

Exchanging Vows: The Swapped Wife Is a Top Shaman - Chapter 121 - 123[1,153 words]

Chapter 121: Chapter 123

Seraphina's Point of View

The banquet hall was completely alive with the deafening roar of laughter, clinking chalices, and the scent of different delicacies, but to my eyes, it was a landscape of annoyance.

I sat near the edge of the tier, I watched the head table. Across the room, Dominic was leaning over Ivy's chair, cutting her meat for her with a devotion that made my heart bleed. He took such meticulous care of her, whispering things into her ear that made her smile.

A wave of jealousy tore through my chest, rapidly curdling into resentment. That should have been my life, I thought hysterically, my gaze dropping to my belly.

I remembered the blinding agony on the stone steps by the pine tree, the sensation of losing my child while my body pooled with blood. I didn't have proof that the council could verify, but my instincts knew the truth—I had lost my child because of Sarina.

"My Lady, your wine," my personal maid, Delia, whispered anxiously, setting a fresh goblet down.

"Leave me, Delia," I commanded hoarsely, waiting until her silhouette vanished.

The moment the shadows shielded my hands, I reached into the folds of my corset and pulled out a tiny vial. My heart beating so fast, and my hands shaking, I uncorked the glass, tipping the dark, odorless liquid directly into the wine. It was a sterilization medicine I had secretly purchased from a wandering rogue merchant at a catastrophic price.

I hated Sarina with every fiber of my soul for killing my child, and I wanted to retaliate by making her entirely childless for life.

When the servers gathered the trays to present the final toasts to the southern tier, I stood up under the pretext of smoothing my skirts. With a practiced, fluid grace, I

casually bumped into the presentation cart, seamlessly swapping my poisoned glass with the identical goblet for Sarina's side table.

I sat back down, taking a breath as I watched Sarina lift the crystal to her lips from across the aisle. She drank the entire contents in a single, elegant swallow, offering me a neat, victorious smile.

"Laugh while you can, you snake." I thought bitterly, a dark, satisfied smirk touching my heart. "Your womb is dead."

*

*

*

The banquet had officially concluded, and from my bedroom window, Sarina was standing on the gravel path, trying desperately to persuade Bastian to stay inside her suite.

"Bastian, stay with me tonight," she urged.

"I am finished tired tonight, Sarina," Bastian countered. He pulled his arm away without a single backwards glance, leaving her standing alone in the freezing wind.

I turned away from the window, pulling my shawl over my shoulders as I prepared to sink into a sleep. But before my hand could touch the drapes of my mattress, the door handle suddenly clicked from the outside. The panel swung open, and Bastian took a step into my room.

I froze in surprise. "Bastian? What are you doing here?"

Bastian didn't answer with his usual arrogant, defensive shouting matches. He looked haggard. He walked slowly toward my bedpost, his shoulders slumping as he sat on the edge of the mattress.

"Sera... please, just listen to me," Bastian said. He reached out, his hands trembling slightly as he stared at the floor. "The physician cornered me after the feast. He gave me the full, unedited diagnostic ledger from your miscarriage. He told me... he told me you were in extreme, catastrophic danger after your miscarriage."

My breath caught in my throat. "What are you saying?"

"The internal tearing was too deep, Sera," Bastian explained, his eyes shining with a profound, watering remorse as he looked up at me. "He fears that your reproductive system are entirely ruined, and you will have difficulty ever getting pregnant again."

I sat completely paralyzed on the sheets, the words hitting my ears like a blow.

"I have a strategy to protect your status. I am suggesting that we secretly select a lower household maid to get pregnant by me, and the exact second the infant is delivered, we will immediately give the child straight to you to raise."

A sudden, sharp urge to laugh hysterically bubbled up in the back of my throat, but it died instantly, turning into a cold, heavy ache inside my soul.

I felt utterly outrageous inside. The twisted irony of the universe was a crushing weight; I had literally just spent the entire evening plotting, swapping glasses, and successfully poisoning Sarina with a sterilization drug to prevent her from ever getting pregnant for life—only to turn around a single hour later and learn from my own husband that I was entirely incapable of getting pregnant either. We were two barren queens now.

"A maid's child..." I murmured, my voice dropping to a low, chillingly flat tone as I stared at our joined hands.

"It is the only way to save your face, Seraphina," Bastian pleaded, his fingers tightening around my wrists as he desperately searched my face for any trace of her anger.

I looked into his eyes and saw the bleeding remorse written across his face. The anger slowly drained from my bones, replaced by a profound, hollow exhaustion.

"Fine," I agreed softly to his surrogacy request. "If the child carries your blood and calls me mother, I will raise the child."

Bastian let out a long, ragged sigh of relief, his forehead dropping against my knees as the suffocating tension finally drained from him.

The two of us remained inside the room for hours, talking a great deal about the catastrophic mistakes of the past months, slowly making up.

"I am sorry, Sera," Bastian whispered hoarsely, looking up at me with an intense, childlike hurt. "I deeply regret getting into that Amber Fire alliance. I regret leaving your bed to sleep inside the study for weeks because I couldn't face your tears. I thought I was doing the right thing, but I was only destroying the woman who stood beside me."

"We both made wrong turns, Bastian," I murmured smoothly, my fingers gently tracing the tense muscles of his jawline as my heart softened. "If we stand together now, we can still accomplish lots of great things together."

We finally unlocked the bedchamber doors to walk toward the primary courtyard.

Bastian walked right at my side, his stride no longer hurried or cold. The long corridor was beginning to swarm with lower servants, kitchen staff, and visiting warriors who were clearing the banquet tables.

Suddenly, Bastian stopped dead in his tracks right in the middle of the wide limestone thoroughfare. Ignoring the strict court protocols and the swarming eyes of the guards patrolling the balconies, he turned his body toward me, reached out his powerful arms, and Bastian tightly hugged me right there in the public space where dozens of people continuously pass by.