomas' eyes reddened, and his composure was merely an act. He could understand why Viola remarried. He even felt like he had failed her in some way. Yet, learning she had been unfaithful with his cousin in less than half a year after he left for the battlefield-it was something that truly broke his heart.

While in the South Frontier, he had been the most diligent in writing home. Everyone had teased him about being henpecked.

Yet, Hector had once told him, "You should write often so they don't worry. When a man is on the battlefield, the women at home worry day and night and lose sleep over it. The only way to ease their anxious hearts is to receive letters from us." Thomas had been grateful for Hector's understanding, believing that each letter he sent home would bring Viola some comfort.

But in reality...

He couldn't tell if it was heartache or bitterness, only that his chest felt unbearably heavy. He had no intention of rushing into marriage. He would only spread the word to make Viola give up on any ideas of reconciliation. "Thomas, the Earl of Silverstone's family has let you down," Zoey said, wiping her tears and regaining her composure. "If you need any compensation, just tell me."

"There's no need for that." Thomas

shook his head, a smile breaking through his sorrowful expression.

fact, I'll tell my mom that you persuaded me to consider marriage. She's been worried about it, and I think she'll be grateful to you.'

"You really don't have to say that," Zoey replied. "I'd feel more embarrassed. After all, it's us who owe you."

"None of us are indebted to the other. We all make our own choices. Regardless, you came here today to tell me this out of genuine concern for my well-being, and I appreciate that," Thomas said earnestly. Zoey sighed heavily.

What kind of good man had Viola let slip away?

Thomas walked her to the door. Upon returning to the hall, Alice asked, "Did she inquire about the Earl of Silverstone?"

Thomas replied, "Yes. She asked

he

about how the earl is doing in the Southern Frontier. She also advised me to think about settling down, and reminded me that I'm not getting any younger. She said since my career is established, it's time to marry and have children so you can hold your grandchildren soon. After thinking it over, I realize she has a point. So, I'll leave the matter of marriage in your capable hands, Mom."

Alice's face lit up with joy. "Oh, you rascal! You don't listen to me, but you take advice from the Earl of Silverstone's wife? It seems

outsiders have more influence on et

you. But I won't hold that against you. Once a match is arranged, I must thank her. She's truly a good person to still be looking out for you, even though our families are no

longer connected."

A shadow of sadness flickered in Thomas' eyes as he said softly, "Yes, she has treated me like a younger brother all this time, and I respect her as I would an older sister." Few women from noble families could do what Zoey did.

Alice had little time to dwell on that as she hurried out the door to find Opal. Alice needed her help in finding a suitable match for Thomas.

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Viola was unaware of what Zoey had done.

Viola had returned to Valor Estate, and told Rebecca and Barrett that she wasn't feeling well. She claimed the physician said her anxiety was due to a recent fright, and that she would need some time to recover.

Barrett wasn't suspicious at all. Instead, he felt more guilty. After all, the assassination attempt had scared Viola badly, and she was already heartbroken over the deaths of Julia and Yvonne. Grief could easily weaken a person's constitution, so Barrett told her to rest and Viola planned to recover for a few days and then use it as an excuse to return to Silverstone Estate to rest further.

take care of herself.

But on the third day, rumors spread about Thomas looking for marriage candidates. It was the servants in the estate gossiping, and she overheard it. After listening, she frowned in disbelief.

That was impossible.

Thomas had promised her. He wasn't the kind of person to go back on his word, and he must have found out about the assassination at Valor Estate. There was no way he would abandon her.

Viola immediately called over her two maids, and asked harshly, "You two never leave the estate. Where did you hear this nonsense about Major General Farrell looking for a wife? If you dare spread rumors again, I'll have your tongues cut out!"

The two maids were merely tasked with sweeping and cleaning, and they usually didn't serve inside the house. Hearing their mistress' sharp tone, they hurriedly responded in a terrified manner, "Madam Viola, we weren't spreading rumors! It was the kitchen staff who heard it, and the news has spread everywhere outside. Many noble ladies are eager to marry him."

"Impossible!" Viola shouted in disbelief.

The maids were so frightened, they dropped to their knees. "Forgive us, Madam Viola! We misspoke!"

Viola refused to believe it. Without hesitation, she took Poppy with her and left for Silverstone Estate. The last time she had been there, she had angered Evelyn to the point of fainting and had left without looking back.

Evelyn was still furious when she saw Viola. "What are you doing here?"

"Mom." Viola's eyes were bloodshot. She didn't care that Luna was present, and asked, "Is what the people are saying true? Is Thomas looking for a wife?"

Evelyn responded coldly, "If he's looking for a wife, what does that have to do with us? Why does it concern you?"

"How can it not concern me? He promised me!" Viola stubbornly turned to Luna. "I don't believe it. Tell me is it true?"

Luna helped Evelyn lie down, then

turned to face Viola. "It's true. The

Farrell family has already arranged for a matchmaker, and the news spread quickly. After all, Thomas achieved great military merits as a third-rank major general. His search for a marriage candidate has stirred up the entire city, and many families have sent inquiries. After all, the Farrell family is known for their righteousness and loyalty. Being a young hero, Thomas is the dream husband of many women."

Luna had phrased it this way deliberately, but the truth wasn't far off. Once the news of Thomas looking for a marriage candidate got out, many noble ladies were indeed captivated by it.

Thomas had once been such a

dashing and handsome figure. Even though he was now older-in his late twenties he was still a hero who had made significant contributions to the kingdom. Young women naturally admired heroes like him.

"No way! That's impossible! He promised me!" Viola covered her ears, and screamed, "How could he go back on his word?"

"Viola, you're pregnant. You mustn't get too worked up," Luna said calmly.

"How can I not be? He's my husband!" Viola snapped.

Luna gently reminded her, "Your husband now is Barrett."

"Shut up!" Viola had never thought much of Luna, and now every word seemed to stab her in the heart. "Who are you to talk about my relationship with him?"

Luna was no longer willing to endure Viola's treatment of her, and responded coldly, "Then don't ask me. Go and find out for yourself."

Viola shot her a fierce glare before turning her gaze away, her voice trembling with desperation. "Mom, please go to the Farrell family and ask him for me. Ask him what's going on! He promised me!" Evelyn's breathing became labored with anger. "You...you shameless girl! Get out of here!"



"Mom!" Viola fell to her knees, tears streaming down her face. "I can't go on like this anymore! You and Zoey were the ones who forced me to marry! The Warren family is a pit of misery. I can't stay there any longer! Do you want me to die there? Are you really that heartless?"

Hearing how twisted and manipulative Viola's words were, Evelyn felt both furious and heartbroken. Tears began to stream down her face as she closed her eyes.

How could her daughter have become so unhinged?

With trembling hands, she pointed towards the door. "Get out!"

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Viola was utterly heartbroken. Her husband's family didn't care for her, and her own family refused to help. What was the point of living in such despair?

Still, she wasn't willing to give up. Thomas wasn't the kind of man who went back on his word. He still had feelings for her he had to! She needed to confront him and get to the bottom of it. Viola knew it wasn't appropriate for her to go directly to see him in her current position. However, she didn't care. She had to ask him in person.

The carriage arrived at the Farrell family's residence. Viola stepped down, and walked straight up to the gate. Upon seeing her, the gatekeeper blurted out, "Ms. Pr-I mean, Mrs. Warren." She frowned, and shot him a cold look. "What kind of nonsense is that? Why are you calling me Mrs. Warren? Is Thomas inside?"

The gatekeeper hesitated for a moment before nodding. "He is."

Without another word, Viola stormed inside, with Poppy following nervously behind her.

Poppy's legs were trembling, but she couldn't stop her mistress. How could they just barge into the Farrell family's residence like this? If the Warren family found out, all hell would break loose! Viola's actions left everyone in the Farrell family stunned.

After all, she wasn't part of their family anymore. How could she just waltz in without any notice or even a formal announcement beforehand?

Not to mention, she barged in demanding to see Thomas. He was now preparing to propose to someone else, and Viola's sudden appearance could disrupt everything completely.

Alice had once felt some sympathy for Viola, but she was now furious. She had Opal order that no one was to mention this incident outside the household. She also had Viola's carriage moved to a discreet location so no one would see it.

Alice refused to let Thomas meet with Viola, but Viola seemed determined. She sat in the main hall, refusing to leave no matter what Alice said. All she wanted was to see Thomas, and nothing else seemed to get through to her. Alice had never seen Viola so stubborn. She was at a loss for words, but Opal finally spoke up.

"Viola, you're a married woman now and part of the Warren family. It's not appropriate for you to come looking for him. Besides, he's in the middle of looking for a wife. This isn't good for either of you."

Viola responded with just one sentence: "I want to see him!"

That was all she said. No matter what else they asked or how they tried to reason with her, she wouldn't answer.

Of course, Thomas didn't come out to meet her. Instead, he sent one of the old maids by his mother's side to deliver a message.

The old maid said to Viola, "Mr.

Thomas has asked me to relay something to you, Mrs. Warren. There's a saying: if you want something kept secret, don't do it in the first place. Mr. Thomas advises

you to take care of yours

and that

a

you two should live your own lives from now on."

Viola's face went deathly pale, and she stood frozen on the spot.

He knew? How could he know?

No, it wasn't possible! Silas couldn't have told him, and her family certainly wouldn't have said anything. "Did you understand Mr. Thomas' message, Mrs. Warren? If so, it's time for you to go," the old maid said. Viola felt numb and dazed as she stumbled to her feet and made her way outside.

Poppy could barely keep Viola upright, her voice shaking as she asked, "Madam Viola, are you alright?"

Viola's mind was completely blank, her steps quick and unsteady. Moments ago, she had been determined to see Thomas. Now, she only wished she would never have to see him again.

Why hadn't he died in the Southern Frontier? Why did he have to come back and give her hope, only to crush it?

Who told him? Who was it?!

She climbed into the carriage, her entire body trembling with fear and panic. He knew, which meant the Farrell family would soon know. And after that, everyone would know. She wouldn't even need to ask for a divorce-Barrett would surely cast her out.

Silas wouldn't have said anything. But that day, he and Carissa had been seen entering the Arcane Sanctum together. Could it be Carissa who investigated the matter? Did she dig into Silas affairs

and find out? Did Silas let something slip?

Carissa would love nothing more than to ruin Viola. If Carissa had found out, she would definitely tell Thomas.

It had to be Carissa!

Rage swelled within Viola, obliterating any sense of reason. One thought consumed her if she was ruined, Carissa wasn't going to get away unscathed either.

In a sudden fit of fury, Viola yanked the curtain open and shouted, "To Hell Monarch Estate!"

## Chapter 608

Yuvan had returned to the capital with his entire family, and they were now settled in. After greeting the queen dowager and the king, Yuvan brought Fiona and his new princess consort, Molly Spencer, to Hell Monarch Estate. Rafael was on leave that day, and happened to be home. Seeing Yuvan arrive unannounced again stirred some frustration in him.

Yuvan was Rafael's uncle. As such, there was no excuse not to meet with him, especially when he came with his whole family. However, it would've been more appropriate for Rafael to bring Carissa to Horizon Estate to pay a visit-that would've followed the proper etiquette.

Now, his uncle had taken the initiative to come by. It made Rafael look as though he was arrogant and dismissive, like he had completely disregarded his place in the family hierarchy.

Left with no choice, Rafael asked his mother to join them. It could still be somewhat appropriate to say that Yuvan and his family had come to visit Helen.

The two men, uncle and nephew, had little to say to each other. They had never been particularly close, and both were preoccupied with their own concerns. The conversation was stiff, filled with shallow pleasantries exchanged out of politeness.

Meanwhile, Molly was quite enthusiastic toward Carissa. She continuously brought up Violet in an attempt to bond with Carissa. What she didn't know was that Violet, knowing Molly had arrived, had no intention of meeting her.

On the other hand, Carissa wore a scowl the entire time as she looked at Yuvan. She didn't even bother to hide her distaste. Ever since Avis had died so horribly, Carissa had been waiting for Yuvan's return to the capital.

The resemblance between Molly's face and Violet's made Carissa even more uncomfortable, especially since Violet had once mentioned that her cousin was determined to marry Yuvan.

Yuvan attempted to maintain a cordial tone as he smiled and said, "Rafael, I must say, serving as Chief Judge seems beneath you. Even I feel it's a bit unfair. After all, Chief Judge is merely an

administrative position, and you were the one who reclaimed the Southern Frontier. The king should've kept you in command of the military."

Rafael replied, "If you think it's unfair, you should speak to the king on my behalf. But I find being Chief Judge to be a suitable position. After all, it deals with matters of law and justice."

With a wry smile, he added, "Besides, you'd better not make any mistakes, Uncle Yuvan. I'm known to be impartial, and the Supreme Court even tries cases involving members of the royal family."

Yuvan let out a forced laugh. "Rafael, you jest."

"He's not joking," Helen chimed in

from the side. "He never jokes. The late king and I always knew that our son was far too serious—he's not one for humor. So, you better watch your step while you're in the capital, Prince Yuvan. Rafael is all about doing things by the book

Yuvan laughed, trying to ease the tension. "Thank you for the reminder, Lady Helen. You're still as witty and humorous as ever."

Helen let out a small laugh, but

inside, she couldn't stand Yuvan. After learning about Avis' situation, she wanted nothing more than to chase him out with a broom. If not for fear of getting a scolding from Victoria, Helen wouldn't have bothered with these empty

pleasantries.

As Yuvan chatted with Rafael, he glanced over at Carissa. His tone was filled with admiration as he said, "You truly have the spirit of the Duke of Northwatch's family. You take after your dad—both of you are exceptional commanders."

Carissa acted as though she hadn't

heard him, instead answering Molly's earlier question. "You were asking about Violet? She's been

living in the estate, but when I asked her to to come out and see you today,

she refused. She even spat in

disgust. Did something happen

between you two?"

Her words made both Yuvan and Molly's faces turn pale with embarrassment. Yuvan, for being blatantly ignored, and Molly, for having her secret exposed-how she had defied her family's wishes to marry Yuvan, leading her own relatives to despise her. Just as their shame turned to anger, a shrill scream echoed from outside. The voice was filled with fury and desperation.

"Get out of my way! All of you, move! Or I swear I'll kill myself here, and there'll be two lives lost! Let's see how Carissa explains that to the world!"

Carissa recognized Viola's voice, and felt a surge of confusion.

What on earth was she doing? Had Carissa somehow angered her?

"Carissa! Get out here!" Viola's frantic voice rang out again, accompanied by the startled gasps of the maids.

"Mrs. Warren, please put down the dagger!"

Yuvan's eyes sparkled with a hint of amusement. It seemed today was going to be quite the spectacle.

## Chapter 609

Rafael and Carissa both stood up and rushed outside, only to find Viola with her hair in disarray, gripping a dagger tightly against her own neck. She pressed it down hard enough that blood was already seeping from the cut. Her maid trailed behind her, pale as a ghost. Poppy had tried to stop Viola, but it had been in vain. Viola had insisted on going to Hell Monarch Estate, even stopping along the way to buy the dagger.

When Viola spotted Carissa, her eyes were bloodshot with rage.

"Carissa, what grudge do we have? Why are you trying to ruin me like this?" Viola screamed.

Carissa remained calm and instructed Luke, "Send someone to Silverstone Estate and Valor Estate. Have them come take Mrs. Warren home."

Luke nodded, and hurried off.

Carissa turned to Rafael. "You should go back inside. I'll handle this."

Rafael glanced at Viola, and saw how unstable she looked with the dagger still in hand.

"Be careful not to hurt yourself by accident," he warned before heading back.

As he walked, Yuvan emerged from the estate. Rafael extended his arm to block him. "Uncle Yuvan, let's continue our chat. Where were we?"

Yuvan put on an air of authority, and asked loudly, "What's going on here? Who dares to barge into Hell Monarch Estate so recklessly? Whoever it is needs to be properly dealt with! We can't have just anyone storming into a royal residence!" Fiona came out after Yuvan, and Rafael didn't bother stopping her. Playing along with Yuvan's indignation, she chimed in, "Your Highness, isn't that the third daughter of the Earl of Silverstone's family? What's going on here?"

Viola had come looking for Carissa, and she wasn't expecting Yuvan to be present as well. Fiona's words seemed to snap her out of her crazed state a little. Still, her cold gaze remained fixed on Carissa.

"Let's find somewhere private to talk. If not, I'll die here with my child in Hell Monarch Estate. You've driven me to the edge, so it doesn't matter where I die!"

Fiona stood at the edge of the veranda with a falsely sympathetic smile, and added, "If you have grievances, why not share them, Mrs. Warren? Prince Yuvan is here, and he'll make sure justice is served." Carissa shouted, "Violet, take Lady Fiona for a walk in the garden!"

She knew Violet was nearby, though

the latter hadn't wanted to show

herself to her cousin. Sure enough

as soon as Carissa finished

speaking, Violet leaped down gracefully from a higher ledge and

grabbed Fiona by the arm.

"You like to mediate disputes, don't you, Lady Fiona? That's wonderful. The fish in the lake are fighting-you should come help me break it up."

Without giving Fiona a chance to respond, Violet gripped her arm tighter and started walking away.

Fiona had never encountered someone like Violet. She was both anxious and angry, but didn't want to lose her composure in front of others.

Meanwhile, Yuvan found himself blocked by Rafael, who forcefully pushed him back toward the chair.

Yuvan smiled wryly, and said, "Rafael, there's no need to overreact. I just want to see who's bold enough to cause a scene at your residence."

Rafael remained unfazed. "Matters

between women should be settled by women. What business do we have getting involved? Or were you so bored in Valken, that you would bother with such trivial matters?"

Yuvan was caught off guard by Rafael's sharp remark, leaving him speechless and feeling incredibly frustrated.



Helen seized the chance, and

chimed in "When you're out in a fief, what else is there to do but be bored with nothing to do? Not everyone can be as busy as you are, with your duties in the capital."

Noticing Yuvan's sour expression, Molly attempted to smooth things over.

"Living a carefree life is its own blessing," she said lightly.

However, Helen didn't miss a beat. She shot Molly a sharp look, and said bluntly, "You're still so young. How did you end up marrying this old man?" Molly's face flushed with embarrassment. "Your Highness, the prince is in his prime. How can you call him old?"

Outside, Carissa dismissed the servants and turned to Viola. "Let's go to the side hall."

After saying that, Carissa turned around and walked ahead. She was genuinely baffled.

What had prompted Viola to come here in such a rage? And what was this nonsense about killing herself, and two lives would be lost?

## Chapter 610

In the side hall, the two women sat facing each other.

Carissa eyed the dagger still pressed against Viola's neck, and frowned.

"Are you really going to keep holding that dagger to your throat? If you truly want to die, go throw yourself against the gates of Hell Monarch Estate. All this drama just makes you look ridiculous."

Viola wiped her tears with the back of her hand, her face pale and stubborn. "Carissa, destroying someone's marriage is a sin! You're truly vicious."

Carissa sat up straight, her posture as rigid as ever. "When did I destroy your marriage? Whatever happens between you and Barrett is your business, not mine. You've always had a poor sense of right and wrong. When Valor Estate was attacked, I was the one who saved you all."

Viola's voice turned cold. "That's beside the point! You didn't save us for my sake. I don't owe you any gratitude."

Carissa laughed incredulously. "I don't need your gratitude. Just tell me what have I done to ruin your marriage?"

Viola gritted her teeth, and spat, "Don't pretend to be innocent! You know exactly what you told Thomas. You just can't stand to see me happy! You found out Thomas and I were going to reconcile, so you dug up dirt on me and exposed everything to him. Now, he's looking to marry someone else. Are you satisfied?" "Thomas?" For a moment, Carissa had been thinking this was about some conflict between Viola and Barrett. She hadn't connected the dots. But then, she recalled that odd moment between Viola and Silas back at Arcane Sanctum. Suddenly, it all clicked.

Viola had tried to reach out to Thomas, hoping to rekindle their relationship. However, it seemed that Thomas had discovered her secret affair with Silas. So, he made it known that he intended to marry someone else to kill Viola's hopes of getting back together with him. And now, Viola thought Carissa had been the one to expose her secret to Thomas.

Carissa pieced it together, and was genuinely shocked. Viola was pregnant with Barrett's child, but she still wanted to rekindle things with Thomas. What was she thinking? Was she really considering getting rid of the baby and pursuing a divorce?

Carissa shook her head. "Viola, I didn't tell Thomas anything about you. And as for this notion that I can't stand to see you happy, it's absurd. Whether you're happy or not has nothing to do with me. Frankly, I'd prefer to keep my distance from all of you." Viola sneered. "You did it but won't admit it? Carissa, you're such a coward! If you'd just owned up to it, I might have actually respected you. I saw you with Silas that day at Arcane Sanctum. You went to snitch, and now, you're here pretending to be innocent? Aren't you disgusting? You're such a hypocrite."

Silas?

It was just as Carissa had suspected earlier. Well, there were all kinds of people, weren't there?

Carissa's voice turned icy. "Not as disgusting as you, and certainly not as hypocritical. You're pregnant with Barrett's child, but now that Thomas has gotten a promotion, you want to go crawling back to him? What do you take Thomas for? Before you came here, I had no idea about you and Silas. But now that you've made such a scene, I do. You had an affair with Silas, and Thomas found out."

"Shut up!" Viola's eyes burned red with anger. She suddenly pointed the dagger at Carissa from across the room, her tears spilling over as she broke down.

"What do you even know? Back then,

I worried for him every day when he was on the battlefield! I couldn't eat or sleep, and the days were torture. I made one mistake-just once!

Afterward, I did everything right net'

was dutiful to my mother-in-law, got along with my sisters-in-law and worked tirelessly for the Farrell family. But because of one slip, I'm supposed to be damned for all eternity? Soon, everyone will know. I can't live with this shame! Carissa, you've ruined me. Don't you see? You've destroyed my life!"

Carissa flicked her wrist, and Viola's hand went numb. The dagger clattered to the floor. Viola bent down to grab it, but Carissa was quicker and kicked the blade far out of reach.

"I'll kill you!" Viola, humiliated and furious, lunged at Carissa.

However, Carissa twisted her arm and immobilized her. Viola cried out in pain, her eyes flooding with tears.

"It hurts! Let me go!" she yelled.

Carissa said coldly, "Stop feeling sorry for yourself. You're acting like you did everything for the Farrell family. But not even a month after Thomas' death was reported, you took his death pension and the two shops, and ran back to your parents' house.

"After betraying him like you did,

how could you take his money?

You're not only shameless, but brainless too. You didn't even bother to figure out who actually told Thomas before coming here to cause a scene. Think about it for a second-if Thomas really wanted to expose what he knew, he wouldn't be looking for marriage candidates so soon. He would confront you directly.

"The fact that he hasn't, means he doesn't want to dredge up that ugly matter. He was trying to save you some dignity. You're such a fool. Instead of being grateful, you come here to throw a tantrum. Now, everyone will know."