

HER GRACEFUL WAR SONG

Chapter 7 Chapter 7

After Carissa left, Derek hurried into the study and announced, "Your Majesty, the queen dowager sent someone over. She requests your presence when you're available."

+25 BONUS

Salvador sighed. "Mother is probably worried and anxious because of Carissa's situation. Alright, prepare the carriage."

Peonies were in full bloom at Serenity Palace, the queen dowager's residence. They exuded an air of opulence and regal beauty, their fragrance surpassing all others. The roses climbing the palace walls had also blossomed, showcasing a stunning and exquisite charm.

Wearing a crimson-purple robe and a white jade hairpin adorning her hair, the queen dowager sat on a chair in the main hall. Her face looked weary.

"Blessings upon you, Mother." Salvador bowed as he approached the woman.

The queen dowager, Victoria Lancaster, looked at him and dismissed the attendants before sighing.

"The marriage edict you issued was extremely unwise. Your actions not only disrespected the Marquis of Northwatch but also set a bad example for the people of the kingdom."

Her tone grew stern as she continued, "In our kingdom, Starhaven, there are laws. Officials of the court are not allowed to take concubines within five years of marriage. Five years is already a short time.

"In my opinion, a man should only be allowed to bypass this criterion if he reaches the age of forty and is without a male heir. Only then can he take a concubine without waiting for the time limit to be up. "Now, by publicly bestowing a marriage edict upon Aurora to become Barrett's legal wife, you've set a precedent. Do you think there's any hope left for women in this kingdom?"

"On Barrett's wedding day, he went to battle. He hasn't even consummated his marriage with

taking another wife. Are you trying to drive her to her death?"

Carissa yet, and now,

As Victoria finished speaking, tears streamed down her face. "The poor girl. She's the only one left alive in her family, and now she's being bullied like this."

The reason Victoria was so distressed was that she and Carissa's mother, Melanie Sinclair, formerly Melanie Sullivan, had been close friends. Victoria had watched Carissa grow up from a young age.

Seeing his mother in tears, Salvador felt guilty and knelt before her. Mother, I didn't think my decision through. At the city gates, Barrett requested the marriage edict in front of everyone, as a reward for repelling the enemy. I knew it was inappropriate, but he said he desired nothing else and needed no rewards. If I didn't grant his request, he

+25 BONUS

Chapter 7

wouldn't have backed down."

"So, just because he wouldn't have backed down, Carissa has to suffer? Hasn't the marquis family sacrificed enough people? Do you have any idea how difficult her life has been this past year?" Victoria said angrily.

Salvador also felt sorry for Carissa, but had to say, "Mother, Barrett has had a change of heart. Even if he can't marry Aurora officially, he won't treat Carissa well anymore. Just now, Carissa came to me and begged for a divorce. I granted it."

Victoria frowned deeply. "What? That foolish child! Why did she beg for a divorce? Where will she go after that?"

"She said she would return to Northwatch Estate and adopt a son to honor her father's memory."

Victoria sighed repeatedly. "Can she really go back to the estate? She has seen the corpses of her relatives scattered all over that place. Isn't she afraid she'll have nightmares every night if she stays there?" Victoria's heart ached beyond measure.

"Since she came to the palace, why didn't she come to me? I could have intervened and taught her how to control Aurora.

"There was no need for a divorce. Barrett has already achieved military merits. If she had sought a different royal edict, she could have lived a luxurious life forever. Why did she choose such a difficult path?" Salvador

replied, "Mother, her mind is made up. She said she didn't want to waste her life with them. Think about it. If she has to watch Barrett being affectionate with another woman every day, how could she bear it?"

Those words struck a chord with Victoria, making her face turn pale.

She had loved the late king, but he was different. The one he had loved most was a concubine, followed by many others.

"A woman's life is so difficult. Aurora is a female general, and I once admired her. I thought she could elevate the status of women. But little did I know that as soon as she gained power, she would turn against her own kind. I am very disappointed in her," said Victoria.

Salvador's expression was also unpleasant. He was deeply disappointed in Barrett and Aurora. But considering that they had just quelled the discord at the border city, he couldn't criticize them too harshly. All he could do was summon Barrett to the palace to reprimand him.

Chapter 8

The next day, Barrett was summoned to the palace. He expected to be received with honor, considering his current status as a prominent figure in the court. He didn't expect to be left waiting outside the palace's study for a whole hour.

Finally, Derek emerged and said, "General Warren, His Majesty is busy at the moment. He asks you to return home and says he will summon you again another day. Barrett looked puzzled.

He had waited outside the study for so long but hadn't seen any ministers entering or leaving. This indicated that Salvador wasn't discussing state affairs with the court officials.

"Mr. Walker, why did His Majesty summon me in the first place?" asked Barrett.

Derek smiled and replied, "I'm unsure of the reason, General Warren."

Barrett felt perplexed but didn't dare to barge in and ask the king directly.

"Could you kindly give me a hint? Did I do something wrong?"

"You've just returned victorious, General Warren. You've earned only merits thanks to your contributions," said Derek, the smile never leaving his face.

"Then, His Majesty..."

Derek interrupted and politely said, "Please return home, General Warren."

Barrett wanted to inquire further, but Derek had already turned and ascended the steps. The general could only leave with a sense of unease,

At the victory celebration, Salvador had praised him and Aurora greatly. Why then, just a day later, was Barrett being treated so coldly?

As he exited the palace gates, leading his horse, he overheard the palace guards whispering to each other.

"Yesterday, the general's wife came to the palace. Now, the general himself is here. Could something have gone wrong with the marriage edict?"

"Stop your nonsense. His Majesty announced his approval in front of officials and the people. How could there be a problem now?"

Barrett's expression darkened as he turned around hurriedly. "What did you say? My wife came to the palace yesterday?"

The two guards hesitated for a moment before nodding.

"Yes, my lord. She waited here for an hour before His Majesty summoned her."

+25 BONUS