

War Song 801

Chapter 801

The carriage arrived at the Heritage Bureau, and Carissa yanked Eleanor out of it. Argent Lane, who was in charge of overseeing the royal prisoners, stepped forward to take custody of her. After the handover, Argent ordered heavy chains to be fastened around Eleanor's body.

Argent said, "Commander Sinclair, His Majesty has ordered that to prevent Eleanor from biting her tongue to commit suicide, we must remove most of her teeth and sever her tendons. Please come inside to supervise, so you can report back afterward."

Eleanor gritted her teeth in fury. "You would care?!"

"Lead the way," Carissa replied calmly.

Eleanor was pulled inside. She roared in fury as she went, unable to maintain the calm she had in the carriage any longer.

The Heritage Bureau was vast, with a wide alley separating the east and west sides. The east side housed the offices, while the west side was where people were detained.

Since all the detainees were members of the royal family, there were no conventional prisons. Instead, the area was divided into small courtyards. However, the detention area was surrounded by towering walls and was heavily guarded.

Carissa had already ordered Alistair, the commander of the Royal Guard, to send troops to guard the place. The Royal Guard had arrived, but Alistair was nowhere to be seen.

As an official in the Heritage Bureau, Argent was responsible for all the prisoners held here. While the bureau had its own guards, Eleanor's situation had attracted special attention from Salvador, necessitating the presence of the Royal Guard for her supervision.

Upon reaching the detention courtyard, Eleanor was pushed inside. A few people were already waiting for her. On a small, shabby table, dental extraction pliers and iron hooks for severing tendons lay ominously.

"Let go of me!"

Eleanor struggled, but the weight of the chains held her down. With one desperate attempt, she lost her balance and fell forward, kneeling on the ground.

Argent appeared unfazed by such events, as if they were a common occurrence.

"Although His Majesty has stripped you of your title as a grand princess, you'll still be detained in the Heritage Bureau. Consider this a blessing. Your kneeling now is an expression of your gratitude," he said coolly.

With that, he ordered his men to grab Eleanor. Blood filled her mouth as her fall had reopened a cut on her lip. At Argent's words, Carissa suddenly recalled what Florence had said-to the nobles, whatever they did to the lowly was a blessing. Now, Carissa wished she could call Florence over to ask if this "blessing" was truly one. Just as Argent's men were about to act, Alistair arrived with two royal guards.

Carissa had encountered him once before at the Capital Guard headquarters when he brought a dozen captains with him. His arrogance had been palpable then, and he clearly didn't regard her as significant.

He strade in with an air of confidence, his features betraying a lingering arrogance. Although he offered Carissa a curt nod, he directed his condescension at Argent.

"This is such a bloody affair. How could you have Commander Sinclair watch? Best to have her step aside. Wouldn't want her to be frightened and need calming herbs afterward."

His words dripped with mockery, veiled in a thin layer of disdain.

"Alistair!" Michael frowned deeply. "Stop this nonsense! Commander Sinclair has been on the battlefield and has

seen her share of blood. Don't look down on her just because you think you're superior."

Alistair feigned surprise, widening his eyes as he looked at Michael. He clicked his tongue. "It's been a while, Deputy Commander Brown. It seems that you've gone from being a man to a dog."

"Alistair!" Michael's frustration boiled over. "That's enough!"

"Alright, fine." Alistair waved dismissively, pretending not to care. "I'm just reminding your master to be careful. We wouldn't want her to get scared, right? If you don't care for her wellbeing, I'll hold my tongue, okay?" Michael clenched his fists, ready to swing at Alistair's face, but Carissa caught his wrist. "Commander Sinclair!" Michael's face flushed with anger. "He's gone too far. Let me teach him a lesson!"

Alistair burst out laughing, his eyes full of contempt. "Your master won't let you hit me."

Carissa's gaze was icy. "You're both essentially deputy commanders and equals. You can't lay a hand on him." She released Michael's wrist, but in a swift motion, she kicked Alistair hard in the stomach.

The move was so quick that Alistair didn't see her foot rise until it was too late. The pain was immediate and intense, a sharp jolt that felt like his insides were about to rearrange themselves.

The force of the blow sent him flying back, crashing against the wall.

Chapter 802

Alistair gritted his teeth against the searing pain, his fury igniting as he disregarded the rules of hierarchy and lunged straight at Carissa,

The result was a series of punches—one to the left, another to the right—before he even realized how she had struck him.

After returning to the capital, Carissa had been an exceptionally considerate person. To ensure he could still see clearly, she slowed down and raised her hand when she grabbed the fabric of his shirt. When he raised both hands to block it, she expertly dodged them and landed solid hits to his face.

Then, before he could even recover from the shock

, she kicked him again, sending him crashing back into the wall.

This time, Alistair saw everything clearly, but was powerless to avoid it. Her foot moved slowly, the kick seemingly casual, yet it accelerated mid-air, precisely predicting the direction he would try to evade.

All he could do was watch as he took another beating.

Alistair's face turned a deep shade of purple, the pain so intense that he found it difficult to summon his strength.

Carissa brushed off her sleeve, turning to Argent, who wore a look of disbelief. "Let's begin. I'll supervise the punishment."

Argent's expression shifted from shock to respect. "Understood, Commander Sinclair!"

Alistair was assisted over by the royal guards he had brought with him, his proud head hanging lower than before as he faced Carissa.

Eleanor was pinned down, letting out a piercing scream followed by a torrent of vicious curses directed at Carissa, damning her ancestors through the generations.

Carissa hardly responded. She merely watched as preparations commenced before saying coolly, "It seems all you can do is curse."

The act of pulling teeth was brutal, but in comparison to what Eleanor had done to those women, it hardly registered as cruelty.

The people in the Heritage Bureau were well-practiced in such matters. They flipped Eleanor over, pinning her to the ground. One guard pried her mouth open while the other brandished the pliers, ready to begin.

When Eleanor had been punished at the Supreme Court, she hadn't emitted such a shrill scream. Even under torture, she had remained whole. But losing her teeth and having her tendons severed meant that, for someone untrained in combat, she would never stand again. She would only be able to crawl or drag herself along the ground once it was done.

Eleanor couldn't accept such a mutilation of her body.

But now, it was no longer in her hands. The pain pierced through her chest, making her body tremble violently. One by one, her teeth were thrown to the ground, soaked in blood.

Hatred consumed her for everyone around her, including Yuvan—what a useless fool! If only he had sent more people! That way, she could have died at the hands of his suicide soldiers. That would have spared

Chapter 803

A bit of public sympathy could ensure the Kingsley family wouldn't face too much trouble in the capital, allowing them to survive without having to abandon their home.

Henry's marriage to Eleanor was meant to lift his family from its declining fortunes. By that time, the Marquis of Grovehill's family had already seen better days and their former glory was fading fast.

With Eleanor's support, Henry's family restored its standing. His family members began entering the court and securing positions, while Jessica led the way in business ventures that, despite taxes, proved lucrative.

With both political and financial success, he may have initially struggled with his choices. After all, he had started as an ordinary youth, unaware of the dark depths of human nature. But greed had a way of lowering one's standards, and what began as a moral conflict soon turned into a willingness to become an accomplice.

Henry had so many daughters with his concubines, yet he could easily play the role of a loving dad, making them believe he cherished them. Unfortunately, all those feelings were merely tools for his manipulation.

"Your crimes are unforgivable. His Majesty has decreed that you will be executed soon to serve as a warning to others."

With that, Rafael turned on his heel and walked out, leaving Henry crumpled on the floor.

Chapter 804

The Kingsley family delivered fifty thousand silver coins, claiming it was meant to settle matters for the women. Gemma continued to lament their poverty, insisting that they hardly had any money left and that fifty thousand silver coins had drained their resources.

Carissa cut off her sobs and said, “His Majesty has ordered you to produce one hundred thousand silver coins—no less. In three days, your son will be executed, and your family members can see him for the last

time.”

Of course, Gemma wanted to see her son. After all, he was the child she had carried for nine long months. But when she caught sight of the cold look in Martin’s eyes, her tears resumed.

“What good would it do to see him? It would only deepen the pain... and the anger. He has done such terrible things that our family cannot accept him,” she said.

“Indeed, he is guilty of unforgivable crimes. Perhaps it is better not to see him,” Martin echoed.

They were eager to distance themselves from Henry. It wasn’t that they didn’t care for their son—he was as good as dead, and it was better if the family wasn’t implicated.

Carissa had merely fulfilled her duty to inform the Kingsley family. Whether they chose to see Henry was entirely up to them. Since they opted not to, she accepted the banknote and dismissed them.

Fifty thousand silver coins—it was an amount carefully calculated.

The Kingsley family members understood the art of negotiation. Pulling together one hundred thousand silver coins all at once would suggest they had no financial woes. They also believed Salvador would provide a portion of the funds seized from Eleanor, so they aimed to give as little as possible.

However, there couldn’t be a single coin missing from their payment.

The next day, they brought the remaining fifty thousand silver coins. Carissa took the money and allocated a portion to the women who would be returning home. She made it clear that no one was

to refer to them as concubines any longer. They were now their own selves and no longer anyone's property.

However, many of them had daughters, young and old, and were reluctant to leave. Most chose to go to

Pearwater Convent.

Carmen wouldn't be going to the convent, so Violet needed to keep track of her movements.

Chaya wouldn't be going either. Hayden had made it clear that as long as she hadn't turned into a pig, he

wouldn't let her leave.

Malcolm's mistress, Casey, was sent to Pearwater Convent by Lionel. As Carissa was busy with arrangements, she noticed Lionel bringing Casey in. When she saw that, she instructed her staff to make the necessary preparations.

Lionel looked at Carissa with pleading eyes. "May I have a word with you, Commander Sinclair?"

Carissa handed the list to Violet, then replied to Lionel 'Let's step outside. It's not appropriate for you to be in here with all the women.'

"Of course, thank you!" Lionel led the way, stepping out into the fresh air.

Chapter 805

"No, it's better for them to save any extra. When they leave here, it'll be good to have some money on hand. You know my family can't give them money directly, Commander Sinclair."

Carissa pondered for a moment. "Alright, then."

Casey would need to support her daughter on her own in the future, so having extra money would be beneficial. Carissa hoped Yuvan's rebellion would conclude soon so the women could all leave this place.

“Thank you, Commander Sinclair.”

“And where is the child? Will you send someone to bring her, or should we send someone to fetch her?”

e to

Lionel bowed slightly and said, “It would be best if you could fetch her. It’s really not appropriate for me bring her here. She’s currently at an apple farm outside the city and is cared for by a wet nurse. She’s weaned now, and when she comes here, she can eat just like any other child.”

“Very well, I’ll go pick her up,” Carissa replied.

“Thank you!”

Lionel’s eyes glistened with unshed tears. He also wanted to apologize for his earlier inappropriate comments.

“I truly spoke out of turn in the heat of the moment, Commander Sinclair. Please don’t take it to heart. These past few days have been quite chaotic for me. Casey initially tried to get close to me, but I managed to avoid her. My dad, however, was not so fortunate. I assume you’ve uncovered all of this as well.”

The moment he saw Casey, his world felt like it was collapsing. Even as he maintained a facade of respect for his dad while dealing with the situation, the way he viewed Malcolm had fundamentally changed.

Carissa nodded. “We did. But actually, Eleanor initially intended for her to approach your dad. However, upon further reflection, she felt your dad was a man of integrity who had a loving relationship with your mother. That’s why she chose to target you instead. In the end, when that didn’t work, Eleanor decided to let her try her luck with your dad.”

Lionel sighed deeply, feeling increasingly unsettled as he learned more. In the end, he nodded respectfully and stumbled away without another word.

Violet stepped outside and asked, "What's going on?"

"Lord Malcolm once said that Casey couldn't have children around her, but now he's sending the child here. As a minister, how can he be so indecisive? If he can't even take care of his own child, why have one at all? Children are always innocent," Carissa explained briefly, her tone sharp.

Violet was equally outraged. "It's likely he said that out of impulse. After thinking it over, he realized it wouldn't work, so he begged the abbess to take the child. But sending her here doesn't mean they can be together. It's just placing the child in the care of the convent under the guise of being an orphan. It's absurd-she has parents, yet she's being treated like an orphan. Is Malcolm cursing himself?"

'Forget him,' Carissa replied. "We just need to take care of the people we should. If the Quinton family won't raise that child, then she can stay at the convent. For Lady Marjorie, both Casey and this child are cruel reminders of her broken happiness."

"Is broken happiness still happiness?" Violet mused. "Does she really know nothing at all?"

"Only she knows the truth.

"By the way," Violet said, checking the roster. "Cecilia from Oakspire Estate hasn't shown up. Didn't she steal the blueprints? Is the king going to deal with her separately?"

Carissa's icy gaze softened slightly. "Lady Cecilia received twenty lashes, while Lord Gareth got thirty. His pay was docked for two years. But Lord Gareth took on Lady Cecilia's punishment, so he received fifty strokes in total. The punishment was carried out yesterday, and it nearly cost him his life."

Violet remarked, "At least that man has some responsibility. Compared to Malcolm, the difference is stark."

Carissa nodded. "True, but when people rise to high positions, they have to consider many things. Lord Malcolm has a great reputation and holds a significant post in court. He won't allow even a hint of scandal to taint his name, so he can easily abandon those who threaten it.

*From what we see, Lord Gareth does seem more responsible, but who knows if he'd still protect Lady Cecilia if he were in Lord Malcolm's position? Their circumstances are different. Lord Malcolm's situation involves a mistress, which is something he can't show publicly. On the other hand, Lord Gareth has a legitimate relationship with Lady Cecilia, and their children are recognized by the Duke of Oakspire's family."

Violet felt frustrated by the chaos. "In any case, not getting married is the best choice. When are we going to pick up Casey's child?"

Carissa thought for a moment. "Henry is set to be executed tomorrow, so let's go the day after."

Violet considered it and suggested, "Why don't we leave now while it's still early? We can leave the inside matters to Claire and Michael. Michael may be a bit rough around the edges, but with Claire and the others looking after things, everything should be fine."

Carissa glanced at the sky. It was around mid-afternoon, which meant there was plenty of time left.

"Alright then. Since she's just at an apple farm outside the city, we can go there."

The two women rode straight toward the Quinton family's apple farm. During their investigation, they had thoroughly familiarized themselves with the officials' residences and properties. The apple farm wasn't far. It was just a turn outside the city and a one-mile ride to reach.

Carissa and Violet were quick, and they arrived in an hour. After knocking on the door, Carissa announced herself. A servant respectfully invited her inside, clearly having been informed of her arrival.

The wet nurse emerged, cradling a small girl in her arms. The one-year-old girl was a plump little darling, her delicate features strikingly similar to Casey's. She wasn't shy at all. When she saw Violet in vibrant red attire, she opened her arms, eager for a hug.

However, she seemed a bit wary of Carissa, perhaps due to her official uniform lending an air of authority.

Carissa asked the wet nurse, "What's her name?"

The wet nurse hesitated for a moment before replying, "Her name is Amara. She no longer has a family name now."

In other words, she had once been called Amara Quinton.

Violet's expression darkened. Forgive her for her lack of education, but the literal meaning of the name struck her -'Eternal Promise'.

What was Malcolm thinking when he named her? Was it a vow of eternal devotion to Casey, or a promise to care for his daughter forever?

Regardless, if Marjorie were to hear that name, it would surely break her heart.

What had Marjorie done wrong? Over the years, she managed both the external and internal affairs of the family. She had also skillfully handled the household. Beyond that, she was a kind-hearted woman known for her generosity-donating food and medicine to those in need, and regularly visiting the local temple to pray for blessings.

To ensure the family line continued, she had arranged for Malcolm to take concubines early on. At first, when his position was modest, he only had two concubines. After his rise, she elevated his two long-term companions to the status of concubines.

Marjorie wasn't a harsh matriarch. Otherwise, she wouldn't have allowed four concubines to bear children for Malcolm. She also treated them all kindly.

Chapter 807

"I wish I could be as carefree as you, Your Grace, but I can't. My life is intertwined with so many others. I already have three grandsons, all older than this child. can't afford to be so reckless. And if I were to divorce him, I'd become the biggest joke in the world. I'd also drag the queen down with me. There's just too much to consider."

Carissa understood.

However, Carissa couldn't let Marjorie take the child back at the moment—at least, not unless Malcolm or Lionel came to claim her. She didn't dare take that risk. After all, this was a life at

stake. Even though Marjorie was doing her best to appear gracious, the heart of a person was difficult to read.

It was best to be cautious.

“If you truly want to take the child home, then please ask Lord Malcolm or your son to come to Pearwater Convent in person. I can’t just hand her over to you.” Carissa paused, her thoughts weighing heavily. “Or perhaps you should return home and think it over more carefully. Make sure you can truly accept her. It wouldn’t do anyone any good if you took her back and ended up regretting it.”

Marjorie nodded. “I’ve thought it through deeply, but I understand that you’re concerned for me I’ll go back and discuss it with them.”

“Very well,” Carissa replied. “Then, I’ll take her with me for now.”

With that, Carissa exited the carriage. She mounted her horse and rode away with Violet.

Carissa temporarily entrusted the child to the abbess, making it clear that someone might come to adopt

her soon.

The abbess cradled Amara—now Briar—gently, her expression warm and compassionate as she sighed ‘softly.

“If someone adopts her and she finds parents who cherish her, that would be the best outcome.”

Chapter 808

As the sun dipped low, casting a golden hue over the landscape, Carissa and Violet rode down the mountain. The matter wasn’t fully settled, but they could finally relax a bit.

“They’ll be executing Henry tomorrow. Do you think anyone from his family will come forward to claim his body?” Violet asked.

“I’m not sure,” Carissa replied, her thoughts drifting back to Marjorie’s intention to take the child home.

Violet caught on quickly. “So, Malcolm’s wife really wants to bring the child back, huh?”

“She said so, but I can’t tell if it’s just a spur-of-the-moment decision.”

Violet frowned. “Although it’s true the child is an innocent victim of Eleanor’s actions, why should Marjorie have to bear this burden? For her, this child’s existence has turned her life upside down. It has put her in this strange and painful situation where all the good she thought she had now feels like a distant illusion. It’s really sad.”

“She asked me what I would do if I were in her position, Carissa said, letting her horse pick its way down the rocky trail with sure-footed ease. “What do you think I would do if Raf had a mistress and fathered a child?”

Violet didn’t hesitate. “If you were still the same person from Meadow Ridge back then, you’d probably gather all your strength to confront him: But now? You’d likely choose to divorce him and go your

separate ways.”

Carissa laughed. “I really can’t let you get too familiar with me.”

“Do you think I don’t know you?” Violet shot her a teasing glance.

“What about you? What would you do?”

Violet chuckled lightly. “That kind of thing could never happen to me because I won’t be marrying anyone. I don’t have to face that possibility.”

“True,” Carissa mused.

Violet tilted her chin slightly. “Actually, do you support me choosing not to get married? You and Prince Rafael seem so happy together. Would you suggest I find someone to marry too?”

Carissa met her gaze. “Of course not. Your life is yours to decide. I’m here to support you and offer help when you need it. Love and marriage aren’t everything in life. You don’t have to marry to find happiness. You’ve always defined happiness as being wealthy and free—doing what you want and not being forced into anything you don’t wish to do.”

Violet raised her chin, a spark of confidence in her eyes. “Exactly! I’ve surpassed many already. I should. be happy every day. If I want to waste time, that’s fine. If I want to do something meaningful with you, that’s fine too. I’ll do as I please.

“That’s right. As long as you’re happy,” Carissa replied, her eyes filled with gentle warmth,

That evening, Marjorie summoned Lionel to join her in the study to meet with Malcolm.

Chapter 809

days, Malcolm had shut himself away in there, dealing with the fallout from Casey’s situation. Salvador knew about the situation with Casey, and more than just the surface of it. He was aware she had even been in contact with Lionel.

Considering their relationship as in-laws, Salvador merely reprimanded Malcolm lightly and let it go.

But for Malcolm, moving past the matter was harder. He might have hidden it from his wife, but many in the household knew. Just because they remained silent didn’t mean they weren’t whispering behind his

back.

His authority was slipping away.

“Dad!” Lionel’s voice broke through from outside the study.

Malcolm coughed before asking, “What is it?”

He didn't want to talk to his son. He didn't want to talk to anyone. All he wanted was to quietly endure these troubled days.

"Mom is worried about you and wants to have a word, Lionel replied.

Lionel had assumed Marjorie didn't know anything about the situation. He thought she had called him over out of concern for Malcolm.

Hearing that his wife was here, Malcolm gathered himself. He coughed a few more times and finally stood to open the door. The dim light cast a shadow over his worn features, but he managed a soft smile for Marjorie.

"I've been coughing and didn't want to pass anything on to you, so I stayed in here." He took Marjorie's hand, his tone still tender as it had always been, "Your hands are so cold. Why don't you wear another layer?"

Marjorie gently withdrew her hand and smiled faintly. "It's nothing. The room is warm enough."

Malcolm's gaze lingered on the empty space where her hand had been, momentarily stunned. After all these years of marriage, she had never pulled away whenever he held her hand..

Chapter 810

Marjorie took the lead, settling into a chair before calmly instructing, "Lionel, close the door. The three of us need to talk."

Lionel sensed something was amiss and cast a puzzled glance at his dad, who sat with his lips pressed together, caught somewhere between confusion and offense. With a heavy step, Lionel shut the door and returned to his seat.

Marjorie placed one hand on the armrest and rested the other in front of her. These past years had been comfortable for her. She had enjoyed a loving marriage and a life of abundance. This made her appear younger than her peers, and her round face and elegant demeanor marked her as someone of high status.

Yet, in recent days, a hint of weariness had crept in.

She looked at Malcolm and spoke as if recounting something trivial, “Today, I met Lady Carissa.”

Malcolm reacted as if he had been bitten by a venomous snake and stared at her in shock. “She sought you out? What kind of rumors did she spread? Whatever she says, don’t believe her—she’s not trustworthy!”

Marjorie regarded him, her dark eyes soft yet regal, “Though I’m not well-acquainted with her, I know she’s not that kind of person. Besides, it wasn’t her who approached me. I encountered her while I was at the apple farm. She was picking up a child.”

Malcolm’s lips trembled slightly, and his gaze darted away. “What what child?”

Marjorie’s eyes remained gentle, though they held a trace of sadness. “I already know the details, so there’s no need for you to explain. I went there today intending to bring the child back for Willow to care for, but Lady Carissa insisted that one of you needed to go pick her up.”

Marjorie sat quietly while the two men shifted restlessly—particularly Malcolm, who seemed lost in a tangled web of thoughts, too anxious to meet her gaze or speak.

“The reason for bringing her back is clear to both of you. It’s not because I’m being magnanimous. The child is innocent. You are her dad, I am her stepmother, and she still has her birth mother. Moreover, secrets rarely stay hidden in this world. The Supreme Court is responsible for handling the case, and with so many hands involved, countless people will learn about it. You can silence one person, but not

everyone.”

She folded her hands in front of her and continued, “Even if the details haven’t spread, there are still those who have seen the case files. They will hold evidence that could be used against us. Our family has become a target. You and Lionel hold significant positions, and our daughter is the queen. Mistakes can be forgiven, but we must not give anyone leverage against us. The more we try to hide things, the greater the risk of disaster that would leave us in a vulnerable position.

“The treason case hasn’t been resolved yet, which means more people will likely come under scrutiny. If you’re worried about this damaging your reputation, that fear will only grow, and the costs will escalate. It’s better to face the problem now and take responsibility for past mistakes. Bringing her back to the household and allowing Willow to care for her is fulfilling your duty as a father. Anyone who tries to use this against you or our family will find it impossible to succeed.”

With that, Marjorie stood up. "I've said my piece. Lionel, you'll go retrieve her tomorrow."

Lionel hadn't expected his mom to possess such foresight, leaving him momentarily speechless.

Malcolm stared at her, as if he was seeing her for the first time.

Marjorie turned to leave. The heavy, calming scent in the study made her dizzy. She stepped outside to take a few breaths of fresh air and felt somewhat better.

"Marjorie!" Malcolm called from behind, his voice laced with shame. "I'm sorry."

"After all these years as husband and wife, I thought I knew you best, but it seems I hardly know you at all. Marjorie didn't turn around. Her eyes felt prickly. "Protecting our family is your duty as the head, as it is mine as the matriarch."

"I'm sorry!" He reached out, trying to grasp her arm.

She deftly evaded him, forcing back her tears. Her voice, carried by the wind, sounded both fragile and resolute. "I'm getting older. I'll arrange a couple more concubines for you."

"No, I don't want that!" Malcolm's legs felt weak beneath him. "I was foolish for a moment. Please believe me!"

Marjorie turned to look at him, her tone gentle as she said, "Of course, I trust you. You value your reputation above all else. If it weren't for your feelings, you wouldn't even consider keeping a mistress. you want Casey back, I would agree to that."

It turned out that after losing faith in someone, it was indeed possible to become indifferent.