

War Song 67

Chapter 67

Ignorance was the most frightening thing.

Derek shook his head. "I don't know anything. I'm just following orders."

His simple statement refrained Harvey from asking further questions. The king's will was akin to divine authority-punishment was also a form of reward.

After Derek left, the couple looked at each other in confusion. They served the empress dowager, and the king even graciously allowed her to stay with them at Hartstone Estate. They were generally on good terms, so why were they being punished without explanation?

They hadn't done anything wrong, or dared to do anything wrong.

It was truly strange!

In the depths of winter, heavy snow had blocked the path of Barrett's troops. Although they had rushed out of the capital, the snow had fallen continuously for two days, covering everything with a thick layer. The severe cold wasn't the only issue; progress had been severely delayed due to the heavy snowfall. Each step was difficult, making it hard to pull one's foot out of the snow.

The Southern Frontier had experienced some snow, but fortunately, it wasn't much. The new recruits, numbering thirty thousand, had almost completed their training. Weapons and armor were being hastily prepared in Tower City, and they hoped reinforcement would reach the front lines before Westhaven's forces arrived.

Rafael had come to find Carissa, strictly ordering her to return to the capital. However, Carissa claimed she had already enlisted, and that returning to the capital would make her a deserter. The Duke of Northwatch's family had no deserters.

Rafael had no way to deal with her, and instructed them to look out for each other. Once the fighting started, their skills might not be fully effective, as battles in such conditions often turned chaotic with friend and foe entangled together.

When Rafael visited Carissa, it terrified Cynthia. She thought the commanding officer looked like a savage.

"Is it just him? I think most of these soldiers look like savages," Violet commented lightly.

Indeed, these soldiers had spent three years on the battlefield at the Southern Frontier. The original commander was Carissa's father, and now, it was Rafael.

"It's alright. Savages are tough fighters," Bun said.

The war began on the twenty-third day of the twelfth lunar month, the eve of the New Year.

Ilyrian's gates swung wide open as countless Sandorian soldiers poured out. Some of them were from Westhaven, others from Sandoria. They all wore the same armor, making it impossible to distinguish

between them.

For the first time on the battlefield, the five of them were somewhat at a loss. War was nothing like

martial arts tournaments. Close combat was brutal, with no fancy moves-everyone just swung blades to kill.

Rafael and his army couldn't retreat, as falling back meant returning to Tower City. Tower City had already been reclaimed, and retreating there would make it vulnerable to attack. The fight had to be waged in the open fields.

Carissa quickly found her rhythm. Her blood seemed to have awakened, and she charged straight into the enemy ranks. With her Rose Spear darting with deadly precision, she pierced through enemies' throats, almost always with a single fatal strike.

She had considered capturing the leader first, but her extensive reading of military texts had taught her that a general in golden armor on a fine steed might not always be the real leader. It could be a decoy. Her first battle was a brutal one. She fought from dawn till dusk until she was utterly exhausted. She felt she had used up every ounce of her strength, but the enemy seemed endless.

Her body was covered in blood-the enemy's blood. She had been slashed once on the shoulder, but her wooden armor had absorbed some of the impact, leaving only a surface wound. The Sandorian forces retreated into Ilyrian as night fell, and the gates were shut.

The first battle was a victory for Starhaven,

Carissa and her companions lay on the ground, too exhausted to move. They were all covered in blood. If not for their breathing, they might have been mistaken for corpses.

Timothy and his men began to clear the battlefield. Starhaven had lost three thousand and two hundred soldiers, with the number of wounded still to be counted.

Sandoria's casualties were around six thousand soldiers, with three hundred captured. However, the six- thousand figure was a conservative estimate, as Sandoria had taken some of their dead with them during the retreat.

Violet lay on the blood-soaked ground. She struggled to catch her breath as she asked, "Carissa, how many did you

you kill?"