

HER GRACEFUL WAR SONG

War 5

The Warren family members exchanged puzzled glances. None expected the usually agreeable Carissa to stand her ground so firmly this time.

She even defied Rebecca, the matriarch of the family!

"She'll come around. She doesn't have any other choice," Rebecca said coldly.

That was true.

With Carissa's family gone, she had no one to rely on except the Warren family. Besides, she was still Barrett's rightful wife, and it wasn't like she had been mistreated.

Early the next morning, Carissa and Lulu returned to Northwatch Estate.

The estate was bleak and covered in fallen leaves. After just half a year of neglect, the courtyard was overgrown with weeds that were taller than a person. Stepping back into the estate, Carissa's heart ached fiercely.

Six months ago, she had collapsed upon hearing that her family had been massacred. She had wept when she saw the lifeless bodies of her grandmother and mother-their corpses cold and devoid of warmth. Every corner of the estate had been stained with blood.

Memorial plaques for her ancestors and mother had been placed at the estate's family chapel. Carissa and Lulu prepared flowers to place on the plaques, their tears unceasing.

Carissa knelt before her parents' memorials. Though her eyes were swollen from crying, they held a determined gaze.

"Dad, Mom, if you can hear me from heaven, please forgive your daughter for what she is about to do. It's not that I don't want a peaceful life with a husband and children, but Barrett is not someone I can trust with my life. Rest assured, I promise Lulu and I will live well."

Lulu knelt beside her, sobbing uncontrollably.

After they were done, they boarded a carriage and headed straight for the palace. It was noon by the time they arrived.

Under the scorching autumn sun, Carissa and Lulu stood like statues in front of the palace gates. They waited for a full hour, but no one came to let them in.

Lulu was distressed and said, "My lady, the king might not see you. Maybe he thinks you're here to oppose his edict about the marriage. You didn't eat last night or have breakfast today. Are you holding up okay? Should I go get you something to eat?"

"I'm not hungry."

The only thing Carissa felt was the unwavering resolve to dissolve her marriage and return home.

"Please don't be so hard on yourself. It's not worth getting sick over. Why don't we just let it go? After all, you're still the rightful wife and the lady of the Warren family. Even if General Yates is to be a legal wife, she'll just be a glorified concubine at best. Maybe we should just endure it?" Lulu pleaded.

Carissa's gaze was cold. "Lulu, if you're going to talk like that, don't speak at all."

Lulu sighed, feeling lost and unsure of what else to do. She had hoped that once Barrett returned, Carissa would find some peace. But the situation had only worsened.

In the palace's study, Derek Walker had already reported Carissa's arrival to the king three times.

"Your Majesty, Mrs. Warren is still waiting outside the palace gates," he repeated.

The king, Salvador Quinton, set aside the document he was reading and rubbed his temples. "I can't see her. The edict has been issued, and I can't take it back. Tell her to go home."

"The guards tried to persuade her, but she refused to leave. She's been standing there for over an hour without moving."

Salvador felt a pang of guilt. "Barrett requested the marriage as a reward for his military service. I didn't want to agree, but not granting it would embarrass both him and General Yates. They have made significant contributions."

"If we speak of military achievements, the Marquis of Northwatch and General Sullivan's contributions surpass all others," Derek countered.

Salvador remembered the Marquis of Northwatch, Hector Sinclair. When Salvador was a crown prince who had recently joined the military, it was Hector who had guided him. Carissa was a familiar face from those days, though she had been a delicate child. He still remembered her fair skin and endearing looks.

Salvador had fought a bloody path to the throne, paved with death. He understood the struggles of military officers. When Barrett requested marriage as a reward, Salvador had hesitated but eventually agreed.

Apart from his brother who was known as the Hell Monarch on the battlefield, the kingdom had no other capable generals. In the recent war with Westhaven, Dominic Sullivan's third son had lost an arm. Dominic's seventh son had been killed, though this had been kept secret.

But Derek was right. In terms of military merit, Barrett and Aurora were far inferior to Hector.

"Alright, let her in. If she agrees to this marriage, I'll grant her whatever she wants. I'll even give her a noble title or an official rank," said Salvador.

Derek breathed a sigh of relief. "As always, you're wise, Your Majesty!"