

War Song 72

Chapter 72

Carissa's hair was a tangled mess. It was stiff with dried blood from the battle, and there were strands clumped together in all directions. Even a bird's nest looked better.

Her wooden armor was torn and stained with blood, and her face was a canvas of grime and mud. She hadn't bathed or washed herself in many days, and even the beggars on the street would appear neater compared to her.

"Are you uncomfortable?" Rafael asked, recalling how vibrant and lively she had been each year when visiting the Pathfinders Guild.

She seemed like a completely different person now.

Carissa's cracked lips parted to utter a single word. "Hungry!"

Rafael snorted. "Yes, we're all hungry. Just bear with it."

"I'm so exhausted!" Carissa replied weakly, "I'm so tired I can barely stand."

"Carissa!" Rafael said sternly. "Do you realize that no general in Starhaven's history has defeated so many enemies on their first battlefield? Not even your father. You've done something remarkable. So, hold your head up high and walk out there with pride."

Carissa straightened up, adopting a proud posture, even though she hobbled with a pained limp and used her Rose Spear as a makeshift cane. Then, she made her way out of the command tent.

Rafael followed her, smiling, but there was a touch of sadness in his eyes. He had watched her grow up, and had once thought.... Supplies of food had arrived from Tower City. Although it wasn't much, it was enough to give the soldiers a good meal.

That evening, Rafael gathered the senior commanders for a meeting. Carissa, still leaning on her Rose Spear, limped into the tent. Inside, everyone looked at her with admiration. The Sinclair family's female general was truly impressive!

Rafael called the commanders together to plan the next battle. He pushed a chess piece across the board, his eyes flashing coldly. "Next, we'll be attacking the city!"

The commanders were taken aback, feeling that such a move was overly risky. Given the current number and weaponry of the allied forces of Westhaven and Sandoria, attacking the city seemed like a hopeless

task.

Only Carissa asked, "A feigned attack, right?"

Rafael turned his gaze to her. "Exactly."

Carissa asked, "So, the first time is a feigned attack. The second time is also a feigned attack, and the third time is the real assault, right?"

Rafael waved her over. "Commander Sinclair, come here."

Using her spear as support, Carissa walked over. "Yes, marshal!"

Rafael stood up, and pinched her cheek. "How did you become so smart? You're a natural leader."

Carissa winced. "Marshal, that hurts!"

Rafael laughed heartily. "Once you're a soldier, you can't be so delicate."

Carissa wasn't being delicate, the biting cold was causing her face, which had been pampered for years, to ache painfully. Rafael's fingers were rough and calloused, and the pinch felt like needles jabbing into

her face.

After laughing, Rafael said, "We need to capture Ilyrian before the reinforcements arrive. We'll drive them to Simonton City, and then we'll face them in the final battle there. Commander Sinclair,

I look forward to seeing how you and your husband will work together. I hope you both shine on the battlefield."

Carissa considered mentioning her divorce with Barrett, to avoid awkwardness if he and Aurora arrived with reinforcements and everyone still thought they were married. She also thought it might prevent misunderstandings, especially since she and Aurora were temporarily aligned against the same enemy.

Before she could speak, another general, Owen Llyod, said, "Barrett is truly fortunate to have married someone as skilled and brave as Commander Sinclair.

Timothy smiled at Carissa. "Carissa, if he dares to mistreat you in the future, just let me know. I'll deal with him, even if his rank surpasses mine."

"No need for that," Owen added with a smile. "If Barrett dares to bully her, her own soldiers will stand up for her. Besides, the son-in-law chosen by Madam Sinclair herself can't be that bad. Let's not speak ill of them and spoil their relationship."

When they mentioned her mother had personally chosen her husband, Carissa's words got stuck in her

throat.

Rafael noticed her change in expression, and felt she was hiding something. However, since she didn't say anything, pressing further didn't feel right.