

War Song 751

Chapter 751

Violet left, her heart heavy with both anger and sorrow

Melanie and Carmen were just a reflection of the women harmed by Eleanor. They weren't the worst off. They were still alive and had been able to leave Harmony Palace.

Countless others had already turned to bones.

The hatred in Violet's heart would never ease unless Eleanor was torn to a thousand pieces.

Meanwhile, Carissa remained at the Supreme Court. After Florence woke up and drank some soup, she was sent back to the interrogation room. Rafael insisted that further questioning was unnecessary, but Carissa had something to say.

They were in the same interrogation room as before, but the scribe was absent, and Rafael sat hidden behind the partition screen.

Carissa faced Florence, and the table stood between them.

Florence's face was pale, and there wasn't any light in her eyes. There was a wry smile on her lips as she sighed.

"What's the point of questioning me further? What else do you think I have to say? Do you want me to testify against Grand Princess Eleanor for treason? You don't need my testimony. You already have evidence from the dungeon. The things you found don't require any confessions, and His Majesty won't let her off the hook. Why put me through this? Why keep kicking me when I'm down? If she's truly guilty of heinous crimes, she will get her retribution."

Carissa countered, "What can her retribution erase? What can it bring back? The evil deeds she's done will always exist. The dead won't come back to life. You think she's pitiful, Florence, but she was only rejected by my dad. She still lived in incredible luxury. Some people yearn for things their entire lives, but she received what she wanted without effort. Others could have sacrificed everything and still not afford even a table in Harmony Palace.

Her

“She was the favored daughter of King Augustus, and was blessed with boundless fortune and riches. Life has been smooth sailing, and the only setback she faced was wanting someone she couldn’t have. You say she loved my dad more than my mom did, but that’s nonsense. It’s just her self-pity for not getting what she wanted.

“No, she never truly loved my dad. If she had, she would have let go when she learned he didn’t love her back. You say she respected my dad? Not at all. If she truly respected him, she wouldn’t have used his rejection as an excuse to harm others with such cruelty.”

Florence watched Carissa intently and narrowed her eyes. “You’re not her, so you can’t understand the pain she feels. What do you know?”

“Obviously, I’m not her. I can’t comprehend a twisted mindset that demands death from others over a little grievance or setback. What more could she possibly want from life? If my dad had married her, would she have allowed him to continue fighting on the battlefield even if King Augustus had agreed to it? Her so-called love is domineering, dictatorial, and lacking in respect.”

“No, that’s just your assumption.” Florence shook her head. “You don’t understand the self-torment she’s endured over the years. She’s been through a lot. If she had married your dad, she would have respected all his decisions and taken pride in him.”

“Who are you trying to fool? Do you really believe your own words?” Carissa’s expression was cold.

“Grand Princess Eleanor treats human life like weeds. Do you think she would be willing to let my dad fight off bandits and protect our kingdom? She’s someone who takes lives and spills blood to achieve a fleeting moment of satisfaction just because she’s faced with a minor grievance. Can you truly expect someone like her to support my dad without complaint when he wanted to fight valiantly for countless citizens?

“King Augustus pampered her all her life, but she hated him and even participated in treason to exact revenge—all because she was refused a marriage edict. Can you expect such a person to let my dad embody the ideals of loyalty to the throne and love for the people?”

Tears glistened in Florence’s eyes but did not fall, her expression bleak. “She knew your dad had great ambitions. How could she possibly stand in his way?”

“Knowing something is easy, but doing it is hard. The only person who stayed by my dad’s side without complaint for all those years was my mom. She gave birth to seven of us, managed the household, and never let my dad worry about our family for even a moment.

“After the initial passion between a man and a woman faded, she had to face the growth of her children, the tediousness of family matters, and the constant anxiety when my dad went to war. To me, my dad is a hero, and so is my mom. Can you honestly say Grand Princess Eleanor could ever measure up to my mother?”

Florence opened her

b “She-”

Carissa cut her off, interjecting, “She can’t. She would throw a tantrum over the slightest issue with my dad, vent her frustrations on the servants when there were small disagreements, and even cut off their fingers and toes just to feel better. Don’t compare her to my mom. She doesn’t even measure up to a single strand of my mom’s hair!”

Chapter 752

Florence remained silent for a long time. She was fully aware that Eleanor could never measure up to Melanie Sullivan.

In Eleanor’s heart, her grievances outweighed everything else. If she had married Hector and he disobeyed her even once, she would undoubtedly have caused a scene and shaken the very foundations of the earth.

Carissa continued, “And you said that concubines are lowly while the grand princess is noble. So, no matter what she does to them, it’s all considered a blessing. If I were to give you such a ‘blessing’, would you kneel in gratitude and offer up your fingers and toes for me to chop off one by one?”

Florence didn’t look up. Her eyes were downcast, and she was unable to muster a single retort.

“Most of those so-called lowly concubines were favored young women in their families. Whether from wealthy households or common folk, their parents likely spoiled them just like you spoiled Grand Princess Eleanor.

“But they were abducted and quietly met terrible ends within Harmony Palace. And you still think they should be grateful? When you ponder such thoughts, doesn’t it feel horrifying? I don’t know if there are vengeful spirits in this world, but if there are, they must linger endlessly within Harmony Palace. No wonder rituals are performed every year during the Emberfest Festival to help those souls find peace. Have you ever dreamed of those deceased concubines and little boys, Florence?”

Florence suddenly covered her mouth, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Carissa looked at her coldly. “You should respect life.”

After delivering her final words, she stood up and walked out.

Rafael emerged from behind the partition screen. He followed her out and instructed someone to take Florence back to her cell.

Florence stumbled as she was led away, her back hunched and no longer holding any trace of her former dignity.

Carissa said, “Let her rest for a couple of days, but we still need to question her. She knows where Lord Henry’s daughters have gone, the former haunts of Grand Princess Eleanor’s trusted confidants, and the fates of the guards and servants who have been replaced one after another.”

“Don’t worry. We’ll uncover everything.” Rafael replied.

As the two made their way to the front yard of the Supreme Court, they were met by Matthew, who rushed up to report, “We’ve unearthed the box, Your Highness, Commander Sinclair. There’s indeed a small notebook inside. I took a quick look, and it records the origins of every individual—names, ages upon arrival, and even the ages and causes of death for some.”

Rafael

expression darkened as he said to Carissa, “Let’s go!”

There were two notebooks, and each of them took one

Carissa's contained details of every child born—whether male or female, and who their moms were. Rafael's held the histories, names, and ages of each concubine, along with how they entered the household.

After a thorough examination, they exchanged notebooks. Carissa saw there had been a girl named Wendy Lloyd, who had lost her fingers and toes. She was from Valken. Her dad was a carpenter, and she had three older brothers, making her the youngest sister.

Florence had even noted how closely the women resembled Melanie Sullivan. Wendy's resemblance was marked at 80 percent. She had been brought to Eleanor by Fiona at the age of fifteen and died at eighteen.

Carissa hastily flipped through the pages to find how many times Fiona's name was mentioned, but there was only a single entry. As for other women, none bore such a high resemblance as Wendy. Even Melanie Lester had only a 40 to 50 percent similarity. There were even some women who bore no similarity to Melanie Sullivan, and only had similar names.

Some women had been bought, but the majority had been abducted—only five were bought outright. Carissa tallied the figures. There had been a total of 182 individuals, of which 142 were already dead, meaning only 40 remained alive.

On the following page, Florence indicated that not all the women had been Henry's concubines. Some had been brought to Harmony Palace so Eleanor could torture them to vent her anger. After that, they were killed. Some bodies had been dumped in mass graves, while others were cast into an ancient well.

Over the years, 28 male infants had been born, none of whom survived. There were 36 daughters, with seven dying shortly after birth and others sent away due to unattractive appearances. As for those who had survived and were raised well, like Carmen and Celeste, there was no record of them in the

notebooks.

Rafael slammed his hand on the table in anger. "This is utterly insane!"

Matthew said in a low voice, "I've looked through it as well, Your Highness. Fortunately, this records the origins of those women, so we can send people to inform each of their families."

"Have the retrieval teams returned yet?" Rafael asked.

"Not yet. The well is very deep and has been sealed for a long time. We need to wait until the stench dissipates a bit before anyone can go down. The people sent to retrieve the box reported that they had descended, but there were decayed and swollen bodies in the well that couldn't be brought up—more than one, in fact. These rotting corpses are also hindering the retrieval of other remains."

"Are the coroners on-site? Send a request to the Royal Citadel and have them dispatch some to assist," Rafael commanded.

"They have already gone."

"Good. Have the weapons been accounted for? I need to report to the palace," Rafael inquired further.

"Yes, the inventory is here." Matthew quickly pulled a ledger from the table and handed it to Rafael. "Everything is categorized for your review."

Rafael opened the ledger.

There were 1,000 bows, 500 crossbow machines, 380 bundles of arrows—each bundle containing 100 arrows—800 sets of full armor, 300 long swords, 300 spears, 300 short knives, 600 swords, and three barrels of gunpowder. The total count of other weapons—axes, iron rods, and whips—exceeded 1,000.

If these weapons were said to be for the defense of the residence, no one would believe it.

Moreover, the regulations regarding armor are extremely strict. Even royal residences were not permitted to possess full metal armor.

Rafael had a set, but it was only for his own use and not his soldiers.

The guards in the estate wore either leather armor or wooden armor, and even these couldn't be worn outside. Doing so was a violation of the law, with penalties that could vary widely depending on the severity of the offense and whether anyone was inclined to make a big deal out of it.

Even if Matthew could make excuses for the other weapons in the ledger, just the presence of crossbows or armor could be considered treasonous.

Rafael turned to Carissa. "I'll head to the palace for a bit. This evidence could strip her of her title as a grand princess."

Stripping Eleanor of her title and reducing her to commoner status would grant them more leeway in the investigation. When it came to torture, Eleanor was more familiar with it than anyone else.

Carissa replied, "Alright, you go ahead. I'll review the other testimonies and look into the noblewomen who have had frequent dealings with Grand Princess Eleanor over the years. We need to ask the right questions."

She had a top choice in mind—Yuvan's household, specifically Molly and Fiona. Although they hadn't interacted much with Eleanor while in Valken, they had visited Harmony Palace several times since returning to the capital. Additionally, Yuvan and Eleanor were raised by Ruth, which created a bond that

warranted some inquiries.

It would also unsettle Yuvan, making him regret his timing in returning to the capital. If he were still in Valken, this turmoil would never have touched him.

Rafael brought the two notebooks from Florence along with him to the palace.

Salvador examined the count of weapons, his blood boiling. "Eleanor has some nerve! How dare she harbor treasonous thoughts and plot against the kingdom!"

Derek quickly pleaded, "Please calm down, Your Majesty!"

Salvador's gaze darkened as he turned to Rafael. "Interrogate her. Use whatever means necessary to force her to reveal the mastermind behind this,"

Rafael replied, “Your Majesty, she is still a grand princess. The royal family is exempt from such methods in public investigations.”

Salvador’s voice turned icy, “Issue an edict to revoke her grand princess title and expel her from the royal family. Make her a commoner!”

“Understood!” Derek hurried off to have the edict drafted.

Rafael added, “Your Majesty, the other two ledgers detail the concubines abducted for Henry over the years. There were more than 180 women, with over a hundred murdered. Currently, only about 40 are still alive. All the boys born to them were killed in various ways, while the girls were raised to be integrated into noble families. Investigating this will take considerable effort.”

Salvador took the ledger and began reading, horrified by the revelations. The thought of treason was one thing, but such madness and cruelty were another. Such a person from the royal family was a disgrace to the entire lineage.

“Issue a directive to Royal Citadel’s governor, Anthony Klein, to assist the Capital Guard in investigating these cases. We must ensure justice for both the deceased and the living, as well as their families,” said the king, seething.

Chapter 754

Since the night of the Emberfest Festival, after Molly and Fiona returned home and shared what happened at Harmony Palace, Yuvan had been consumed by anxiety.

He didn’t need Wayne to advise him. He understood that it was crucial not to leave the capital for Valken at such a critical moment. Otherwise, it would be like declaring his guilt. Wayne advised him to focus on his duties in the palace, feigning ignorance about everything that had transpired. Those Yuvan had brought to the capital had to remain low and not do anything.

On the surface, Yuvan maintained a calm demeanor; inside, he was a whirlpool of turmoil. He wanted to gather information but had no way to do so. He knew that those who had been closely involved with Eleanor were all on edge, and his status as a prince made things even more delicate.

After considering his options, the only person he could potentially glean information from was Molly, whose cousin, Violet, resided at Hell Monarch Estate and was Carissa’s close friend.

So, before entering the palace to care for Ruth today, Yuvan went to Molly's chambers.

“You don't have any acquaintances in the capital, and imagine this time has been quite dull for you. I recall you have a cousin at Hell Monarch Estate. You should visit her more often, have some conversations, and subtly inquire about the case involving Grand Princess Eleanor. Just make sure it doesn't raise any suspicions.”

Although Molly didn't fully grasp the gravity of Yuvan's treasonous plans, she sensed he was hiding something from her. The events of that night still frightened her.

“Your Highness, if Grand Princess Eleanor is involved in treason, it's probably best if we don't get entangled in her affairs.”

Yuvan's expression darkened slightly as he replied, “It's precisely because it's a grave charge that we need to find out more. After all, she is my sister and was raised alongside me. If anything were to happen, it could implicate us. We need to gather information so we can prepare for any potential fallout.”

Reluctantly, Molly conceded, “Alright, I'll visit her today

“Remember, don't ask directly. Use subtle hints instead,” Yuvan reminded her.

“Understood, I'll keep that in mind.”

However, Molly didn't make any effort to seek out Violet after Yuvan left for the palace.

She knew this was her chance to win favor with Yuvan and overshadow Fiona, but it also wasn't exactly a good opportunity. Her cousin was difficult to deal with Violet often acted superior and had given Molly nothing but cold shoulders during their previous encounters. Even strangers would at least nod in acknowledgment, but Violet wouldn't even do that.

So, despite promising Yuvan she would seek out Violet, Molly decided against it.

Before entering the palace, Yuvan had naturally exchanged words with Fiona. She was equally anxious, unsure of the current situation, and afraid that Eleanor would expose the involvement of Yuvan and his family.

Fiona was desperate to learn more. It was already past five in the evening, and when she found Molly still

at home, she approached her.

However, the maid informed her that Molly was napping. Fiona's face turned a deep shade of red in frustration and she snapped at the maid, "Go inform her that Prince Yuvan wants to know if she has visited Ms. Spencer."

Molly was enjoying a peaceful sleep when Fiona's loud entrance jolted her awake, leaving her quite displeased. Upon hearing it was Yuvan's command, she reluctantly got up to deal with the situation, instructing someone to bring Fiona in.

As soon as Fiona entered the room, she exclaimed, "Why haven't you left yet, Lady Molly? The prince has already sent someone to ask about it."

Molly replied tersely, "My cousin isn't idle in Hell Monarch Estate. Given the gravity of this situation and the Supreme Court's involvement, she's certainly busy attending to matters. I wouldn't be able to see her if I went in the middle of the day. It would be best to wait until tomorrow morning."

Fiona's anxiety flared at her words. "But His Highness wants you to go today! You can't put it off until tomorrow! The situation changes rapidly, and knowing something a little earlier can make all the difference."

Molly shot Fiona an annoyed look. "What does a rapidly changing situation have to do with us? We're not involved in the treason. We're merely trying to gather information. It's not like we're in a life-or-death situation. Besides, didn't I already say? Violet is likely not at home during the day."

Fiona was exasperated by Molly's indifference, but she was unable to explain her urgency.

"How do you know she's not there if you haven't even gone? You should at least make the effort. Even if she isn't home, it'll give you something to tell His Highness later. Otherwise, he might blame you for it."

Molly replied coldly, "I am the prince's wife. There's no question of blame between us. But if this matter is troubling him, I will take it seriously. Get a carriage ready. I'll leave right away."

Seeing her willingness to go, Fiona didn't care how condescending Molly's tone was. Fiona hurried outside to call for the carriage.

As soon as Molly stepped out, she spotted Carissa approaching with a large contingent of Capital Guards. At first, Molly didn't recognize Carissa, but after a moment of scrutiny, she identified her.

Carissa was accompanied by Michael and a dozen guards, and she had made a grand entrance. Their show of force was deliberate, as they intended to interrogate several noblewomen and titled ladies. It was essential for Carissa to make a statement, to show that if she could confront Yuvan and his household with such authority, then the other noble families could expect nothing less in terms of respect. If she didn't create a similar spectacle for the other families, it would appear as though they were being treated with leniency. This approach would not only avoid offending them but might also earn their gratitude.

Molly saw their entrance into Edgeview Estate and barked, "What do you think you're doing? How dare you! This is Prince Yuvan's residence!"

Michael stepped forward and said loudly, "The Capital Guard is here under the king's orders to assist the Supreme Court in investigating the treason case against Eleanor. We have some questions for Lady Molly and Lady Fiona."

Molly was taken aback. "What business do you have at Edgeview Estate regarding a treason investigation? There's nothing to discuss! Just go back,"

"Are you trying to defy the king's command, Lady Molly?" Carissa said icily.

Fiona rushed out from the main hall, her face paling at Carissa's words. She quickly said, "Since it's the king's command, please come in at once."

Looking up, she finally noticed Carissa was wearing official attire. Though she wasn't aware of any other news, she knew that Carissa was now the commander of the Mystic Army.

"Oh, so it's you, Commander Sinclair! What a surprise," Fiona said with a forced smile before turning to Molly. "Quickly, call the children to come out."

Upon returning to the capital, Yuvan had formally bestowed the title of heir apparent upon Fiona's son, Lucian Sanford.

As for Randall, the son of the late Avis, he was granted the title of county duke. Randall was Yuvan's eldest son, born of a concubine who had died, and he had been raised by Avis. Despite having assumed the status of a direct descendent instead of a concubine's son, Randall had no hope of being named heir, especially given the tragic circumstances surrounding Avis' death.

Fiona welcomed Carissa and the Capital Guards Inside to avoid saying too much at the gates, where prying eyes from other residences might catch wind of the situation and fuel unnecessary speculation. She called for Sabrina and Stephanie, along with Randall. Fiona hoped that since Avis was Carissa's maternal aunt, Carissa would be lenient toward Yuvan's household.

Fiona knew Yuvan would be under suspicion, but at least they were only here to ask questions, not to haul anyone away. There was no evidence linking Yuvan's household to Eleanor's alleged treason, meaning Eleanor hadn't implicated them yet.

Once in the main room, Carissa, Michael, and the others took their seats. They had brought along a scribe from the Capital Guard office to record the proceedings. Before any questions could be posed, Randall entered with Sabrina and Stephanie.

The two county duchesses had never been particularly close to their mom, Avis, and they were even less fond of Carissa. Upon entering, they sat down without acknowledging anyone.

However, Randall nodded slightly to Carissa and greeted her.

Carissa nodded in return. "Everyone, please take a seat I'm here on official business. You'll answer my questions as they come."

Stephanie furrowed her brow, her expression icy. "What kind of business is this? Are you trying to make a name for yourself by bullying our family now that you're an official?"

"Stephanie, just listen to Commander Sinclair and answer what she asks," Fiona interjected, giving her a pointed look. "She's your cousin. She won't make things difficult for you."

Stephanie scoffed, turning her face away in annoyance “Just get on with your questions already.”

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Carissa didn't seem angered by Stephanie's tone. Instead, she turned to the scribe, Kirk, and said flatly, Note that Lady Stephanie appears impatient and unwilling to cooperate. This raises concerns of defiance. against royal orders.”

Kirk opened his book, and Michael quickly prepared the ink.

“Understood, Commander Sinclair.”

Stephanie was taken aback, her cheeks flushing with indignation. “Carissa, don't say such nonsense! When have I ever defied orders?”

Carissa remained unmoved in her seat and continued, “Also note that Lady Stephanie scolded me and has displayed an extremely poor attitude.”

Kirk's quill flew across the page. “Noted. It's been recorded.”

Stephanie walked over and saw that Kirk had indeed written down Carissa's words. In a fit of anger, she reached out to tear the page, but Michael swiftly blocked her with his sword.

Then, he coldly said, “Note that Lady Stephanie attempted to destroy the testimony.”

Stephanie stumbled back two steps. She was caught off guard by the blade and didn't dare to retaliate further.

Seeing that Carissa showed no leniency despite their familial ties, Fiona quickly stood up to ease the tension.

*Commander Sinclair, please don't hold this against Stephanie. She's young and inexperienced and has never encountered such a situation. Besides, you're cousins. There's no need to make things so tense, right?”

Carissa didn't even glance at Stephanie, her expression cool and distant. "The Capital Guard handles cases with impartiality. What do familial ties have to do with this, Lady Fiona? They share no more bond with their own mom than they do with me."

Fiona understood that Carissa was not someone to be trifled with. She forced a smile and said, "Of course. If you have any questions, please ask. We will certainly answer truthfully."

Carissa fixed her gaze on Fiona, "Are all of you aware that Eleanor has been hoarding weapons?"

Fiona immediately shook her head. She looked at Kirk and said, "No, we didn't know anything about this- nothing at all. Prince Yuvan doesn't know either."

Carissa replied, "Whether Prince Yuvan knows or not is a matter for him to clarify. Just answer whether you all knew."

Unease stirred within Fiona. If this was just a routine inquiry, why was Carissa being so sharp from the

start?

"No, we didn't know," she replied.

Outside Edgeview Estate, two capital guards stood resolute and solemn, their expressions unreadable.

tside the estate, a steady stream of passersby moved along the street, their attire indicating they were vants from wealthy households. Some had walked back and forth several times, eager to see how

g the Capital Guard would linger in Edgeview Estate and whether there would be any other commotion.

the sun dipped below the horizon, the tension grew, No one had emerged from within, leading many to inder just how long this questioning would go on.

lat could possibly warrant so many questions? Were they going to interrogate every last detail?

side, Carissa focused on asking seemingly trivial inquiries—questions about their interactions with Eleanor and the conditions in Valken, along with how many times Eleanor had visited the region.

These questions spiraled on and on, wearing everyone's patience thin.

Carissa also brought up Avis, probing why she had left Valken to recuperate at Verdant Monastery when he fell ill.

Had it been Yuvan's decision, or hers alone?

Though Fiona and the two county duchesses insisted it had been Avis' choice, Carissa continued to leave through various topics until she eventually circled back to the conspiracy surrounding Eleanor.

Fiona found herself increasingly exhausted from the back-and-forth.

Then, Carissa shifted her attention to Randall and the two county duchesses.

Do you find it suspicious that when Lady Ruth fell ill, Prince Yuvan brought you back to the capital to care for her?"

Sabrina's frustration flared. "What's suspicious about it? Dad has always been filial! What's suspicious about returning to care for his mom? Isn't it more questionable that his mom is gravely ill while her son is miles away? What's the point of all this questioning?"

Carissa met her gaze. "You're right. It is only natural for children to attend to their ailing parents. So, why was your mom recuperating alone at Verdant Monastery, while you three siblings and Lady Fiona's three children were absent?"

"If Prince Yuvan is indeed a dutiful son, he should have sent you to be by her side. Instead, he upholds his duty to his parents alone and leaves you all to appear ungrateful and uncaring. Doesn't that raise suspicion?"

Chapter 757

When Carissa asked the question, no one answered.

Whatever they said would be recorded. Disloyalty toward one's parents or elderly relatives was a grave sin. Even if they were not held accountable, it would not benefit their future prospects if word got out.

In a noble family, who would want to marry a disloyal daughter?

Among them, only Randall showed a hint of guilt, but he remained silent.

Carissa glanced at them and said to Kirk, "Make a note of this—Lady Avis' children, as well as the concubine's children in the household, have nothing to say. I can't tell if they are ashamed or indifferent."

Stephanie quickly replied, "How can you say that? How can we not have wanted to take care of our mom? The truth is our dad was unwell at the time, so we had to take care of him. Besides, we were still young and unmarried. It wouldn't have been appropriate for us to go to Verdant Monastery."

A mocking glint flickered in Carissa's eyes.

"So, because your dad was ill, you all stayed in the manor to take care of him. Meanwhile, your mom, who was in serious condition, had to go to Verdant Monastery. Why couldn't she stay at Horizon Estate to recover? Did you treat her poorly? Or did she discover something unsavory in the estate?"

Fiona shuddered suddenly. "You can't say such things, Commander Sinclair! Lady Avis wanted to go to Verdant Monastery of her own accord. We tried to persuade her, but she wouldn't listen. Besides, this is our family's private matter. What right does the Capital Guard have to meddle in our family affairs?"

Molly didn't like it when others mentioned Avis, and she coldly remarked, "Exactly! What does this have to do with the rebellion case? No matter your rank, you can't interfere in the matters of a prince's household. Even if you are the Hell Monarch's princess consort, that doesn't grant you any special standing.

"Right! This is a family matter! We don't need to explain ourselves to you.

Everyone joined in denouncing Carissa, their expressions filled with righteous indignation.

Carissa allowed them to voice their grievances. Once they grew animated, she turned to Fiona and asked, “Once, you offered a girl to Eleanor. What was her background? What was her name? Did you buy her or abduct her? What was the purpose of presenting her to Eleanor?”

Fiona had been coldly watching Molly and the two county duchesses denounce Carissa. She was feeling quite pleased with herself, but Carissa’s sudden question completely stunned her.

She showed a momentary flicker of panic, but quickly regained her composure.

“What girl? When did I ever offer a girl to the grand princess? Don’t make unfounded accusations, Commander Sinclair That’s slander

Carissa looked at Fiona

“You don’t remember? Let me help you recall. She was a girl from Valken named Wendy Lloyd. Her dad was a craftsman, and she had three older brothers. You brought her to the capital when she was fifteen, and she died at eighteen Do you know how she died? She gave birth to a son, who was thrown to death. Eleanor ordered the girl’s fingers and toes to be chopped off, and she was tortured for three days before she died.”

Fiona’s face paled slightly. “Who said such nonsense? I don’t even know anyone by that name!”

Carissa leaned back in her chair, watching her coldly.

“It doesn’t matter if you deny it. Someone in Harmony Palace remembers, and it’s recorded in the books. Those records detail every girl who entered Harmony Palace. It also includes where they came from, who brought them, how they arrived, their ages when they came, when they died, and the kinds of abuse they suffered—everything is crystal clear.

“Do you want to explain now, or should the Supreme Court summon you directly, Lady Fiona? Do you think Eleanor is only implicated in the rebellion? Over a hundred girls suffered and died in Harmony Palace. This case will shock the entire Starhaven, and the king is taking it very seriously.

Fiona gripped the armrest, tiny beads of sweat forming on her forehead. She hadn't expected that despite all her precautions, she would be caught like this.

She had even forgotten the girl's name. It had been too long. All she knew was that when Eleanor saw a girl resembling Melanie Sullivan, she would take her back to Harmony Palace.

Back then, Fiona had just married Yuvan. So, she had sent just one girl to curry favor with Eleanor.

She pretended to be deep in thought, and took a while before finally saying, "Now that you mention it, I do remember something. I did send a concubine to the grand princess. At that time, Grand Princess Eleanor had just given birth to Lady Jessica and didn't want to have more children. She didn't want Lord Henry's line to end, so she sought a few concubines of humble origins who would be easy to manage. I recommended one, but it's been so long, I nearly forgot."

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After Fiona finished speaking, she suddenly covered her mouth for a moment, looking at Carissa in terror.

"Did you just say that girl died three years after entering Harmony Palace? She had her fingers and toes chopped off? Heavens, how could that happen? What did she do wrong? I thought she came from a decent family and had good character, which is why I sent her to Grand Princess Eleanor, What could she have possibly done to deserve that?"

"She erred by being seen by you," Carissa said.

"What?" Fiona's face registered shock and innocence. I truly didn't expect this. I had good intentions. I thought the Marquis of Grovehill's family was a noble household. Even if the girl was just a concubine, it would be better than marrying a commoner."

Carissa replied coldly, "Are you saying you didn't know she would end up staying at Harmony Palace instead of Grovehill Estate? That's quite the convenient excuse."

Fiona hurriedly explained, "I really didn't know! After all, Lord Henry doesn't live in Harmony Palace. I thought that since he lived at Grovehill Estate, his concubines would also stay there. I truly don't understand why Grand Princess Eleanor treated her that way."

Molly usually wouldn't defend Fiona, but she felt a wave of crisis this time as Carissa aggressively pursued the matter. For the first time, Molly stepped in to help Fiona.

“I believe Lady Fiona is a good person, Commander Sinclair. She only wanted to give Lady Wendy a better, life.”

Carissa’s expression remained icy. “A good person, you say? So, did Lady Wendy go of her own accord, or did you deceive her into coming with you?”

Fiona replied, “She came of her own accord. I told her to come to the capital to be one of Lord Henry’s concubines. Both she and her family agreed, and I even provided a dowry for her. Her family added dowry items as well. You can verify this.”

Carissa said, “We will certainly investigate.”

“Go ahead and investigate all you want. Her family agreed to everything,” Fiona declared, showing no signs of guilt.

Carissa looked at her steadily for a long moment until Fiona averted her eyes, revealing a flicker of fear.

Finally, Carissa said, “Alright, we’ll leave it at that for today. If we think of anything else we need your assistance with, we’ll come back.”

Fiona’s tense shoulders relaxed slightly, and she stood up. “Alright, we’ll be happy to cooperate.” Then, she gestured at one of the maids. “Please show them out.”

Carissa saluted in acknowledgment and left with Michael and the capital guards.

Outside, passersby hurriedly pretended to be merely passing by, quickening their steps as they saw them

emerge.

That night, the major families were in an uproar, gossiping about the Capital Guard’s visit to Edgeview

Estate that lasted nearly four hours. That naturally sparked a sense of unease. The conspiracy case involving Eleanor felt like a wildfire spreading among the noble families in the capital, and no one knew when it would reach their doorstep.

However, not everyone was afraid. Some families looked down on Carissa. They believed she was merely flaunting her authority under the guise of the kingdom's highest female official, using the conspiracy case to assert dominance over the noble families.

When the Duke of Oakspire, Norman Whitfield, heard about the event, he was extremely furious. During dinner, he instructed that no one in his household was to associate with anyone from Hell Monarch Estate.

“Have we reached the point where a hen crows at dawn? Is she trying to overturn everything?” Norman shouted, his face flushed with anger as he slammed his cutlery down.

“She dared to bring people directly into a prince's residence and interrogate the people in there for four whole hours! The king must be blind to allow a woman to command the Mystic Army. If she continues to be allowed to stir up things like this, what dignity do the noble families have left?”

“She thinks she can act with impunity by relying on her dad and brothers' military merits. If she dares to come and interrogate my household, I'll make sure she's unable to leave once she enters!”

The head of the Quinton family, Malcolm, who was also the current Civil Minister, gathered the elder and younger members of his family together, his expression grim.

The Quinton family had produced great scholars in the past. Even the current patriarch of the family, Gerald Quinton, had once been a teacher to the late king. Though he had retired to live a quiet life, his words still sent ripples through the literary circles of the court.

The Quinton family was regarded as the pinnacle of the civil service elite, thanks to two factors—Gerald's status as a teacher to the late king and the fact that the current queen was a member of the Quinton family. Adding on that Malcolm was now in charge of the Civil Department, even the prime minister's family couldn't compare to them.

However, Malcolm knew that with the family's current prestige, they were under strict control regarding their descendants' behavior, and the women in the family adhered to traditional values, ensuring no scandals would arise.

Yet this time, Malcolm felt that Carissa had gone a bit too far with her antics.

Chapter 759

The Quinton family had navigated the political landscape for many years, and they were now in their prime. Malcolm had gained significant favor during the reign of King Sigmund. He prided himself on understanding the late king's intentions, yet he couldn't grasp the current king's mindset.

He couldn't understand why Salvador would appoint Carissa as Mystic Army's commander. This position was critical. If the Hell Monarch and his people had treasonous intentions, the power that came with that role was considerable.

Thus, he convened a family meeting, where he imposed strict measures and expressed his dissatisfaction with Carissa.

"Causing such a commotion will turn the noble families of the capital upside down. I fear it may lead to wrongful accusations. I never realized she was such an impatient and self-serving person. She made an example out of Prince Yuvan's household right off the bat—how can we expect her to show any mercy to the other families? It's simply absurd."

Felix and Logan were also present. They considered defending Carissa, but before they could speak, Malcolm shot them a cold look.

"You need to be more cautious. That applies especially to you, Logan, as you're married to a royal family member. Princess Kiera is the Hell Monarch's younger sister. You must be careful of what you say and do in her presence. Who knows where her loyalties truly lie?"

Logan had no choice but to reply, "Uncle Malcolm, please rest assured. I can withstand any test from the princess, and I believe Commander Sinclair is not acting recklessly."

"What do you know?" Malcolm frowned deeply. "The fact that she started this today shows she has no regard for anyone's reputation. The king might not act against her for now, but this kind of chaos is humiliating for all the families involved, especially ours. How can we let her trample on our family like this?"

With the Quinton family's current status, they weren't easily challenged.

Logan wanted to say more, but Felix stopped him. After the family meeting ended, the two of them stepped outside.

Logan asked, "Why didn't you let me speak, Felix? I believe Lady Carissa isn't making a scene for no reason. If Grand Princess Eleanor truly is plotting treason, she must have allies by now."

Felix replied, "Do you think Uncle Malcolm isn't aware of this? To put it bluntly, it's because the person investigating the noble families is Lady Carissa. If it were Prince Rafael, Uncle Malcolm would certainly have a different stance."

Logan found the conversation rather dull. "What does it matter that she's a woman? Everyone knows Lady Carissa's capabilities. Uncle Malcolm has praised her before for having the qualities of her dad." "Praise is just a passing comment," Felix explained. "But now she's in charge of the treason case, which means she can interrogate anyone from the noble families at will, even intimidate them. How can Uncle Malcolm endure having our family be trampled on like this?"

"But Lady Carissa wouldn't do that, Logan insisted.

Felix sighed. "She wouldn't, but what Uncle Malcolm is unhappy about is that she could do it. It doesn't matter whether she actually will. Just the fact that she has the power to do it is enough for Uncle Malcolm to feel humiliated."

Logan didn't have much ambition. He thought these matters of reputation were not so important as long as he felt at peace within himself.

Meanwhile, Barrett was recovering from his injuries at Valor Estate. His appointment had come through- he was transferred to the Crown Guard, and he was their commander.

To him, it was a stroke of incredible luck.

When his appointment was announced, Rebecca and Viola were overjoyed. They ordered the family to prepare a feast to celebrate.

Viola was especially thrilled. Being part of the Crown Guard was impressive enough, not to mention being its commander. Many noble youths spent years trying to achieve such a rank without success. She felt that it rivaled Thomas' position as a third-rank major general and even surpassed

it, as Barrett would now be working closely with the king. That would give him greater opportunities for advancement.

However, Rebecca and Viola's excitement waned when they learned that Carissa, as the commander of the Mystic Army, was now Barrett's superior. So, Barrett was essentially only the deputy commander of the Crown Guard.

Then, the news that Carissa had taken the Capital Guard to Edgeview Estate to interrogate the people within extinguished any lingering joy on Viola's face.

What an impressive display of authority! Ultimately, they were sure that it was Carissa's status as a princess consort that lent her this confidence to do what she did.

Chapter 760

Now that Viola was pregnant, her thoughts were often clouded, and she was overly sensitive. When she heard about Barrett's promotion, she felt joy. But upon learning that Carissa was his superior, tears filled her eyes.

She leaned against Barrett's arm, choking on her words

"I'm not jealous of her, but how can she possibly hold power over you? You discovered the evidence of Grand Princess Eleanor's treachery. If it weren't for you, the grand princess' ambitions might still be hidden from everyone.

"I just can't accept it! Why are you always overshadowed by her? When it comes to contributions and achievements, haven't you surpassed her? How could the king allow a woman to be the commander? To let a woman oversee the Mystic Army, along with the Crown Guard and the Royal Guard—it's absurd! The men have lost all their dignity!"

Barrett listened to her choked voice and felt a twinge of irritation in his heart. He remembered the assassin who had faced him that night—he knew exactly who that person was.

Was this credit truly his? No, it was handed to him by someone else.

Barrett suspected that the person had already known about Eleanor's plot and planned to expose her scheme during the Emberfest Festival. Barrett just happened to be in the right place at the right time. He had chased down the assassin in the western courtyard and stumbled upon those weapons in the dungeon.

He didn't understand why the Hell Monarch himself didn't expose Eleanor, but instead had the Capital Guard and the Garrison Unit do it.

It was such a significant achievement!

Why give the credit to the Capital Guard and the Garrison Unit?

Perhaps because he was the Hell Monarch, well-known for his military prowess, and simply didn't care about such accolades.

A shadow crossed Barrett's eyes. In the end, it all came down to one's origins.

What Rafael didn't want was something Barrett could never earn, even if he gave everything he had.

"Stop thinking about it. At least I've been promoted," Barrett said, pushing down the bitterness in his heart and offering Viola a gentle smile. "From now on, you'll be the wife of the Crown Guard's commander."

"But when will the Warren family return to its former glory? Carissa is your superior, and she'll continue to keep you under her thumb. She harbors resentment toward you, and if she schemes against you, you might not even keep your position as the Crown Guard's commander."

Barrett wiped away her tears with his finger. "That won't happen. She's not that kind of person."

Viola swatted his hand away, her expression turning icy with anger. "Are you defending her? If she's not that kind of person, then what kind of person is she? Don't tell me that even now, with our child on the way, you still can't let go of her!"

Viola could never forget what Aurora had said—that Barrett still had feelings for Carissa. She hadn't cared

before, but now that she was determined to build a future with him, she couldn't tolerate the idea that he still had space in his heart for another woman.

Barrett's patience wore thin as he saw her turning angry. "Can you please stop overthinking everything? You doubt everything and everyone! Carissa is the Hell Monarch's princess consort now. She has nothing to do with me. Why do you keep bringing her up?"

"What? I can't mention her at all?" Viola stood up, tears welling in her eyes from anger. "Barrett, dare swear to heaven that she means nothing to you?"

do you

Barrett closed his eyes for a moment, his chest rising and falling as he struggled to contain his anger. He opened his eyes and glared at her fiercely. "Have you had enough? Why can't we just live our lives? Why do you have to keep bringing her up?"

"I want you to swear!" Viola grabbed his pillow and slammed it against him. "Swear it!"

The pillow hit Barrett's injury, causing him to wince in pain.

He shouted, "Enough! This is ridiculous! My promotion should be a joyful matter. Why do you keep mixing her into it? Does it really matter to you whether I think about her or not? And what about you? Do you still think about Thomas? What have you done? Have I ever questioned you about it? Can't we just live in peace?"

Hearing things that made her feel embarrassed and furious, Viola felt her head explode with rage. She slapped his face. "Shut up!"

As the sound of her slap echoed in the room, both of them froze.

Barrett touched his face in disbelief. "You...hit me!"