

War Song 621

Chapter 621

Viola was frozen in shock.

She had never seen Zoey lose control like this. Zoey had always been composed and steady, unflappable in the face of crises, able to handle even the gravest situations with ease. But now, she seemed like a madwoman.

"Do you see clearly now? This is how everyone sees you-crazy and obsessed, disregarding your status, ignoring decorum, and showing no shame. You don't even care about your basic dignity."

Zoey grasped Viola's hand tightly. "Let's go. You wanted to see Mother, right? Let's go and drive her to her grave with anger. You can then take your own life to atone for your sins, and this household will finally have peace."

Viola shrank back in terror, her eyes wide as she stared at Zoey. She gasped for breath, shaking her head.

No, she wasn't like this-she wasn't this mad!

"Zoey, I don't want to go anymore! I won't!"

Jane quickly helped Zoey to sit down. Tears were streaming down Zoey's face as she reflected on her time in the Prince family. She had devoted herself to this family, caring for her in-laws and her husband's younger siblings, even accommodating his concubines and their children. She had never treated anyone poorly.

When the concubines caused trouble in the previous years, Oliver had supported them, and Zoey suffered a lot. Later, she worked hard to help him build a reputation and secure a job to protect her own children's future.

Everyone relied on her, but not everyone listened to her.

Over the years, the only ones who truly supported her were Caspian and Luna. Her mother-in-law wasn't bad, but she was soft-hearted. Many rules Zoey established were easily undone by Evelyn's kindness.

As for the troubles at home, Viola had given Zoey no small amount of grief. Now, with her position as Barrett's wife, she had stirred up trouble in the Farrell family. She had even made a scene at Hell Monarch Estate. Even though the royal residence maintained strict order, the presence of guests and numerous servants at the Farrell estate meant that loose lips were inevitable.

If such matters got out, the reputation Zoey had worked so hard to maintain for the Earl of Silverstone's family would be lost overnight.

After taking a moment to gather

herself, she turned to Viola. "Are you

calm now? Can we talk rationally? Think carefully about whether you want return home or continue living with Barrett. If you choose the former, our family will still welcome you back."

Viola remained silent.

In truth, she had no way out without Thomas accepting her back.

Returning to Silverstone Estate would ensure she had food and shelter for the rest of her life, but it would also mean living in solitude. No one would marry her again. After two marriages, who would take her in? A lowly merchant, or an ordinary peasant?

As the third daughter of the Earl of

Silverston's family, with a former husband who held the rank of a

third-ranked major general, she

could never settle for marrying

commoner. Moreover, she was

pregnant. If she returned, she would inevitably have to terminate the pregnancy.

However, with the commotion at Hell Monarch Estate, someone had already been sent to invite people from Valor Estate. She had already revealed her pregnancy, and the Warren family would soon know. They wouldn't let her divorce Barrett. In truth, she had no means of escaping the Warren family. Though it was a fallen family, it still had its remnants of status, enough to maintain some semblance of dignity.

"I'll return to the Warren family," Viola said softly, her expression a mixture of madness and cold resolve. "But Zoey, that matter has already been exposed. You must ensure it doesn't leak further."

Otherwise, she wouldn't be able to stay with the Warren family.

Zoey replied coldly, "I can't

guarantee anything. I've done my best, Viola. You could have either tried to make a life with Barrett or returned home after the

assassination attempt, and let

everything blow over. But tel

were

determined to return to the Farrell

family and ruin Thomas, which has

led us to this situation."

"If this information gets out, it will harm the other ladies of our family. It would make it difficult for my nieces to marry in the future," Viola retorted.

Zoey sneered. "Well, that can't be helped. It's not their fault they have such a shameless aunt."

Viola clenched her teeth. "There's no need for you to insult me at every turn."

Zoey's tone was icy. "Here's a piece of advice for you, Viola. Things must rot before maggots infest them, and a person must first dishonor themselves before others will dishonor them." Viola's face stiffened, leaving her at a loss for words.

Chapter 622

Amelia went to Hell Monarch Estate. Upon hearing that Viola had returned to Silverstone Estate, she immediately made her way there.

Barrett was on duty, so he was unaware of the situation. With everything in such disarray, Amelia had no choice but to come. Dragging her "sickly" body into Silverstone Estate, she sighed heavily. She didn't know the full story, but she figured that the ruckus at Hell

Monarch Estate that involved Carissa had something to do with Barrett.

Evelyn didn't say much, only informing her that Viola was pregnant and that she should be taken care of. Amelia didn't dare ask too many questions, but she was certainly puzzled.

Pregnancy was a good thing, so why did Viola cause a commotion at Hell Monarch Estate?

Viola's pregnancy thrilled both Rebecca and Barrett. That evening, Barrett took great care of her. As Viola lay in his arms, silent tears streamed down her face. She was still extremely upset, but perhaps they could find a way to make their lives work if he could treat her well.

However, news of her visit to the Farrell family's residence eventually spread and reached every corner of the city.

Rebecca had always valued her reputation, so she summoned Viola and questioned her sternly, "You went to the Farrell family while pregnant with my son's child-what were you thinking? Whose child is in your womb? You can't have rekindled your relationship with Thomas, can you? Did you secretly conceive with him?"

Viola felt no respect for her mother-in-law anymore. She replied coldly, "Whose child this is will be clear once it's born. As for rekindling an old flame or secretly conceiving, you should worry about my husband's reputation. If those words got out, he would be the laughingstock."

With that, Viola turned and left.

A wave of frustration washed over her. Though she had fallen from grace, that didn't mean anyone could trample on her. The people of the Warren family had no right to criticize her. They were the ones who had caused the deaths of her maids. What right did they have to judge her? The instigator still resided comfortably in Blessed Haven, enjoying the good life, while she suffered.

Rebecca thought herself to be so formidable, so why hadn't she sent someone to reprimand Aurora?

Aurora was ruthless and cutthroat, and no one dared to provoke her. Instead, they treated her like royalty, catering to her every need without daring to cut back on her provisions.

Barrett was on duty when he

overheard his colleagues whispering among themselves. After inquiring.

further, he learned that Viola had actually gone to the Farrell family's residence. A wave of humiliation washed over him, and he stormed back home, fury coursing through him as he headed straight for Grace Mansion.

Viola had already prepared her defense, so facing Barrett wouldn't be difficult.

"I went to the Farrell family's residence because my sister-in-law used her own money to return the death pension and the money for the two shops. She has helped me a lot over the years, and I didn't want her to bear that expense. I thought it best to go to the Farrell family myself to request that they return the money to her. After all, I'm carrying your child now. For the sake of the child's future, I need to clarify everything."

She gently caressed her barely noticeable belly, a glow of motherhood illuminating her features.

law?

No, she had wanted to rekindle her relationship with Thomas.

However, Barrett didn't believe her words. He wasn't foolish, and he understood Viola's character all too well. The money had come from her family, and she was delighted she didn't need to fork it out herself. Why would she go to the trouble of retrieving it for her sister-in-

Suppressing his anger, Barrett

watched her tenderly stroke her

stomach. Well, it didn't really matter. Their feelings for each other had, never been very deep. Unlike his mother, he wouldn't doubt that the child was his. He didn't trust Viola, but he did trust Thomas. Thomas wasn't that kind of man.

"Honey!" Viola stood up, wrapping her arms around his waist. "This is our first child, and I'm really looking forward to his arrival. I promise to take good care of myself, and together we'll protect him, okay?" Barrett embraced her, and nodded. "Okay."

He stifled a sigh, wanting to ask Viola what she had been doing at Hell Monarch Estate, but he decided against it. It was better to avoid stirring up more trouble. After all, the damage had already been done. In truth, what did it matter now? All that mattered was preserving the honor of the Warren family.

Chapter 623

Molly sent a notice to Silverstone Estate, stating that she would be visiting the next day. Upon recalling Carissa's words, Zoey's expression turned grave.

After a moment of thought, she instructed Jane, "Prepare gifts. I need to make a trip to Hell Monarch Estate."

"Madam Zoey, shouldn't we send a formal invitation first?" Jane asked. "Going like this might come off as a bit rude."

"No need for that. When I took Viola back with me, I mentioned to the princess consort that I would come to apologize in person. So, this visit wouldn't be seen as disrespectful."

With visitors from Yuvan's family arriving tomorrow, there was no time to wait for an invitation to arrange a meeting.

At Hell Monarch Estate, Carissa noticed Zoey's swollen face, the marks of fingers still clear on her skin.

"Are you alright?" Carissa asked.

Zoey smiled bitterly. "I'm fine. The injury is self-inflicted. No one at Silverstone Estate would dare to touch me."

Carissa didn't want to pry into her family affairs, but felt a pang of admiration as she observed Zoey's exhausted yet dignified demeanor. A stable and composed woman to manage the household was vital for a noble family. "Actually, you don't need to apologize," Carissa said. "It's not a big deal. I didn't think much of it, and it really shouldn't be you doing the apologizing."

After pondering this, Zoey decided to be straightforward. "Your Grace, my apology is just an excuse. I actually have something I want to ask you."

Carissa lifted her cup and took a slow sip, her gaze drifting lightly over Zoey's face. "Go ahead and ask."

Carissa already knew what Zoey wanted to inquire about someone from Yuvan's family must have sent a notice to visit Silverstone Estate.

Every move Yuvan made upon his return to the capital was under Rafael's watchful eye, with Travis himself leading the surveillance. Such attention was fitting for someone of Yuvan's status.

Zoey tried her best to mask her anxiety, but the situation with Viola had drained her. She was starting to feel overwhelmed.

"Your Grace, I'm sure you know that

Lady Molly has sent a notice of visit to us. The

the Southeof Silverstone is in

Frontier. When Prince

Yuvan returned from his fief, he first visited the king before coming to Hell Monarch Estate. Now, he'll be visiting Silverstone Estate. As a woman, I'm not familiar with the proper protocols for receiving guests of such stature. I would

greatly appreciate your guidance."

Her words were cleverly phrased, avoiding any potential pitfalls while making it seem as though she simply wanted to know how to properly host.

But in truth, if it were just a regular royal visit, how could she not know the customary etiquette?

Carissa set her cup down and

smiled. "I suspect that either Lady Molly or Lady Fiona wishes to visit the esteemed matriarch of your family. Given that Lady Molly is a princess consort, the visit should be conducted according to the protocols for receiving a princess consort. You've attended enough social gatherings, so I'm sure you understand the rules."

"You're absolutely right, Your Grace. However, if there are other matters at play..."

Carissa cut her off with a light laugh. "There's nothing else. The Earl of Silverstone's family and Prince Yuvan have had little interaction in the past. It's merely a standard visit."

Zoey pondered the implications of Carissa's words, particularly when she said there was nothing else. Zoey's concern was precisely because there might be more involved. She sensed that many things were beyond her grasp.

Yuvan had returned to the capital because of Ruth's illness. But instead of being preoccupied with taking care of Ruth, they visited Hell Monarch Estate first. Then, after they saw Viola, they sent a notice to visit Silverstone Estate. If there was nothing more to it, Zoey would find that hard to believe.

Having managed the inner workings

of the Earl of Silverstone's family for years, Zoey possessed a keen sense of observation and an innate ability to detect Tooming crises. In a city filled with powerful families, such as dukes and marquesses who far outranked an earl, it was clear why they chose to visit her home.

It was all due to Zoey's husband holding military power in the Southern Frontier.

"Mrs. Prince, there's truly nothing else. Just treat them as you would any other guests," Carissa said, noting Zoey's hesitance.

She seemed to have guessed something, and Carissa acknowledged Zoey's capabilities.

With a decisive nod, Carissa added, "If you find Lady Molly agreeable and wish to befriend her, that's entirely up to you. But if you feel that she's beyond your station, keeping your distance wouldn't be a bad idea either."

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Carissa's words were clear enough for Zoey to grasp their meaning. She didn't dare to dwell on other implications, as they were beyond her purview as a woman. What she could do was ensure that the Earl of Silverstone's family maintained clean and transparent

relationships with everyone.

After Zoey left, Jacob stepped into the room.

It was uncommon for Jacob to see Carissa alone, but he had taken notice of the situation since Zoey entered the room and had stayed outside to listen for a while.

Carissa was aware he had been eavesdropping, and asked, "Do you think I handled that conversation appropriately?"

"It was perfectly balanced," Jacob replied. "You couldn't have been too direct, but you couldn't stay silent either. After all, the troops in the Southern Frontier consist of either the Sinclair Army or the Hell Monarch Army."

Carissa sighed. "Yes, I can't just stand by and do nothing. But with Zoey in charge at Silverstone Estate, there are certain things she can't understand too clearly, or it might frighten her."

"Exactly. You struck the right balance, Your Grace," Jacob said. "I have other matters to attend to now."

Carissa watched as he turned to leave, momentarily startled. She had thought he came to discuss the matter further, but he had merely entered to praise her. She couldn't help but smile. Well, fine!

Jacob was the head archivist of Hell Monarch Estate, but Rafael regarded him as a strategist. Even so, Jacob managed all the affairs and people within the estate, essentially fulfilling the role of a steward. He reported directly to both her and Rafael. As the head archivist, he was supposed to have a deputy. However, Rafael was quite picky and hadn't found anyone suitable. So, Jacob effectively served in both capacities, placing him in a high position within the estate.

Busy from morning till night, it was rare to see him around. He had an assistant who oversaw the day-to-day matters, which was Luke. Luke managed the various errands of the estate. While the royal family was small, the number of staff was substantial.

Sometimes, Carissa felt exhausted just hearing about all the mundane issues from each steward when they met every couple of days. She had never voiced her fatigue, but Jacob had suggested that Luke filter the reports, bringing only essential matters to her attention while leaving out trivial details.

It was truly thoughtful of Jacob.

Carmen had been frequently visiting Hell Monarch Estate lately, primarily because Violet was learning a mix of swordsmanship and dance from her. As they spent time together, they discovered a special camaraderie, prompting Carmen to come over more often. Carissa maintained a certain distance from Carmen. Just after Carmen had left, Violet arrived at Orchid Hall to see Carissa.

Without ceremony, she plopped down into a chair and declared, "Ms. Lester is quite a nice person, but I've noticed you seem a bit put off by her."

"Having met a few times, how can I

say whether like her or not?" Carissa shot her a glance and instructed, "Janice, please prepare a drink for Ms. Spencer. Look at her she's all sweaty. Bring her a towel too."

Janice curtsied. "Yes, I'll get that right away."

Once Janice was gone, Violet continued, "She convinced Henry, and he'll cooperate with us."

Carissa considered this for a moment. "Vivi, what do you think of Henry?"

"Claire did some digging. He used to be quite the scholar, but now? He's like an old mouse-hiding away and being timid and cowardly."

"He's been married to Eleanor for

over twenty years, and he's been oppressed by her for just as long. It's

hard for someone who's been oppressed for so long to fight back. I'm cautious about him."

"Could it be that after being oppressed for so long, he wants to

turn the tables with our help b

mouse will fight back when

cornered. I don't believe he would

willingly endure this humiliation."

"Reluctance doesn't guarantee trust. Also, don't forget that his family is also dependent on Eleanor."

Violet nodded, and as footsteps echoed in the hallway, she smiled and said, "See? I told you, Ms. Lester is an interesting person. Next time she comes, you should practice swordplay with us."

Carissa shot her a mock glare. "Alright, I got it. Since you think so highly of her, I'll practice with her next time. I doubt she'll last three moves under my hands."

"Let's give it a try!" Violet replied with a grin, looking up at Janice as she entered. "What drink is this?"

Janice set the cup down and said, "It's ice tea that Ms. Lily made today, Ms. Spencer."

"Perfect!" Violet took the cup eagerly, drinking it down in big gulps. She grabbed the towel to wipe her neck, and tossed it back onto the tray. "That's enough. You're dismissed."

Chapter 625

After Janice left, Violet said, "That person seems quite unpleasant."

Carissa chuckled. "Don't say that. She's actually quite handy. After all, she comes from the palace. Nowadays, Lulu has much less to do."

Violet smiled and asked, "When do you plan on letting Lulu go? She's at the age to get married."

Carissa sighed. "I was thinking of finding someone for her once things settle down. It's hard to let her go, but she's the same age as I am. If I wait too long, she'll be an old maid." "What about Rod?" Violet raised an eyebrow.

"I'm afraid he'd starve Lulu."

Violet burst into laughter. "That's true! He has to support his guild. How much money would he have left for a wife? A man like that shouldn't get married-he'll only ruin a woman's life. Do you remember? He once said he wanted to marry you. Alana chased him down and beat him up for being such a little flirt."

Carissa laughed too, though her heart felt heavy. Meadow Ridge and the capital seemed like a dividing line, splitting her life in two. Even if she returned to Meadow Ridge now, she couldn't regain that state of mind.

Just as they were discussing Lulu and Alana, Lulu rushed in, breathless. "My la-I mean, Your Grace, Ms. Violet! Ms. Alana is here! She said Lady Leona is about to give birth!"

Carissa immediately stood up. "About to give birth? Is it time already?"

"Almost, but Ms. Alana said there are complications, and she needs Sebastian. But he's not in the capital!"

"What? Where's Alana?" Carissa asked anxiously.

Lulu replied, "She just informed us and then left. I'm not sure what's going on, but she looked furious."

Carissa instantly said, "Let's go! We need to get there right away."

Violet took a deep breath. "She's giving birth? I'm not ready for this! I've never seen a child being born."

"Come on." Carissa pulled her by the arm. "It's not like you're the one giving birth. Let's go check it out. If Alana is that upset, something must be wrong."

The two quickly made their way to fetch their horses. By the time Lulu called for the carriage driver to harness the horses, Carissa and Violet had already disappeared. Lulu stomped her foot. "Ugh, they didn't take me with them!"

In the past, she would go everywhere with her mistress, but now it seemed she wasn't included in any outings.

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At Gracehold Estate, Leah had tied Samuel outside Leona's courtyard. He was battered and bruised, his face swollen and covered in footprints.

Dorothy arrived, and gasped at the sight of her grandson in such a pitiful state. "Someone, get Samuel down!"

Leah stood coldly before her,

holding along whip. "Let's see who dares to untie him. If the duchess is unharmed, he'll be fine. But if anything happens to her, I'll make sure he pays the price!"

"You're out of line! Who do you think you are? You're not the master of our family!" Dorothy was furious, and her face was red with anger. "Someone, take her away! Throw her out!" Leah cracked her whip, producing a sharp sound that made everyone hesitate to approach.

Abigail came out and sighed as she supported Dorothy. "Don't worry about him for now. The duchess is in a bad state, and Alana went to get Sebastian. I think we need to call Lady Heather over." FindNovel

"She brought this on herself!" Dorothy said angrily. "After all this time, her husband finally wants to reconcile with her, and what does she do? She gives him a cold shoulder every day. She knows she's pregnant and still speaks so harshly. It's no wonder she got hitt

"You spoiled him too much. It will lead to his downfall," Leah said coldly.

"How dare you!" Dorothy's face turned a shade of deep purple. She had spent her entire life in dignity-she had never been treated so rudely!

Just as she was about to order Leah to be beaten, a heart-wrenching scream echoed from inside. "Argh! Cari... It hurts so much!"

The sound was piercing, and it chilled Dorothy to her bones, causing her expression to change abruptly.

She sighed and said, "If she screams now, she'll be too exhausted to give birth later!"

Chapter 626

Leah was fuming with anger. "Get out of the way, old hag! I've put up with you for too long! I respected your age, but I didn't realize you were completely incompetent. I've never insulted an elder in my life, but I'll make an exception for you. You'd better not force me to slap you. If you can't keep your mouth shut, I'll sew it shut for you." Leah had always respected her elders and cared for the young, but she was, first and foremost, a martial artist. If she gave others an inch of respect and they tried to take a mile, then she wouldn't hold back from retaliating.

Dorothy was furious. Abigail quickly supported her and whispered as they walked, "Mother, please don't stir things up. It won't look good if the Hell Monarch's princess consort shows up and sees this."

"Am I supposed to be afraid of her?" Dorothy snapped.

The one she loathed most was Carissa. "Though she's a princess consort, she has no right to interfere in the affairs of our household. Even Lady Heather hasn't said a word! She's just a meddler, poking her nose where it doesn't belong!" However, hearing the cries coming from inside made Dorothy shiver a little.

"Isn't Sebastian's apprentice in there? What's she doing? Can't she use some drugs or something for the delivery?" she said.

They climbed the stone steps, and a room full of women waited in the outer room, separated by a curtain from Leona's delivery room.

Leona was already writhing in pain. Although the blood on her forehead had stopped, her face was badly swollen. Samuel had pushed her down the stone steps just as Leah and Alana were not around. By the time Alana rushed over, Leona had already fallen. The steps weren't high, but Leona was heavy, and her head struck the edge of the first step. By the time Alana scooped her up, blood was pouring from the wound.

Fortunately, Ivy had arrived a few days earlier and had tended to Leona's injuries quickly. Also, the midwife had been arranged in advance by Carissa-she was the best in the capital. Countless noble families had chosen her to assist with their deliveries.

After treating the wound on Leona's forehead, Ivy sensed that the situation was dire. Even though Leona was already in labor, a hard fall at this stage was serious.

"Go and call for Lady Heather!" Abigail was deeply worried, her palms slick with sweat. If something were to happen to Leona, the royal family would surely place the blame on the Earl of Gracehold's family. Both the queen dowager and the king held Leona in high regard. Someone dashed out, calling for the guards, who galloped off toward Hartstone Estate.

The men of the Earl of Gracehold's family weren't allowed in the courtyard, so they gathered in the side hall, anxiously awaiting news. It was clear how things had escalated.

Noah wished he could break

Samuel's legs. He had thought his son was sincere in reconciling with Leona, unaware that Samuel

harbored so much resentment he resorted to violence at the

slightest provocation. Co pet

Had Noah known, he would have never let Samuel return home. It was better to let him perish outside. It was only because Dorothy had taken pity on Samuel that they had brought him back.

The family members from the other

branches were present as well. This wasn't just a simple case of a woman giving birth-the duchess was involved. If anything happened to Leona, it would spell disaster for the Langley family.

"Lady Carissa has arrived!"

With that shout, the tension in the air thickened. While Carissa could be agreeable, she was just as capable of showing no mercy when angered.

Carissa paid no mind to the chatter as she hurried toward Leona's courtyard with Violet in tow.

As soon as they entered, they

spotted Samuel bound to a tree, his face battered and bruised. Blood

dripped from his mouth, and he could only manage to open one eye. His handsome features were completely gone, replaced by the visage of a pig.

"Carissa, Violet." Leah stepped forward, her voice thick with emotion. "I'm so sorry. We failed to look after the duchess properly."

"How is Leona?" Carissa asked just as a sharp yet gradually weakening voice came from inside.

"Cari... Cari..."

A sharp pang shot through Carissa's heart as she hurried inside.

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In the outer room, a group of women sprang to their feet at the sight of Carissa, but she didn't spare them a glance. She lifted the curtain and strode inside, with Violet close behind.

When Carissa saw Leona's condition, she gasped in shock.

How did Leona injure her forehead?

"Ivy, how are things?" Carissa grasped Leona's hand and settled at the edge of the bed, using her sleeve to wipe away the sweat and tears from Leona's face.

Ivy was administering acupuncture, the quilt pulled high, revealing a belly covered in needles.

With a heavy sigh, Ivy said, "It's more than just a case of disturbed labor. I'm afraid the fetus may have been harmed. We've given her labor-inducing medicine, but there are no signs of delivery yet—it's already been three hours." Leona's face twisted in agony. "Cari... It hurts so much."

"Don't be afraid, okay? I'm here, Leona." Carissa reassured her, turning to Ivy. "Is Sebastian not in the city?"

"He's treating someone on the outskirts. Alana has gone to fetch him. Let's hope she gets back in time." Ivy tried to maintain a calm demeanor to comfort everyone, but the slight tremor in her voice betrayed her tension and worry.

Violet turned and stepped outside, where Leah stood watching the group from the Earl of Gracehold's family, especially Dorothy. That old woman was always causing trouble, and her recent comments had crossed the line. Leah needed to keep an eye on her to prevent the older woman from sending anyone inside Leona's delivery room and speaking unpleasant words.

"Leah, what happened? How did it come to this?" Violet asked, concern etched on her face.

Leah's face was flushed with anger as she pointed at Samuel, still tied to the tree. "He pushed her, but we were also too lax in our vigilance."

Leah recounted the events. It turned out that Samuel had finally emerged from his sorrow over losing Ruby, and realized he had neglected Leona. He had been coming to Leona's courtyard daily, trying to win her back with flattery.

Each time he arrived, he wore a smile and brought delicious food and drink. He also repeatedly confessed his past mistakes and promised that he would never treat Leona that way again.

Leona hadn't openly confronted Samuel, but she hadn't paid him much attention either. After Alana and Leah confirmed that the food he brought was safe, she allowed everyone to eat it. Samuel had been visiting for about a week or so, continuously wearing a shameless smile and showering her with flattery, which had caused Alana and Leah to let their guard down.

When he arrived today, Leah was in

the kitchen preparing a medicinal dish. With Leona nearing her due date, Sebastian had prescribed a recipe to nourish her strength for childbirth. Since she didn't fully trust the people from the Earl of

Gracehold's family, Leah insisted on cooking it herself.

Seeing Samuel enter filled Leona with unease. She asked Alana to take her out for a walk, believing that staying active would help with the delivery.

The air outside was a bit chilly, prompting Alana to return for a shawl. But during that time, Samuel said something to Leona in the corridor and suddenly struck her across the face before pushing her down.

When Alana heard the commotion and rushed out, she discovered Leona had bumped her forehead and was bleeding.

Leah dashed back from the small

kitchen, immediately seizing Samuel and delivering a flurry of punches before binding him to a tree. The commotion was loud enough for everyone in Gracehold Estate to notice, and they began to flock over. However, Leona was in too much pain to care about Samuel.

Violet seethed with rage. She snatched Leah's whip, and struck Samuel again. His agonized screams echoed in the air, drawing the attention of Dorothy, who fumed, "Are you trying to kill me with your actions? Who do you think you are, trampling all over my family?" While Abigail felt pity for her son, she knew she couldn't intervene. She grabbed Dorothy's arm. "Mother, don't interfere. The worse he gets beaten now, the less angry the king will be when he sees it."

"She's brought this on herself! It's her own fault," Dorothy repeated in a cold voice. As she glanced at her grandson, tears welled up in her eyes.

Inside, Carissa listened to their

exchange while watching Leona's face drain of color. Leona appeared almost lifeless, and the bleeding showed no signs of stopping. With the cervix still closed, it seemed the baby might suffocate inside her, and she herself was in peril.

Even at this point, Dorothy was still making snide comments, and she was more concerned about her grandson than the lives at risk!

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Leona's maids, Hazel and Kate, were also crying in sorrow at Dorothy's words.

When Hazel saw Carissa preparing to head outside, she hurriedly spoke up, "Your Grace, Mr. Samuel was trying to convince Lady Leona to speak on his behalf to the king. He hoped to restore his position and title. Lady Leona refused, saying he didn't deserve it. In a fit of rage, he pushed her- it's not Lady Leona's fault! Madam Dorothy's words are deeply hurtful to Lady Leona."

Carissa was furious. She pushed aside the curtain and stepped out, her cold gaze landing squarely on Dorothy's face.

The older woman was momentarily taken aback by the sharpness of Carissa's eyes, but she quickly straightened up, reminding herself of her seniority and status. Even as a princess consort, Carissa had no right to meddle in the affairs of the Earl of Gracehold's family. "What do you intend to do, Your Grace?" Dorothy asked in a defensive tone.

Carissa fixed her with an icy stare. "If I hear one more word from your mouth that insults the duchess, I will have you arrested for disrespecting the royal family."

"How dare you-"

With a swift kick, Carissa sent a chair flying. It crashed against the door, splintering into pieces on the floor. The sound of the break echoed ominously alongside her cold voice. "Just watch me. If anything happens to Leona, your precious grandson will follow her into the grave."

Her words silenced everyone in the room. A chill ran down Dorothy's spine, and she found herself unable to scold Carissa for interfering with the affairs of her family.

Abigail sighed. "Right now, we need to focus on Leona. Your Grace, please calm down."

Kate had finished brewing the labor-inducing medicine and brought it over. Carissa took it from her, turned sharply, and reentered the delivery room.

Violet followed her inside and glanced at everyone present before addressing Abigail. "Your daughter-in-law is inside giving birth. Aren't you going to support her as her mother-in-law?"

Abigail had initially hoped to keep Dorothy calm to prevent her from saying something that would further provoke Carissa. But upon hearing Violet's words, Abigail instructed her sisters-in-law to "look after" Dorothy before following Violet into the room. Though Abigail had indulged her son, she had genuinely cared for Leona. Seeing Leona in such agony brought tears to her eyes.

"I'll help feed her," Abigail said, taking the medicine from Kate.

She sat beside Leona and began to spoon the medicine into her mouth, tears dripping down onto her wrist. "Leona, listen to me, okay? Don't think about anything else. Just focus on bringing this child into the world."

Leona gritted her teeth, and forced herself to drink the bitter concoction.

After finishing, the pain intensified. She cast a pleading glance at Carissa, her tears soaking the pillow beneath her. "Cari, help me."

Carissa felt a sharp pang in her heart as she grasped Leona's hand.

"How is she doing?" she asked Ivy urgently.

Ivy peeked beneath the quilt, and quickly removed all the needles. Then, she sighed and said, "Give her an Energy Pill and let her chew on some thousand-year-old Evergreen Root."

After administering the Energy Pill and the Evergreen Root, Carissa looked at Ivy, who looked worried. "I hope Alana can bring my mentor here soon."

However, Leona's pain continued to

escalate. It felt as though a massive hand was twisting her insides repeatedly compressing everything with a relentless grip. She arched her back, trying to curl up, but her belly was too swollen to allow any relief. Ivy wouldn't let her twist and turn, warning that it would only worsen the baby's suffocation.

The discomfort was unbearable. The pain consumed her thoughts, and all she wanted was for it to end as quickly as possible. She couldn't find anyone to help her. The only thing she could do was grip Carissa's hand tightly. In her desperation, she clawed at Carissa's delicate wrists, leaving several angry red lines.

Unable to contain herself any longer, she let out a piercing cry as she writhed on the bed. Both Carissa and Violet were frozen in fear, helpless as they watched her suffer. "Can't you do something to ease her pain, Ivy? She's going to die at this rate!" Carissa's voice was filled with urgency and dread.

Wiping the sweat from her brow,

Ivy's face had turned pale. "There's nothing I can do. We've already tried acupuncture and medication, but the pain hasn't subsided. I'm afraid the placenta has detached. It's very dangerous."

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Abigail nearly collapsed to the ground. She looked pleadingly at the midwife, but the midwife was also at a loss. In her lifetime, she had witnessed the dangers of childbirth many times, but when it became that perilous, there was no saving either the mother or the child. "What do we do? What can we do?" Abigail cried, tears streaming down her face as she wiped the sweat from Leona's brow. "You're suffering so much, Leona. I'm so sorry."

"It hurts..." Leona could only repeat those two words, her gaze pleading for help from one person after another, but no one could offer her relief.

Outside, hurried footsteps echoed-Heather had arrived.

She rushed into the delivery room, pushed Carissa aside, and took Leona's hand in her own.

"Leona, I'm here. How are you feeling?"

"Hurts..." Leona looked at her mother with no trace of joy. In fact, she looked fearful and wanted to pull away from Heather's grasp as she searched for her cousin.

"Just endure a little longer. Giving birth is painful. When I had you, it was agony, too, but I made it through. You can do this." Heather squatted down beside her and spoke softly. "Take slow, deep breaths in and out. It will help with the pain."

Ivy interjected, "Your Grace, she took a blow to the abdomen. The baby is likely in danger, and it could endanger the duchess' life as well. This pain is beyond mere endurance."

Heather snapped back, "Enough with your nonsense! Prince Harvey has already gone to fetch the royal physician. He will be here shortly."

Ivy thought to herself that the royal physician's skills were on par with her own. Only Sebastian could truly help, but she refrained from saying so. It wouldn't do to undermine the royal physician's reputation, as it would bring trouble for the Arcane Sanctum.

The royal physician arrived soon after, but he couldn't enter the room. Instead, he stood on the other side of the partition screen, asking about the situation before preparing more labor-inducing medicine. They had already given Leona a dose, and now they could only increase the amount.

At this point, Leona could hardly swallow anything. The excruciating pain made her nauseous. She managed to sip the concoction a couple of times before retching it back up.

With no other option, they hung a curtain at the foot of the bed and called the royal physician in to check her pulse. However, the physician hesitated, citing that men should not enter the birthing room, especially considering Leona's status. He was unwilling to risk offending anyone, and only instructed Ivy to take her pulse.

Ivy moved forward to do so. The royal physician frowned as he looked at the results. "Is her cervix not fully dilated yet?"

"It has opened a little," the midwife replied.

"How can this be? Is there a lot of bleeding?"

"It's not excessive, but her waters broke. It's been over two hours."

The royal physician asked, "What about using acupuncture to induce labor?"

Ivy said, "We've tried, but there's been no effect."

The royal physician frowned, and stayed silent for a while. Heather urgently urged, "You have to come up with something!" Hearing Leona's cries growing increasingly desperate, the royal physician felt a wave of helplessness wash over him. He sighed.

"I don't know what else to do. Please forgive me, Your Grace."

Heather turned pale, "You're a royal physician! I-If you don't know what to do, what are we to do?"

She suddenly looked at Carissa, her eyes wide with urgency. "Carissa, think of something to help your cousin. You know Sebastian, right? You must send someone to fetch him!"

"Alana has already gone to get him,"

Carissa replied. She turned to Hazel and Kate and said, "Bring more hot water and apply a warm compress to her belly. Let's see if we can help things along."

Abigail left Hazel and Kate with Leona while she stepped out to give orders. At this moment, the people from Graehold Estate needed to take action. Even if it seemed futile, they needed to do something

Meanwhile, Harvey was in the side hall, and servants were bringing him updates. Initially, he thought the arrival of the royal physician would be enough, but when he learned that the royal physician had no solution, a wave of anxiety gripped him.

Chapter 630

They waited for nearly an hour, and Leona had lost the strength to cry out in pain. She felt as though she had been pulled from the depths of water, her body drenched in sweat.

Carissa stood by, wiping Leona's forehead with a cloth and murmuring comforting words into her ear. But in her agony, Leona couldn't process any of it. She felt as if she were on the brink of death. She managed to open her eyes with great effort, but they were vacant and hollow. She forced out a pained whisper, "It'd be better...better to just die."

"Don't say such foolish things. Sebastian is almost here," Carissa choked out, overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness. It was the emotion she feared the most, as it signified her inability to do anything. Tears streamed down Heather's face. "Leona, please listen to me. Don't talk like that. Just hold on a little longer. Listen to your cousin. Sebastian is coming."

Leona could only emit feeble groans, her eyes wide and unseeing. All her remaining strength was devoted to fighting the relentless pain. It felt as if her very insides were being twisted and turned, and she could hardly bear it. Outside the room, Dorothy finally fell silent and felt fear creeping into her heart. She had initially thought that the impact to Leona's belly might just lead to labor, but she never expected the severity of the situation. She wasn't worried about Leona. She was worried that if something happened to Leona, it would implicate Samuel. If the king were to unleash his fury, the Earl of Gracehold's family would likely cease to exist. Samuel's life would likely be forfeit as well.

Realizing this, Dorothy began to tremble. She cast several discreet glances at the nearby servants, signaling them to find someone who could release Samuel and ensure he fled for his life.

The servants understood her intent, and went to gather a few guards to help with Samuel's release. However, Leah caught wind of their plan. With a sharp crack of her whip, she drove them back. "Who dares to set him free? Without Lady Carissa's order, I'll bind anyone who tries!"

Leah knew the people in Gracehold Estate well. Others might hesitate, but that old woman would never allow her grandson to come to harm. If Dorothy sensed even the slightest hint of danger, she would see to it that he escaped. So Leah stood guard, determined not to let anyone approach him.

Just when everyone was feeling anxious, Alana rushed in at lightning speed, carrying Sebastian on her back. Sebastian's face was pale.

"I can walk myself!" he protested.

He wasn't on his last legs, so being carried by a woman was just humiliating. It wasn't dignified at all!

Alana moved like a gust of wind, darting straight from the outer room into the delivery room before finally setting Sebastian down.

Once his feet hit the ground, Sebastian steadied himself and then kicked Alana lightly. "You've embarrassed me."

Breathless, Alana shot back, "You can scold me later. Right now, we need to check on Lady Leona!"

From behind the partition screen, the royal physician called out urgently, "The duchess is of royal blood. How can a man enter during her labor?" Heather was taken aback and raised her hand to stop Sebastian. "You... You should stay behind the partition screen."

Sebastian glanced at Leona, and immediately sensed the gravity of the situation. His expression

darkened "This is a matter of life et

and death! Are we really going to worry about decorum now? Is it a choice between life and reputation?"

Outside, Dorothy began to protest. "This can't happen! It will ruin the duchess' honor! If a woman loses her honor, it's like losing her life!"

"Silence!" Carissa shouted. She

pushed Heather aside with one

hand, and used her other to push Abigail away. "Sebastian, please check on her. She's in terrible pain!"

"No, Carissa, you can't harm your cousin like this-" Heather hadn't finished her sentence before Violet stepped in and dragged her out.

"You can stay outside. Don't go in!" Violet positioned herself at the curtain. Her arms were crossed defiantly over her chest, barring anyone from entering.

After checking Leona's pulse,

Sebastian's expression shifted. He pressed against her belly through the fabric to confirm what he felt. After doing so, he spoke in a grave tone. "The child is likely gone. Our priority now is to save the mother."

"Gone?" Abigail swayed unsteadily, but she quickly steadied herself. "Sebastian, please save Leona!"