

War Song 851

Chapter 851

Rebecca woke up, her eyes fixed on the ceiling above her. The horrific image of Amelia hanging outside her door was still vivid in her mind. A chill ran through her, and her chest felt heavy

After a long silence, she spat out bitterly, “What a wretch! A wretch who doesn’t know how to appreciate her blessings!”

Tara had cried her heart out, regretting that she hadn’t gone outside to check. If only she had left earlier! Perhaps then, she could have saved Amelia. Her heart ached with sorrow.

Hearing Rebecca’s harsh words, she couldn’t help but softly defend Amelia, “Madam Rebecca, Madam Amelia did her best to care for you. Now that she’s gone, please stop cursing her.”

Rebecca snapped back, “Why shouldn’t I curse her? If she wanted to die, she could have at least done it farther away! Dying right at my doorstep—who is she trying to upset?”

After her outburst, she couldn’t help but cry.

“I never imagined she was such a vile person. Hanging herself at my door only cements my reputation as a heartless witch! Now, my son and grandchildren will struggle to find brides. Why do I have such a miserable fate? One after another, they’re all the same kind of trash!

“It’s ruined! The reputation of our family is completely destroyed! Who knows, this might even tarnish Barrett’s future!”

Rebecca wept in despair, but not a single tear was shed for Amelia.

The next day, the news reached the people in Hell Monarch Estate.

Since it was a holiday, Rafael and Carissa had planned to visit the academy to take Ryan out for a meal. However, Violet came in with the news about Amelia, which had naturally come from Claire.

Carissa paused for a moment, her mind blank as if she couldn’t believe what she heard. “She hanged herself? There was no way to save her?”

“She’s dead,” Violet confirmed.

She sat in a chair, stunned, not understanding why she felt so choked up. After all, Amelia was someone she and Carissa had rescued. Rafael had even scolded his wife for the risk she had taken.

“Why did that happen?” Rafael asked, unsure of the full story.

Since they had saved

He only knew that Amelia had jumped into the river and had been saved by Carissa. her, she should have been treated with care to prevent her from trying to end her life again.

How could so many people have failed to watch over her?

After cursing, Violet explained, “They say that after she was brought back from Arcane Sanctum, that old witch forced her to kneel as punishment from dawn until night. When Tara got up in the middle of the night, she found Amelia hanging outside that old witch’s door.”

“She was punished? Rafael’s expression darkened with anger. “What is wrong with that family?
After

something that serious happened, instead of comforting her, they made her kneel as punishment?”

Suicide was an act of utter despair.

Carissa remained silent, but a deep sadness weighed on her heart.

Amelia chose to end her life rather than leave the Warren family because, without them, she didn’t have the skills to survive. She was timid, weak in character, and had no one to rely on. Simply put, once she left, she had no way to go on.

If there was a way out, who would choose death?

“Carissa, don’t be too upset,” Rafael said, noticing the pain swirling in her eyes.

“I’m fine.” Carissa shook her head at him, her furrowed brow still tense.

She replayed the events in her mind. Perhaps, even while talking to her in Arcane Sanctum, Amelia hadn’t truly given up on thoughts of ending her life.

Violet sniffled. “Why didn’t she think of her children?”

Carissa remembered Amelia’s children, caught between a domineering grandmother and weak parents. They were just as timid and frail.

Then, a sudden realization struck her—Amelia’s death was the ultimate form of revenge against Rebecca. Hanging herself at Rebecca’s doorstep was no mere act of scaring the older woman or tarnishing her reputation. Instead, it was about the people at Arcane Sanctum only acknowledging Amelia and only being willing to sell Snowdrop Pills to her. With her gone, the other members of the Warren family wouldn’t be able to purchase them.

By taking her own life, Amelia had also dragged Rebecca down with her. Without Rebecca’s oppressive control and tyrannical ways, Benjamin wouldn’t be able to cling to foolish devotion and their children wouldn’t remain so weak.

Of course, this was just Carissa’s speculation.

Only Amelia truly understood her own thoughts.

Chapter 852

Even though it was a suicide, the Royal Citadel still needed to investigate whether there was any foul play involved. Though Gregory was a Royal Citadel official, he couldn’t participate in the inquiry since it involved his direct family.

Anthony sent people to ask questions, and each person had a different opinion of Amelia.

Viola claimed she was selfish and lazy, while Barrett described his late sister-in-law as quite.

understanding.

Rebecca didn't hold back, calling her a poisonous, gluttonous, and deceitful woman, a disgrace to the Warren family.

Aurora, who rarely stepped outside of Blessed Haven, simply remarked, "Who cares?"

The servants said she was kind but easily deceived, someone who could be easily bullied.

Charlotte wept, saying Amelia was a poor soul trapped in her circumstances.

Yet, Benjamin couldn't describe her at all.

After thinking for a long while, the only image that came to mind for him was of his wife quietly taking care of him every time he returned home drunk from social gatherings. She never spoke much, so he had found her dull, wooden, and boring.

Given Amelia's act of throwing herself into the river, the investigation confirmed that she had indeed been driven to suicide due to the mistreatment she had endured. According to the law, to be convicted of mistreatment, there had to be a physical injury caused to the victim.

While Amelia had been slapped a couple of times and made to kneel as punishment, it wasn't enough to constitute a legal charge.

Although the law couldn't punish her, public outrage nearly drowned the Warren family in criticism. This wasn't the first time—the family had been flooded with public outrage many times before, yet they always managed to pull through.

Amelia's funeral was a quiet affair. Lily came to Valor Estate on behalf of Carissa to offer flowers and a prayer, a gesture of goodwill after having been sisters-in-law for a year. Entering the estate filled her with a sense of foreboding, yet no one dared to make things difficult for her.

After placing the flowers on the table, Lily said softly, "May your spirit watch over your children, Madam Amelia."

With that, she turned and left.

Regardless of how many people in Valor Estate were genuinely mourning Amelia, the funeral was held, and the entire residence was shrouded in a heavy atmosphere. They rushed through the burial, eager to dispel the somber mood that hung over the estate.

Rebecca had taken a dose of Snowdrop Pills earlier. Although the chaos of recent incidents had left her feeling tight-chested, the effects of the pills meant she wasn't in any serious trouble.

As the weather grew colder, a light snowfall heralded the arrival of a harsh winter.

Salvador appointed Thomas to replace Tyler as the commander of the Capital Army and to manage the military outposts. Although this decision seemed sudden, the king had actually been observing him for

some time.

He noted that Thomas had not maintained excessive contact with people from Hell Monarch Estate. Initially, Salvador had worried that the Septimus Tetra reconnaissance team members would build closer ties to Rafael since the prince had rescued them. But after watching for a while, he saw no evidence of that. In fact, during the investigation into Eleanor's treason case, Thomas had been out of the city visiting family.

The Septimus Tetra reconnaissance team was considered one of the best, yet some members lacked interest, while some showed no intention of seeking out alliances. Moreover, after leaving Thomas in the lurch for so long, he remained steady and composed. He avoided the frantic search for connections typical of those desperate for power. This stability made him an ideal leader for the Capital Army.

The Oversight Department had taken aim at the Warren family again—this time, at Jonathan, Benjamin, and Barrett.

Salvador sighed once more. Every time he considered reappointing Barrett, something chaotic arose in his household. Now, with the people watching and criticizing the Warren family, he had no choice but to leave Barrett in the background for a while longer. He decided to send the man off for training in martial arts, only allowing him to return to court after a period.

As for Benjamin, in a fit of anger, Salvador issued a royal edict stripping him of his post and declared he would never be employed again.

One son had been sidelined, and the other had his position stripped away.

This was a heavy blow for Rebecca. She raged through the night; she even contemplated tossing out Amelia's memorial plaque.

Viola felt a twinge of discomfort. She refused to believe Amelia's death had anything to do with her, but the memory of their two arguments before the latter's demise left her unsettled. When she later heard that Barrett was being sent for special training while Thomas took command of the Capital Army, a bitter sense of loss welled up within her.

Chapter 853

After Amelia's death, Viola had no choice but to continue managing the household.

The accounts were in dire straits. Viola was reluctant to dip into her personal savings, so she decided to take a step back and visit Charlotte. She placed the family's account ledger on the table and suggested

that the older woman take over.

Charlotte was still grieving Amelia's death. Her anger flared at Viola's actions, and the older woman immediately flung the account ledger back at her.

She stormed into Rebecca's room, declaring, "I demand a separation of the family!"

"Isn't there already enough gossip about us? What do you think people will say if we split the family now?" Rebecca snapped, fuming.

"It's your sins that brought this upon us! Why should I suffer alongside you? We're separating the family! When the men come home tonight, we'll sit down together and discuss how to divide things up."

“You’re being utterly unreasonable! How can we separate now? The money’s gone, the properties are gone. -what do we have left to divide?”

“I’ll build a wall to separate us and make a separate entrance for my residence!” Charlotte snarled, her resolute tone making it clear she was not going to negotiate or back down.

“You’ve lost your mind! Your branch of the family has no resources, no connections! How do you think you’ll fare after a separation?” Rebecca shot back.

“Anything is better than being pointed at and insulted because of you! I’m done with this. The shops and land your family sold were public property. I don’t care how you do it—you must return the portion that belongs to us.”

With that, Charlotte stormed out in a huff, leaving Rebecca seething.

“I’m going to die from anger! What’s Viola thinking? She’s supposed to manage the household, yet she runs off to Charlotte’s side of the family?! And that wretched Amelia—she’s dead, yet she still won’t let anyone have peace!”

She ordered Viola to come and scolded her in person, telling her not to stir up trouble and to manage the household properly. If there wasn’t enough money, she should cover the shortfall herself, and once funds were available, they could pay her back.

The anger didn’t dissipate. It merely shifted from Rebecca to Viola.

Viola felt a sharp pang of anger in her heart. How dare Rebecca ask her to cover the household expenses out of her own pocket? The nerve of her!

However, not covering them was not an option. Amelia’s funeral had cost a small fortune, nearly draining their monthly funds.

Now, the household needed money for various expenses—the servants’ monthly allowances had to be disbursed, the winter clothing bills needed to be settled, and preparations for the New Year celebrations were piling up.

Viola was overwhelmed with a multitude of tasks, her stomach in knots as she lamented her misfortune.

She was pouring both money and effort into this place; it felt like she was losing everything.

Following the royal edict mandating his participation in special training, Barrett spent his days training with Violet. The training grounds were located at the Capital Guard headquarters, but Violet couldn't be there all the time. She reserved her lessons for her three personal apprentices and only conducted large group classes when enough students gathered.

As a result, Barrett, the newly appointed Crown Guard Commander, often found himself polishing weapons under Violet's orders.

Amelia's suicide hit Barrett hard—he knew his wife was involved in it. If it weren't for Viola's domineering attitude, his late sister-in-law might not have taken such a drastic step. So, he preferred to be at the training grounds polishing weapons rather than face her at home.

The second snowfall lasted for two days, falling in fits and starts. Valor Estate's charcoal supply was running low, leaving the days and nights uncomfortably cold. Rebecca required a steady supply of charcoal to endure the winter, so Viola gritted her teeth and used her own money to buy several cartloads

Despite Viola's efforts, Rebecca still caught a chill and fell ill. Her weakened condition triggered old ailments, necessitating another round of Snowdrop Pills.

Viola pulled out ten silver coins and sent someone to purchase the pills, but this time, the staff at Arcane Sanctum refused to sell any to them. They had previously made an exception because Amelia had knelt in the freezing cold, impressing Sebastian with her devotion. Now that Amelia was gone, there would be no more Snowdrop Pills for the Warren family.

Several people from Valor Estate took turns disguising themselves to buy the pills, but none succeeded.

Feeling a rising sense of urgency, Barrett considered asking his contacts in the Capital Guard for help, unaware that purchasing Snowdrop Pills required a prior diagnosis. Sebastian insisted that one must truly be in need before one could buy the pills.

As Rebecca's condition worsened, she felt terrible every day.

She sent for Viola and said, "You... You should do as Amelia did and go to Arcane Sanctum to kneel for

the medicine."

Utterly shocked, Viola immediately shouted, "Are you out of your mind? You want me to beg for medicine while I'm pregnant?"

"You're so disrespectful!"

Rebecca gasped for breath, her eyes filled with an unfathomable rage. She picked up a cup next to the bed and hurled it at Viola's head with all her might.

Chapter 854

Viola yelped as she quickly dodged the flying cup, then fell to the ground. The strain from days of working hard had already caused a dull ache in her lower abdomen, and with this fall, she felt a rush of blood flowing down her legs.

Rebecca froze in shock at the sight.

Tara hurriedly called for help to get Viola back to Grace Mansion, then called for a physician and a midwife.

Barrett was summoned back urgently. By the time he arrived, the physician and midwife were already

there.

The baby wasn't full term yet, and the position was all wrong. After the fall, Viola had begun bleeding and her water broke. Seeing this, the midwife broke into a cold sweat.

Outside the delivery room, Barrett was filled with worry. This was his first child—he was about to become a father for the first time, and his heart had been bursting with hope. Because of this baby, he had been putting up with Viola, avoiding arguments and disputes. He never imagined such an accident would happen at such a critical moment.

The physician was renowned in the capital as a master of obstetrics. He checked Viola's condition before retreating behind a screen to give orders. But the dire situation left him feeling uncertain.

Six hours passed, yet her cervix hadn't fully opened. The labor-inducing medicine had been administered, causing Viola to feel waves of pain surging through her body. She was nearing her breaking point.

Struggling to breathe, her voice grew hoarse as she cried out, "Barrett, please bring my family here..."

Barrett heard her desperate plea and immediately sent someone to Silverstone Estate to fetch them without hesitation.

Tara was inside the delivery room, assisting them. Although she wasn't an expert, she had some experience, having helped Rebecca and Amelia during childbirth. However, as the situation worsened, she began to feel helpless.

The midwife attempted to manually adjust the baby's position, but Viola's agony-filled cries echoed in the

room.

Tara watched in horror, her heart racing. "Is this really going to help?"

The midwife had her share of experience, yet Viola's condition seemed more serious. As the baby refused to turn, the pain continued to escalate. Enduring this torment was not a viable solution, so the physician decided to increase the dosage of the labor-inducing medication.

After administering the labor-inducing medicine again, progress was finally made. The cervix slowly began to open. In just half an hour, it was nearly fully dilated, signaling that it was time for

the baby to come. However, the baby was still in the wrong position, leaving it still in danger. With the water having broken for so long, there was a real risk that the baby might be suffocating.

Viola was nearly out of strength. Fortunately, Amelia had previously bought some Evergreen Pills for her. After taking one, she gradually felt a resurgence of energy.

Just when everyone let out a slight sigh of relief, the midwife suddenly turned, panic etched across her face as she called out to the physician, “The bleeding is increasing! Only the baby’s legs have appeared! What do we do?”

The physician sighed heavily and turned to Barrett. “If this continues, I fear for both mother and child. We need to summon Sebastian from Arcane Sanctum.”

Barrett felt darkness cloud his vision. “What? She just fell! Why is this so serious?”

The physician replied, “Madam Viola has suffered a miscarriage before, which injured her womb. That is why there is excessive bleeding. If we can’t bring Sebastian here, our only option is to pull the baby out quickly, then use hemostatic medicine. Otherwise, neither mother nor child will survive. You need to make a decision.”

Barrett shook with dread, his gaze fixed on the old physician. “What did you say?”

Seeing the shock on Barrett’s face, the physician thought it was because he couldn’t accept such a result.

He raised his voice and urged, “Sir, you must decide—either fetch Sebastian or get the baby out quickly and use the hemostatic medicine.”

Barrett took a deep breath to calm himself, thinking that Viola might have once carried Thomas’ child but had lost it without mentioning it to anyone. Yet, lives were at stake, and this was not the time to dwell on the past.

He steeled himself and said, “Then, let’s do as you say. We must save her.”

The physician nodded. “Very well. Prepare hot water. I get the hemostatic medicine ready for her to take.

Just then, Viola's mother and sister-in-law arrived. When Evelyn heard that they were about to administer hemostatic medicine, she nearly fainted from shock. Zoey quickly supported her, urging the physician to

focus on his work before turning to Barrett.

"What happened?"

Chapter 855

Unable to evade the truth any longer, Barrett honestly explained, "She had a few words with my mom, and my mom threw a cup at her. She fell..."

Evelyn gasped, steadying herself. "What? Your mom hit her?"

Barrett's expression turned remorseful. "Mother, I admit my mom was wrong, but right now, the priority is saving Viola. The physician says she has miscarried before, which injured her womb. That's what's causing excessive bleeding now. The situation is serious. We need to pull the baby out and use hemostatic medicine."

Evelyn's furious demeanor froze at his words.

Barrett had found out?

Zoey interjected, "Let's not dwell on that now. We need to save her. Listen to the physician."

Anxiety evident in his voice, Barrett continued, "The physician said we should consider calling for Sebastian, but it's already dark. He might not be at Arcane Sanctum, so we have to proceed without him." The physician had already prepared the hemostatic medicine. Zoey followed him inside and saw Viola, who was drenched as if she had just been pulled out of water. Her face was pale, her eyes vacant. The ordeal had taken a toll on her, making her look frailer and more exhausted.

Upon seeing her sister-in-law, Viola instinctively searched for her mom.

"Mom..."

At that moment, Viola could only trust her mom.

Zoey grasped her sister-in-law's chin, her tone firm. "You need to drink the hemostatic medicine first. Your mom is just outside. Once you take it, everything will be fine."

Viola swallowed the medicine in trembling sips, tears streaming down her face as she clutched Zoey's hand tightly. "Am I going to die, Zoey? Will I die?"

"Don't say such foolish things. You won't," Zoey reassured, steadying her shoulders. "Don't worry, your mom and I are here with you. Just focus on giving birth."

Zoey exchanged a glance with the midwife, who nodded and held her breath.

Screams echoed through the halls of Grace Mansion, causing Evelyn and Barrett to feel their hearts sink. After the horrific cries, the sound of a baby's wail did not follow.

Barrett and Evelyn's hearts plummeted.

The baby was most likely stillborn.

But Barrett couldn't think about that now. He rushed into the delivery room and called out, "Zoey, how is Viola?"

Through the door, came the physician's voice, "There's no major bleeding. Don't worry."

That meant Viola had made it through the worst.

Evelyn's legs trembled uncontrollably, and it took her a moment to steady herself before she pushed the door open. Barrett tried to follow her inside, but was immediately stopped by Tara.

"The blood in the room hasn't been cleaned up yet. You can't go in."

"I want to see her. How is she?" Barrett pleaded, feeling frantic.

“Madam Viola is okay, but she’s exhausted and needs to rest.”

Barrett didn’t dare ask about the child. Tara hadn’t mentioned that both mother and baby were safe, so he suspected the worst.

A wave of anger surged within him—this was the first time he truly felt anger toward his mom.

His sister-in-law was dead. What more did she want?

After cleaning up the delivery room, Tara emerged holding the baby, wrapped tightly in a swaddling blanket.

She sighed and approached Barrett. “The baby didn’t survive. Do you want to take a look?”

With trembling hands, Barrett opened the blanket, revealing the frail, lifeless body of a boy. A wave of Sorrow washed over him.

He staggered back a step, his throat tightening. “Take him away for burial. Don’t let Viola see him.”

This was supposed to be his first child. Unfortunately, fate had other plans.

“Madam Viola won’t look,” Tara said, tears streaming down her cheeks.

It was a boy. What a shame..

Evelyn stepped into the delivery room, standing by the bed and gazing at her daughter with a mix of emotions. The physician had said that if Viola hadn’t suffered that earlier miscarriage, the situation might not have been so dire. But seeing her daughter in such a state, she couldn’t bring herself to lay blame.

She sighed heavily. “Just focus on your recovery. There will be other children.”

“I won’t have any more children. I can’t do it again,” Viola said weakly, her voice barely a whisper, completely drained of strength.

Chapter 856

Evelyn lingered in the delivery room for a moment before turning to Zoey.

“There’s no one capable of managing things here right now. Rebecca is sickly, and after Viola’s difficult labor, she’s physically and emotionally drained. Please stay here and help her for a few days.”

Ultimately, Evelyn was worried about Viola being mistreated. Rebecca could be cruel—after all, she had thrown a cup at Viola. Who knows how much her daughter had suffered in the past?

But Evelyn didn’t confront Rebecca now. The family had just lost Amelia, and now Viola had lost her child. after a difficult labor.

If anything happened to Rebecca...

Forget it. They could no longer hide the miscarriage: Barrett likely believed it was just the result of Viola’s previous relationship with Thomas, and assumed that the baby hadn’t survived. If this matter could be swept under the rug, it would be for the best.

Evelyn simply couldn’t bear to face it.

Zoey didn’t want to stick around dealing with the mess at Valor Estate, but with her mother-in-law’s orders ringing in her ears and no lady to run the household, staying a few days to help seemed the least she could do. Still, Zoey wouldn’t stay in Valor Estate, and would instead come and go each day.

After Evelyn left, Zoey remained in the delivery room, watching her sister-in-law sleep fitfully. Her heart. softened, and she sighed inwardly.

Forget it

Barrett stood at the bedside, gazing down at Viola, who had succumbed to exhaustion. A wave of pity washed over him. In the end, it was his mom’s actions that caused his wife to fall, leading to the loss of

their child.

It weighed heavily on him.

Yet, the physician's words echoed in his mind. After hesitating for a long moment, he couldn't help but ask, "Did she have a child with Thomas before? What happened to that baby?"

Zoey's expression darkened. "Let's talk about it later."

"Okay." Barrett glanced at the sleeping Viola and nodded. "We don't want her to hear anything that might upset her."

The physician and midwife needed to stay for further observation. Zoey, ever tactful, ushered them out.

Sliding some silver coins into their hands, she lowered her voice and said, "Let's just say what needs to be said and keep the rest to ourselves."

After finishing his conversation with Barrett, the old physician suddenly remembered that Viola was in her second marriage. Barrett's shocked expression earlier clearly indicated he was unaware of the miscarriage. It must have happened during her first marriage.

He had a sense of medical ethics, and although he could have refused the money, he knew that if he did, they might not feel at ease. So, he simply thanked Zoey and assured her that she didn't need to worry.

The midwife shared the same sentiments. To have a good reputation in her line of work, she knew that keeping her mouth shut about what shouldn't be said was just as important as her skill in delivering babies. If she ruined her reputation, no one would seek her services again.

Barrett turned to Zoey. "Please take care of Viola while I go speak to my mom."

Zoey looked into Barrett's eyes, where resentment simmered just beneath the surface.

She nodded. "Go ahead. Tell her that her grandson is gone."

Zoey had no fondness for the Warren family, especially not for Rebecca, whom she deemed a troublemaker. The woman had already caused one daughter-in-law's death and still dared to make a scene. Now, she had managed to lose a grandchild as well.

Once Barrett left, Zoey called Poppy outside.

"Has Viola done anything outrageous lately? Also, did she argue with Amelia before her suicide?" she

asked

Considering that Viola had gone through such a traumatic experience and lost her child, Zoey felt it was her duty as a sister-in-law to stand up for her. However, given Viola's previous actions, it was essential for Zoey to understand the situation fully.

Poppy choked on her words as she hurriedly explained, "Madam Rebecca lost her temper because she couldn't get Snowdrop Pills, so she ordered Madam Viola to kneel at Arcane Sanctum as the late Madam Amelia did.

*After Madam Viola got angry and shouted at her, Madam Rebecca accused her of being disrespectful and threw a cup at her. Madam Viola had already been handling all the household affairs since Madam Amelia's death, and because she was pregnant, she was really worn out.

"As for whether there was an argument with Madam Amelia before her death..."

Poppy hesitated for a long time, but couldn't bring herself to say it.

After all, Amelia was gone. Viola hadn't voiced her feelings, but surely there was some guilt lingering inside her. Otherwise, she wouldn't have taken on all the responsibilities of managing the household.

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Hearing this, Zoey sensed that there had been some friction between Viola and Amelia. Her heart sank- she hoped it wasn't related to the events surrounding Amelia.

“Please tell me the details. I want to know everything, no matter how minor,” Zoey insisted.

After Poppy recounted everything she knew, Zoey summarized it.

“Three main issues. First, Viola appointed Amelia to manage the household but only allocated 30 percent of Barrett’s salary to the family fund, while all her expenses, including clothing and monthly allowances, came from there

“Second, after an argument with Amelia, Viola resorted to extreme measures. She even gave Amelia scissors to stab her belly.

“Third, she complained that Amelia didn’t buy enough Evergreen Pills for her. Did I get it all right?”

Poppy nodded. “That’s correct.”

“All this happened right before Amelia’s suicide. What about before that? Was there any previous discord?”

Poppy thought for a moment, then said, “There wasn’t anything particularly severe, but Madam Viola always looked down on Madam Amelia, so there were probably some disrespectful remarks.”

“How disrespectful? To what extent?”

“Mostly, she would say Madam Amelia came from a low background, had no education, and lacked dignity. She said Madam Amelia was just someone who knew how to scheme for trivial gains, and that she couldn’t win her

husband’s affection.”

Perhaps accustomed to the situation, Poppy no longer saw the disrespect as being particularly severe.

“Did she say these things to her face?” Zoey pressed.

“Yes, she did. Madam Viola insisted on saying such things directly. She said if she spoke behind Madam Amelia’s back, it would make her look petty.”

Zoey frowned. “I want to call her insane, but that’s not how insanity works. It seems a person’s true nature can’t be changed. She’s even worse than a petty person.”

Zoey felt a deep-seated annoyance towards Viola. Was this really how she treated people?

Meanwhile, Barrett trudged into Rebecca’s room. His steps were heavy as he numbly delivered the news that the baby was gone.

Jonathan, who was also in the room, sprang to his feet incredulous. “He was born lifeless?”

“Barely escaped losing both of them,” Barrett said, his gaze fixed on his mom, filled with a mixture of grief and anger.

Rebecca’s face turned pale and her lips trembled for a moment before she managed to utter, “How was I to know she was so useless?”

You wanted your

“Shut your mouth!” Jonathan exploded with fury. “What kind of mother-in-law are you? pregnant daughter-in-law to kneel outside Arcane Sanctum? Why don’t you go kneel yourself?”

Jonathan rarely spoke to his wife with such harshness. He had always been indecisive, allowing her to manage all the family affairs.

Rebecca seemed taken aback by his outburst. For a moment, she was speechless. Once she regained her composure, she trembled in anger.

“You’re mad! You want me to kneel? What about the dignity of our family?”

“What about your own life?” Jonathan shouted back.

“Stop this nonsense!” Barrett lifted his gaze, tears pooling in his eyes, his lips trembling slightly. “It hasn’t been very long since Amelia died. Mom, don’t you feel any responsibility for her death or Viola’s suffering? Just because you’re a mother-in-law doesn’t mean you can treat them this way!”

Rebecca trembled all over. “How... How have I mistreated them? Carissa used to do the same things I asked of them! If she could manage it, why couldn’t they?”

Clenching his fists, Barrett roared, “Don’t mention her! We have no right to speak her name! She risked her life to save my sister-in-law, and you’re the one who drove her to death! You think Amelia’s the one who made you look harsh? No, it’s you! You’re not just harsh—you’re cruel. What kind of mother-in-law treats her daughter-in-law like that?”

Rebecca pounded the bed in frustration. “What did I do to her? She threatened to drown herself after making a mistake! How could I not punish her? Are there any rules in this household? Her suicide also affects your future, and yet you defend her! You’re so ungrateful!”

“That’s my own fault! It has nothing to do with Amelia!” Barrett yelled.

Tears streamed down his face as he thought of Amelia and the child he had lost. He also thought about the woman he once had. It felt like a piece of his heart had been ripped out, leaving only an overwhelming

pain.

Yet, he couldn’t help but feel a sliver of inappropriate amusement amidst his tears.

“Karma—it’s all karma,” he muttered.

Rebecca gasped for breath as she pointed an accusing finger at him, unable to utter a single word as her face turned purple from the strain. Suddenly, a sharp pain pierced her chest and she collapsed.

Chapter 858

At Hell Monarch Estate, the study was brightly lit.

“Are you really set on this?” Rafael asked Carissa once more “You have to understand that taking this step could stir up a lot of trouble and you might face severe backlash.”

“Whatever you

decide, I’ll stand by you,” he added, his warm smile a reassuring balm.

Violet propped her chin on her hand, a mischievous grin spreading across her face. “Not only do I support you, I’ll also pitch in both money and effort.”

Carissa turned to Jacob. “What do you think?”

Jacob thought for a moment before saying, “If I consider the prince’s reputation, I can’t support this. But as a person, I’m behind you all the way.

“Kyle?” Carissa looked at her silent senior guild member.

Kyle nodded slowly. “How could I not support you in what you want to do? But I must warn you—since you’ve made your decision, be prepared for the consequences and ensure you can handle them.”

I understand.”

Under the light, Carissa’s eyes shone brightly.

“This isn’t a rash decision. I’ve been thinking about it for days. We need to establish an academy for women, but as Vivi mentioned, while it’s significant, it currently only caters to a few daughters of officials, so it’s not urgent. Besides, running an academy for women requires the king’s approval, so it’s under his control.

“However, an embroidery workshop is different. That’s our own initiative. Any woman cast out by her husband or without family support can join. They can learn embroidery, weaving, cutting, and other skills to make a living. If they don’t know how, we’ll teach them. For those who are sick or disabled, we can find suitable accommodations. Vivi and I are ready to fund this ourselves.”

Everyone nodded in agreement, though even someone as reckless as Violet understood that this would disrupt male interests. Once women found a way to earn their own living, they would become stronger and less willing to bow to the men in their lives.

But knowing and doing were two different things.

If a place like the embroidery workshop they planned on establishing had existed, Amelia wouldn't have had to fear being cast aside, let alone be driven to suicide. So, not only should they move forward, they also needed to do it as quickly as possible.

"I've already chosen the location. It's at No. 18 Goldflower Street, which used to be a dyeing workshop. I've been there, and it's perfect. With a little renovation, it'll be just right," Carissa explained.

Rafael's eyes softened. "Finding a place isn't difficult, but women who dare take that step are few and far between."

"I know this isn't something that will happen overnight, but having this space means that those who are pushed to their limits will see there's a way out. They will have a place to go, and it might just keep them from seeking death as an option, Carissa said earnestly. "I know implementing it will have its challenges,

and we'll also inevitably face public criticism."

Drawing from his vast experience, Kyle said, "Well, this isn't completely uncharted territory. In the border towns of the kingdom of Velrune, they've established similar shelters for women who've been cast aside. They even set up women's self defense groups.

Jacob's expression brightened. "If there's precedent in another kingdom, that makes it easier."

Rafael nodded. "In that case, let me handle it. Once it's established, I'll hand it over to Carissa and Violet."

Kyle grinned. "Exactly. The ones who will oppose it most are the men. If they can't be reasoned with, we'll just have to exert some authority. There are always more solutions than obstacles."

Carissa looked at Rafael, her eyes brimming with gratitude. Her greatest fortune was having a husband who would support her no matter what she chose to do.

“In fact, this can be presented to the king. If Prince Rafael takes the lead, I’m sure His Majesty would be quite agreeable. After all, many in court would find this absurd, and seeing them criticize His Highness would only amuse His Majesty,” Jacob added.

Rafael chuckled lazily. “Alright, I’ll make myself the target of their disdain.”

At the next morning’s court session, Rafael brought the matter up without wasting any time. Given the recent events surrounding Amelia’s tragic death and Benjamin’s punishment, using this initiative as a starting point was perfectly fitting.

Chapter 859

A storm of opposition swept through the court.

“This is preposterous! If such a place is established, what will become of the principles of obedience and virtue?” one official shouted, his voice rising above the others.

“Indeed! This will only embolden women, making them disrespect their in-laws, stir up jealousy, and even cause chaos in the household,” another added vehemently.

“I don’t think this reflects your views, Your Highness. This is clearly Her Grace’s idea, right? To please her, His Highness is willing to sacrifice men’s dignity. How laughable!” came another scathing remark

Salvador sat on the throne, observing the uproar below. He occasionally pursed his lips or let a small smile slip, but this was a true spectacle. Since Rafael returned from the Southern Frontier, praise for him had flowed like a river, while criticism was a rare bird.

He sighed inwardly.

Ah, Rafael was still too young. He had struck a nerve with the officials. If women had an escape route, how could they be controlled? Rafael thought he was winning the hearts of the people, but in doing so, he lost the support of the scholars.

This strategy was Rafael’s miscalculation.

The noise continued, but Salvador remained indifferent, only suggesting that they revisit the topic at the next court session. He hoped the situation would simmer and grow, with even more voices of dissent by then.

Rafael, for his part, didn't want Salvador to agree too quickly either. He aimed to let the matter gain traction, ensuring that the populace would be abuzz about it. If this initiative were to be realized, it needed to make a significant commotion so everyone would be aware of this new opportunity.

A month of commotion would be perfect. By then, the entire capital would know about it. Plus, renovating the space

and setting up accommodations would take time. A month was just right.

Rafael was confident Salvador would eventually relent, as he would feel pressure to comply with no real choice.

After the court session concluded, Rafael strolled out, hands clasped behind his back. The officials who had just condemned him now fell silent, knowing better than to speak against him alone. If they were to criticize, it would be in a group, never alone.

The Defense Minister, Davis, followed closely behind Rafael. The minister had feigned outrage earlier, echoing the sentiments of others, merely regurgitating their words. Deep down, however, Davis found himself in agreement—he truly supported Rafael. If it were possible, he would have raised his arms in enthusiastic applause.

As a man well-trained for two to three decades under the thumb of his wife, Hannah, he now found himself thinking from a woman's perspective. It was a skill honed over years of marriage. If this initiative succeeded, Hannah would be overjoyed. When she was happy, harmony would reign in their household, leading to a more pleasant life for him as well.

Most importantly, she would surely want to be involved in such a meaningful project. Once she was

occupied with it, she wouldn't be so fixated on his shortcomings. Sighing inwardly, he reflected on how, at her age, she had a knack for being in an irritable mood for at least the majority of the month.

The uproar in court soon spilled over to the streets, where the citizens buzzed with discussion. The reaction was so explosive that it felt like a pot boiling over.

Men could hardly believe that the Hell Monarch could be so foolish. Had he lost his mind? They knew that if such a place for discarded women was established, the wives at home would surely cause chaos!

The noble families disapproved of Carissa's actions, and even many of the women were not fully in support. Only a few—those who had a clear understanding of the hardships women faced—quietly supported her.

Yet, this support remained unspoken, hidden from view. No one would openly endorse her.

While the outside world was in an uproar over the issue, Zoey was still busy handling matters at Valor

Estate.

Rebecca's health had deteriorated significantly, and they couldn't buy any Snowdrop Pills. Everyone in the household had tried but returned empty-handed. To make matters worse, they learned the price had skyrocketed from ten to twenty silver coins per pill.

Rebecca was genuinely frightened and anxious. In desperation, she sent Bryan to beg Zoey for help, knowing that she, as part of the Earl of Silverstone's family, had the connections and influence to secure a few pills from Arcane Sanctum.

Upon hearing this, Zoey went straight to Rebecca's room. "I can help buy them at twenty silver coins each, How many do you wish to purchase?"

"Ten... Ten..." Rebecca's heart was racing, her breath labored.

Her eyes widened as she extended her palms, a mix of joy and greed glimmering in her gaze. If Zoey was willing to buy the pills, they might as well stock up.

*So, ten would be two hundred silver coins," Zoey replied. "Would you like to pay with banknotes or silver ingots?"

Chapter 860

Rebecca froze, her gaze fixed on Zoey. The corners of her eyes, which had sagged slightly, now lifted, filled with scrutiny as she tried to gauge whether the younger woman was joking.

But it was clear that Zoey was not joking—she was dead serious.

A rush of blood flooded Rebecca's head as she struggled to catch her breath, scarcely able to believe that Zoey was asking her for money to buy medicine. They were family by marriage, and this was for medicine. Did she have to be so calculative about it?

Suppressing the humiliation that bubbled up inside her Rebecca shot a glance at Tara. There were some things she simply couldn't voice, given her senior status.

some

Recognizing the cue, Tara mustered the courage to ask, "Could you lend us the money for now, Madam Zoey? We can pay you back later."

"I rushed out of my home this morning. How could I possibly have that much money on me?" Zoey replied.

"You could always go back and fetch it first," Tara suggested, her voice barely a whisper.

Zoey chuckled. "Isn't that a bit redundant? I'd have to make an extra trip to the estate. Why

not just give me the money directly? After all, you'll need to pay me back eventually. You can't be saying that a prestigious family like yours can't come up with two hundred silver coins, right?"

Rebecca's face flushed with anger, her complexion darkening. It was clear Zoey was humiliating her.

Tara tried to laugh it off. "How could that be? It just so happens that the steward isn't here at the moment, so... so we can't access the funds right now."

Viola in th

Zoey stood up, her demeanor cool. “Then, send someone to fetch him. I’ll check on Viola in the meantime. Once you have the funds, send them over to Grace Mansion. It’s just running an errand for you. There’s no reason I shouldn’t help family.”

With that, Zoey offered a polite nod and left. Once outside the courtyard, a cold smile crept onto her lips.

The audacity of it all—daring to ask her for money to buy medicine!

Viola had been resting for the past few days, finally managing to settle herself after narrowly escaping death. The thought of her brush with the afterlife sent chills down her spine.

Previously, she had held a ridiculous and pitying attitude towards Amelia’s death, thinking it was absurd for someone to be so fragile and be unable to bear any burden. If living was so difficult, what was the point of it all?

But now, having nearly died herself, Viola understood just how terrifying death could be. And yet Amelia, that timid woman, had chosen death. She had first tried to throw herself into the river, and failing that, she hung herself. It showed the depths of her despair, the sheer hopelessness that led her to such a drastic end.

Viola started to feel a pang of sadness for Amelia, along with a bit of guilt. At first, she believed her late sister-in-law’s death had nothing to do with her, but then Zoey scolded her and pointed out that Amelia’s suicide had a lot to do with her actions.

Initially, Viola had resisted this notion. Yet, Zoey laid out one point after another, painting a picture of a bitter, sharp-tongued, and selfish woman.

That woman was her, Viola Prince.

Viola couldn’t understand how she had become like this. She was the third daughter of Earl of Silverstone’s family, a lady who had never known hardship. It was no exaggeration to say she lived a life of luxury. But after marrying into the Warren family, why had she begun to value money over lives?

When she saw Zoey enter, she quickly wiped away her tears. Even though she knew her sister-in-law despised her, she couldn't help but choke out, "Zoey, I don't know why I treated her like that. I really didn't. mean to go against her."

Zoey sat down, silent for a moment. Noticing Viola continually dabbing at her eyes, she finally spoke, her tone measured, "You didn't mean to harm her, but you did intend to go against her. Amelia had no money, and you looked down on her shabby ways.

"You wanted to humiliate her by depriving her of money, to see her embarrassed and struggling, all to highlight your own wealth and status. You couldn't compete with Carissa or even Kayla, so you chose to compare yourself to Amelia. You won, but at what cost? She's dead..."

Zoey paused, fully aware that her next words would be harsh, but she felt they needed to be said, a wake-up call to Viola.

"But she's dead, and your child is gone too. Have you thought about what it would have meant if she hadn't died? With just a little effort to gather some money, she could have bought Snowdrop Pills. The people at Arcane Sanctum acknowledged her and would have sold the pills to her."

Viola covered her eyes with her hands, tears streaming down her face. "I truly didn't think she would die. I never thought..."

Zoey watched her cry. "When you deliberately inflict malice upon someone, you must consider the worst. consequences your actions could bring."