

## The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 101

### #101 The Trap

He watched down, the blood dripping on his armor. The black metal had taken a reddish, horrid color of the last few days. Kairen didn't even have time to wash it. He looked around him. The fight was dying. The remaining eastern army soldiers were all killed or taken as prisoners by his men.

To his surprise, the city people had even helped a bit, providing food and shelter to the soldiers who needed it. This was a first for the Imperial Army. Aside from the Capital, most cities were only terrified by the Emperor's army. They had never seen military aside from their City militia, and the rumors about the Imperial Family held everyone in fear. However, Kairen himself had been surprised to see how things had changed lately. First, the news of him freeing the previous City was enough to have the War God's arrival celebrated whenever they reached another one. Plus, he didn't know how, but the people already knew that, unlike the Eastern Army who did not care, the War God forbade his men from assaulting or injuring any women or children. That was enough to have all the locals support the Imperial Army anywhere they showed up. Finally, Cassandra's shadow was also everywhere. Not only the soldiers were delighted by the medical kits that had already saved many lives, but the story of a former slave turned concubine and an Imperial physician was running like a legend in the streets. As soon as they saw the medical kits, the common people treated it like a treasure, looking incredibly grateful when the soldiers used it on the innocent people who had been injured.

Strangely, Kairen was feeling incredibly proud of his concubine's doings. It was as if Cassandra was there on the battlefield, supporting him with her own strength.

As he walked back to the little buildings where his army had established themselves during this battle, he witnessed more soldiers using the little kits, now perfectly familiar with all the contents. He had even seen some

of his men discussing with the accountants and the men watching the supplies about what they were running out the fastest, and use the empty compartments to store food.

“Are you alright, your Highness?” asked one of the Generals as Kairen walked in the building.

was alright. He didn't bother to answer and instead, took off his bloodied armor. His bare torso was perfectly fine except for a couple of scratches. Kairen walked upstairs, finding the little room they had prepared quickly for him. The War God could only afford to take short naps, but this was plenty enough for him. He laid on the bed, but, instead of trying to sleep, his hand reached for the little box on the bedtable.

Kairen had kept one of those for himself. He probably wouldn't ever need what was inside, but having one of those boxes itself was meaningful enough for him. He opened it. The supplies hadn't moved, but on top of the compartments, he grabbed the letter he had already read many, many times. Cassandra's handwriting was pretty and delicate. As he was re-reading, he touched her hair tied with his. He could easily imagine her gentle voice saying each word. The War God sighed, imagining his concubine as she wrote those, thinking of him. He could fight a hundred wars, but he never would have imagined that being away from her for so long would be so hard. Back at the North Army Camp, he could see her at the end of the day, so he hadn't really stopped to think about even missing her. 2

However, now, this was getting too annoyingly long, and Cassandra wasn't anywhere near. It was better. He didn't want the fear he witnessed every day in the innocent villager women's eyes in her beautiful emerald-colored irises. She was so sick just from the smell of blood.

This place would have been an utter nightmare for her... .

He tried sleeping a bit, a couple of hours.

He had done most of the job in fighting off the Eastern Army, his generals were competent enough to finish whatever was left in his absence. Most of them were smart enough not to disturb the War God's

few hours of rest.

When Kairen got down, a full plate of food was ready for him. He ate while listening to several reports but, all in all, this City was now free, and they should move on to the next one. Finally. They were about to reach the last City the Eastern army had been able to establish a decent siege on. The final fight would occur soon, and then, he was free to go back to his Concubine. Kairen left the building once he was sated, and his men were done talking. He went outside to join Krai, who was laying in the middle of an abandoned garden of a wealthy villa. That was one of the only spots large enough for the Dragon to sit comfortably, as most of the City had been ravaged by the attacks.

The large black dragon was obviously bored by this war. The Eastern Army had done great by locking themselves inside the City, where it was hard for him to access in the narrow streets, and unless Kairen and his men pushed them outside or in areas he could reach, the big dragon literally didn't have much to put his fangs or claws in. Hence, he was looking even more depressed and ignored the Prince walking his way. "Stop sulking, we're almost done."

The answer came as an angry growl. Krai turned his head away, and kept growling, terrorizing the poor soldiers who just happened to be walking by. Kairen sighed and leaned against his big body. Both turned their heads in the same direction, where the Diamond Palace stood, miles and miles away. Kairen promised himself to fly there the minute he would be done with this war. He had already enough.

Suddenly, Krai moved, pushing the War God and hiding his head under his wing. Kairen glared at his wilful beast that was now showing him his rear.

"I miss them too, you know."

Another pissed growl came. Kairen couldn't blame him. They were both dying to fly back and meet their babies... His son and the baby dragon. Kairen had a feeling that birth had already happened, from the way Krai was acting. His dragon had acted up all agitated, two nights ago, but they

were right in the middle of the raging battle. However, his angry dragon attitude had been even worse since then, and now, Kairen could tell the Dragon wasn't only missing Cassandra. (1

The War God had enough. After a few more minutes, he angrily walked back to the main building, yelling for the generals to gather. All men assembled in less than a minute.

“We are attacking the next City in two days at dawn,” he said. “Warn all the men we are taking no prisoners.”

No one dared to protest or even raise a single concern. Two days would be plenty enough for the men to rest, and the next City could be reached in two hours by foot. Moreover, one would have been crazy to object to the War God when he had this murderous glare on. He was merciless with his enemies, but his men knew Kairen could be as deadly with anyone who disrespected him too.

Hence, just as the War God had ordered, the Army arrived at the next City exactly before dawn, two days later. Just like the Black Dragon flying above them, the soldiers were actually quite excited. This was the last battle, the last City to be freed, and they had come here victory after victory. Even if this one would probably heavy consolidated, the mere thought of ending this war soon was enough to energize the troops. Just like Kairen, many of these men had families or lovers they were all dying to return to. 2

As Kairen stood forward, lines and lines of soldiers behind him, an eastern soldier, probably some general, appeared on top of one of the City's walls.

“Imperial Army! You have fought brilliantly until now, but we won't let you win this city! Our great Eastern Republic won't submit to some barbarian country who...”

“Shut the fuck up.”

The man stopped talking, shocked by the War God's words. Kairen hadn't yelled, but his voice was powerful enough to be heard all around. Some men snickered behind him, making fun of the poor soldier.

“We... We are not going to s-step down in front of the tyranny, and...”

“I said, shut the fuck up.”

Some of the men behind Kairen laughed at the man’s baffled expression, but the War God wasn’t laughing. Instead, his glare was absolutely terrifying. The poor spokesperson tried to stutter something, but it came more as some pitiful squeak than any word. It was indeed hard to dare open his mouth when being glared at by the most terrifying black eyes in the world. The most spine-chilling beast wasn’t in the sky.

“W... We... d... don’t...”

Kairen silently took out his sword, and, in a silent deadly movement, sent it flying. The distance should have been hard to conquer, even for an arrow. However, the blade went right into that man’s head, in the perfect middle. He fell backward and out of sight. The large door stood in front of them, surely barricaded, but this was the twelve door they were facing in those few weeks. The soldiers knew exactly what to expect. Kairen glanced up, waiting. The Dragon kept circling lazily until the War God clicked his tongue.

“The sooner we’re done, the sooner we go back,” he muttered, still glaring at his dragon.

Just then, Krai finally flew down, apparently headed right in the door and, a few meters before, finally spit his fire. The door melted in seconds against the pressure of the heat. Even the men started sweating under their armors, but they watched the gate disappear and got ready to fight.

“All men, ready!” Yelled the Generals in unison.

Kairen took out his second sword and, with one swing of his hand, all the soldiers started moving at the exact same moment. The Imperial Army was perfectly trained to do what they had to. The Generals alone were enough to guide the men, while Kairen marched in front. Anyone who got on his path wearing the wrong armor was killed instantly. Many men tried to fight him, as it would be the ultimate honor to be able to kill the Dragon Empire’s War God, but they were greeted with their death

instead.

It was like a machine. He didn't stop, didn't flinch, and kept going with nothing to stop him. Krai, too, was flying over the City, looking for any spot where he could attack and bite a few enemies. The Dragon was only too happy to have an opportunity to end this war as soon as possible. He even wandered off to chase some men who were trying to flee the City, and he had no pity for deserters.

On the ground, Kairen was leading his men silently. They were barging in a building, making sure the inhabitants were safe and the enemy was killed and moved on to the next one. It was harder to progress because the Eastern Army had no remorse in taking hostages. Somehow, they had to find a way around any situation, but after twelve cities of the same scenario, all of his men were trained to act accordingly.

The War God didn't even have to yell any orders, the Imperial Army was the best of the Empire. Instead, Kairen focused on the larger buildings, or the houses where many hostages could be held. One was particularly barricaded, and he kicked the gates open. Something felt strange inside that place.

It was... too silent. No one had progressed that far into the City yet, but he was almost surprised no one had raided such a big mansion. Was this a possible trap? That thought wasn't worrying him one bit. He had faced countless traps and rendered all of them useless. His enemies were smart, but his strength and stamina were hard to overcome. Not only that, but his Dragon blood made his enemy cry in frustration, for any injury that barely managed to inflict to him was absolutely useless.

However, his instincts were telling him something was wrong with this place. The large rooms would have been perfect to store men or weapons, but it seemed empty... The ceiling was strangely high, too, as if one of the floors had been taken down. From the outside, the roof seemed robust, so why...?

The answer came a couple of rooms further in. Kairen's instincts warned him first, and he placed his sword in front of him. Another trap, surely.

When he kicked another door open, however. There was quite a surprise behind it.

Two young dragons, facing him with their yellow angry eyes. The two beasts stood still, but they were not restrained in any way. Kairen frowned. The Eastern Army shouldn't have any Dragons. Those two were unknown, he had never seen those before... They were young, two, obviously not adults. He swung his sword around. Finally an interesting battle.

There was no record of a man able to single-handedly kill a dragon. Let alone two dragons. The War God had a smirk on. They had really worked hard at trying to kill him...

One of the dragons suddenly growled, and they both jumped on him. The room was big but just enough for those two to attack. No adult Dragon would be able to sneak in there, but those Dragons were the size of three or four adult men, not even half of Krai's size. They really had prepared the perfect trap.

Kairen barely dodged one of their claws, and the other dragon furiously growled, jumping next. The War God didn't have time to think. He raised his sword and, at the right moment, stabbed one of their flanks, making the dragon screech in pain. However, right next to him, the other jumped, and tore Kairen's armor off his chest in a loud metallic bang. The pieces of metal fell, with holes from those close in it. The War God frowned.

He jumped to get on one of the Dragon's back, using it as a stepping stone, and attacked the other, aiming for its jaw this time. He barely missed it, but his sword still opened a large cut on the beast's neck. Both dragons were now injured and furious, and they attacked back. The War God felt a sharp pain, and his blood flowing from the injury. He glanced down. How long had it been since he had seen the color of his own blood? The injury was large, and strangely, at that moment he was reminded of

Cassandra, Something about the pain, maybe. He looked up, and both dragons got ready to jump again.

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### #102 The Hostage

As soon as the green dragon landed, the three people got down. Princess Shareen, leading the little trio, almost ran inside the Diamond Palace, furious. She hadn't heard the best news on her way there, and she was seriously hoping there was some sort of mistake. She ignored all the servants that ran to greet them.

“Mother! Mother!

The Diamond Palace was awfully quiet, even more than usual. She had noticed the little groups of soldiers stationed in the Diamond City on her flight there, but they were in such a small number that it didn't seem that important. However, now that she was inside the Diamond Palace, Shareen felt restless. What the heck was going on there? She had only been absent for a few weeks! The journey to and inside the North Camp was almost like a holiday trip for her. After she was done putting Kairen's men back to work, under her own criteria, Shareen had been almost bored. Truth was, Kairen's army was well trained enough to be able to function perfectly with or . without their Commander. There had been a few attacks from the northern barbarians, but this wasn't anything they could handle. Shareen herself had participated a few times, having more fun fighting than leading the men. She participated in a few gatherings, had listened to their reports, and made a few changes here and there, but really, she was not really worried about the North Army. As it had been reported in the Imperial Palace, the northern barbarians had attacked more than usual, but this wasn't as bad as it had been reported. She was even shocked at how easy it had been to get rid of them. After a few days on the battlefield, she had enough. The General also made sure to have her visit the Mountain Hospital, Cassandra's

doing. Shareen wasn't too surprised to hear them praise the Lady of the Mountain endlessly, but she sure was impressed about her legacy there. It certainly would be worth implementing in all the Dragon Empire's armies in the future.

After all of this, Shareen had decided to go back to the Onyx Castle to rest a bit. However, after spending so much of her time in the Imperial Palace, that place was incredibly boring. The Onyx Castle sure felt like a forgotten remnant of their Empire, with about nothing to do and nothing to see. Sure, she had found a servant fun enough to play with for a while, but her mother's letters had come to end the fun time. 3

Imperial Concubine Kareen wasn't one to ask for anyone's help or even the type to worry over small things. That's why Shareen had been even more alarmed by her mother's letters. Once she had told Anour, her younger brother had become restless, too. The last one she had read before leaving was telling her about her mother's spies going missing one by one, and no news coming from the Eastern Front. Though Shareen wouldn't have been too worried about Kareen ignoring their mother in normal circumstances, it was highly unlikely that he would ignore his concubine. Cassandra was so close to her delivery date, and Shareen had witnessed how much Kareen loved her. If he hadn't come back yet, it meant he wasn't done fighting yet. If the war led by her brother, the Empire's War God still wasn't done, something was wrong.

Hence, Shareen had taken Anour and Roun and fled back to the Diamond Palace. She had also decided to bring that annoying guy with them. The poor Imperial servant was left outside to puke after he couldn't handle the flight, but she could worry about him later.

"Mother!"

"Shareen!"

Finally hearing her mother's voice, the Princess let out a long sigh of relief and ran to her. The Imperial Concubine was actually in one of the gardens, arms crossed. Sitting like a queen on one of the chairs, a young maid at her feet, she was completely still until her daughter appeared. Her little Dragon, Srail, was curled up at her feet, and continuously

growling at the woman facing her.

“You have got to be fucking kidding me,” growled Shareen, taking out her sword.

Of all people, she had not expected to see Phetra there. However, the princess was seated in front of Lady Kareen and flanked by no less than six soldiers. She now longer had any injuries visible and was wearing her purple dress as if she was just relaxing there. Meanwhile, the Imperial Concubine, too, was flanked by two soldiers. None of those men belonged to the Diamond Palace’s militia, either. Shareen immediately recognized more of Vrehan’s militia, with their red armors. From an external point of view, it may have seemed like the two women were hanging out in that garden with heavy security, but the atmosphere was icy. Phetra seemed in control, with a snicker on.

However, as soon as her eyes fell on Shareen, the snicker disappeared in a flash and she went extremely white, visibly terrified.

“Y... You... What are you doing here...?”

“That’s my line, you crazy bitch!” Retorted Shareen, heading right in her direction: 4

“Do not step further, Princess Shareen,” said one of the soldiers, taking out his sword and walking up to her. “We have orders to...”

Shareen grabbed his hair and brutally slammed the man’s face against her knee. It probably wouldn’t have made such an atrocious sound if she wasn’t wearing metal knee pads. The man fell at her feet, his face completely wrecked. All the others remained in a religious silence.

“Finally,” said Kareen, standing up. “How long did it take you to get there!”

“What the fuck is going on, mother?” Asked Shareen, still glaring at a petrified Phetra.

“Can’t you tell? I’m a hostage. In my own Palace, too!” 1

Shareen raised an eyebrow, turning to her mother. There were a lot of adjectives that could be used to qualify Lady Kareen, but she would never have thought to hear her mother call herself a hostage one day.

Nothing even remotely close to a victim's status, actually. That woman was probably the most influential one in this Empire, if not the most powerful.

However, glancing towards the petrified Phetra, Shareen already had a rough idea of what was going on.

"...Where is Cassandra? And the girls?"

Quickly, Lady Kareen hurried to explain everything. Anour arrived in the room just in time to listen to everything as well. The Imperial Concubine detailed all of Vrehan's arrival in her City, and how he had barged into the Diamond Palace with his men and taken control of the City. Kareen had spent several hours, that night, agonizing over Cassandra's crazy jump in the waterfall before one of the servants had managed to let her know the news from some of her people in the Diamond City. Not only confirming that the Concubine and her sister were alive and well, but also that she was hidden by their people and about to give birth. After that, Vrehan had spent two nights and two days crazy furious, looking for Cassandra everywhere, sending all his men left and right to interrogate the people and find her. Once they had found clues that the young concubine was headed north, and fearing Shareen's arrival, he had left in a hurry, only leaving some of his men and Phetra there.

Shareen and Anour were both in shock over what had happened in such a short time. Not only there had been no news from the Capital or the Eastern front in weeks, but Vrehan had come here?

"What the hell was father thinking?" Said Shareen. "He is not stupid enough to send Vrehan here!"

"I don't think so, either," replied her mother, glaring at Phetra.

"However, that little rat did come here and claim he was acting on behalf of the Emperor to arrest Cassandra. She had no choice but to flee."

"Damn it! You think Sephir is really dead?" (3

"It seems so... The official news arrived here the next morning, your Father placed the entire Empire in mourning for the first Prince Sephir." Shareen shook her head. The Official news was validated by the Palace,

this couldn't be Vrehan's lie. However, she didn't believe one second Cassandra had anything to do with this murder. She glared even harder at Phetra.

"Where is that damn little rat now?"

"He left yesterday. Their annoying soldiers searched the entire City to find Cassandra, but they couldn't. His original plan apparently was apparently to lock down my City and use me as a hostage. However, when he understood I had already sent a letter to have you come back before he killed all my couriers, he panicked and left like the coward he is." 4

"I see he left his trash behind..." growled Shareen.

Phetra was absolutely petrified, and terrified. (2

"Oh, she was apparently supposed to watch their hostage, me. Needless to say, it was incredibly boring."

"Your brother is the most horrendous scum to have ever lived," said Shareen, slowly walking towards Phetra. "Not only does that fucker dare to barge here, to try to harm my brother's concubine while he's gone, but you even have the fucking guts to use my mother as a hostage?"

"Don't touch me!" Screeched Phetra, retreating in utter fear.

Even the men who were supposed to guard her actually stepped back as Shareen came closer, worried. No one wanted to be the next to have all of their facial bones violently wrecked by the furious Princess' knee.

Phetra was left alone to face her, and she couldn't even hide her fear.

"Y... You can't touch me! The Emperor ordered you not to kill me!"

"If I remember it correctly, father's exact words were, not while we're eating, and not in the middle of the Imperial Chamber. Too bad for you this is not the right time and place," hissed Shareen, slowly raising her sword. 3

"Stop! Stop! You can't kill me! I... I know Vrehan's secret! I'll tell you everything!" 1

Shareen hesitated, tilting her head. Truth was, she had been dying to get rid of this vermin for a while, and even Kairen's cruel punishment on her

hadn't been nearly enough in her eyes. It was almost too infuriating to see Phetra was able to walk so soon already. However, this wasn't a normal situation either.

"Mother, what do you say?"

"I say I want my grandchild back!" Yelled the Imperial Concubine, exasperated. "This damn duo of siblings got rid of all of my soldiers and chased Cassandra away while locking me here. If Cassandra, her sister, and my grandson aren't all alive, unharmed and well when we find them, I swear I'm going to peel every layer of that skin's bitch and break every single one of her bones myself!"

"Oh, good idea, mother. We can get started on that right now," said Shareen with a sadistic smile. "You, break one of her legs."

The soldier she had pointed with her sword went livid. Phetra was his master's sister, and, when the second Prince had left, he had told them to protect her or, in any case, make sure she didn't die. The poor man hesitated for too long. Shareen got rid of him with one movement from her sword, making Phetra scream in horror. She then turned to another soldier.

"I can do this all day," she said with a terrifying smile.

"Why the hell are you doing this!" Yelled Phetra. "Just do it yourself, you monster!"

Shareen turned to her.

"Oh, I would gladly do that, Phetra, but each one of those men had the fucking balls to trap my mother here and kill her militia. So, now, they are either going to learn to obey who rightfully rules this place, or die as should all of Vrehan's damn dogs."

Behind her, Kareen smiled, obviously proud of her daughter. Though she wasn't a fighter, Kareen praised herself in raising those two children well. Phetra looked at the soldiers, realizing what Shareen was doing. This was simple and cruel torture. Vrehan had left those men behind to protect her, not for them to torture his sister!

"Mother?" Asked Shareen after a short silence.

“Yes, daughter of mine?”

“How tall is the highest place in the Diamond Palace?”

“About... seven or eight floors, I think.”

“Well, you see Phetra, we do have an option in case all of Vrehan’s men remain stupidly obedient to your scum brother. I mean, it’s only a few more floors than last time; You might die for real this time, but maybe not...”

Phetra was livid and so scared she was on the verge of passing out.

“B... Break it!” She screamed at the closest soldier. “Do it! P... Please, hurry!”

Shareen almost had a satisfied smile on, watching this. She knew Vrehan had actually done nothing but abandon his sister to her wrath, but she really didn’t care. Phetra had harmed Cassandra, killed Dahlia, and imprisoned their mother here. Shareen was too furious to let this go.

## The War God’s Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 103

### #103 The Hostage

The sound of a bone breaking, and a scream that went with it, resonated a few seconds later. Even Anour didn’t watch, a bit uneasy. He knew how merciless his family could be, but until now, he hadn’t gotten many occasions to witness it himself. However, he was mad too about what had happened.

“What did you have to say, about Vrehan?” He asked, stepping forward for the first time.

“He... He’s... prepared a trap... for... Kairen...” whimpered Phetra, holding her broken leg.

“What kind of trap?”

“I... I don’t...”

“Damn, you’re really that useless,” sighed Shareen.

While her daughter was still glaring at Phetra, Kareen stepped forward, grabbed her sword, and, without warning, cut Phetra’s hand. Another scream resonated within the Palace’s walls as the cut hand fell to the

ground. The Princess held her wrist, her face deformed by the pain. 5

“Try to heal this,” hissed the Imperial Concubine. (5

No one else could watch this scene. The Dragon blood could heal a lot of injuries, but it certainly couldn't regrow a new hand for her. The blood flow and Phetra desperately tried to wrap it in her clothing, clumsily. Meanwhile, Kareen handed the weapon back to her daughter for Shareen to carefully clean her sword.

“That one was for slapping Cassandra, killing my servants and my men,” said Kareen. “I strongly advise you never use that other hand to slap or kill anyone else again, or I'll cut it off too. I am not as merciful as my children, and I'll have no problem in killing a bitch like you even before my son comes back.” 5

Though she raised an eyebrow at being called merciful, Shareen didn't say anything.

“So you're not killing her now?” Asked Anour.

“First, she doesn't deserve a quick death,” replied Shareen. “Secondly, she can still be useful until I put my hands on Vrehan, that bitch probably knows more than she says.”

“How do we find Cassandra and Missandra now?” He asked. “Is there a chance they are still within the Diamond City?”

“They couldn't, Vrehan searched everywhere,” replied Kareen with a sigh. “He even tortured some of my people and found the hideout under the waterfall. Thank the Gods, the girls were long gone, and they even left fake clues that sent this idiot towards the North. Brilliant girls. No, from what my people told me, the girls decided to go to the Capital with the babies.”

“By the great Dragon, I can't believe they're born already. Kairen will be crazy when he comes back!”

“I know, and I haven't even seen them! I want to kill them just for making me miss that!” Growled Kareen, biting her nail. 2

“Is brother Kairen going to be fine?” Asked Anour, worried.

“I'll go and check that first,” said Shareen. “I don't want to be

pessimistic, but that rat his smart, and if he planned a trap for my brother, it probably was serious enough. Everything about his war sounded fishy from the start.” 3

“What about Cassandra and Missandra ? Shouldn’t we find them first ? If they are going to the Capital by themselves, and with a baby and the baby dragon, too...”

“They don’t have an adult dragon to fly with, it will take them days. Moreover, they are smart enough to not be captured until they reach the Capital, and if those girls are hiding from Vrehan and his dragon, it will be hard for us or Roun to find them as well. No, I’d better go grab my brother’s butt and bring him back to the Capital as soon as possible. Krai should be able to find his baby or Cassandra

“I am worried about your father,” said Kareen. “I don i think that old man is senile enough yet that he would have given that order willingly, not if everything was alright with him. Something must have happened in the Capital, or Vrehan would never have dared to act so rashly. 2

\*How long will it take you to send new spies to the Capital, Mother ?

“I can send people right away, but it will take them longer to come back than for you to come back from the Eastern front with Kairen ! Moreover, aren’t you going to help me clean over here ?

Kareen had said that while pointing out at the soldiers who were still waiting by Phetra’s side. The men, suddenly getting nervous about what was going to follow, exchanged glances.

“Seriously, mother, you want me to take care of them before I go ? Don’t we have more urgent matters ?”

“I’ve cut enough of one hand for today, I’m tired. Plus, are you going to leave your poor defenseless mother to deal with those men ? Do you know how many Vrehan left here ! I can’t even walk around or take my brunch quietly !” 3

“What about recruiting them ?”

Are you kidding me ? Vrehan’s army of little mutts ? I wouldn’t even use them to scratch my dragon’s shit off the floor !” ?

While the men were still confused at the situation and shocked by that woman's words, Shareen rolled her eyes over and took out her sword once again. Anour sighed and look elsewhere, but sure enough, Roun appeared over the walls to help the Princess do that bloody cleaning. 4 Every one of Vrehan's soldiers was killed in less than ten minutes, even those who desperately tried to run away. He really hadn't left many behind to assist his sister, and only Phetra was left, her wrist half-healed, even if she was still white and on the verge of passing out from all of the blood she had lost. Roun was left behind in that garden to guard the Princess, even if it was very unlikely for her to even be able to go anywhere in her current state.

Then, Shareen accompanied her mother back inside, followed closely by Anour.

"So brother still doesn't know what happened here?"

"How could he? Vrehan killed all of my couriers and spies, not even a fly left this Palace before today! I bet Krai was able to sense his egg's hatching, though, he's always been very sensitive."

However, the Imperial Concubine seemed to be back in charge, as she was hurrying inside her Palace's walls. Shareen knew her mother well enough to know that, despite Vrehan's siege, there was no way Kareen had completely run out of resources. Her little dragon following her closely, Kareen walked back inside and opened another secret hideout. Shareen raised an eyebrow; She had spent half of her childhood in this Palace, but there were still many things she had never seen before. They climbed some very narrow stairs all the way up to get inside a tower. It was a room filled with birds, including a couple of falcons, Kareen whistled, and one of them flew to her wrist. She gave the bird a note she had taken the time to write down while Shareen was getting rid of the soldiers. The falcon left the tower with his message, clearly heading towards the Capital.

"Mother, I thought all your spies were dead?"

"Those who were supposed to return here! However, I do still have many

friends in the Palace, of course. This is my fastest bird, we'll have news faster that way..."

"I see... Mother, you never told Cassandra about Dahlia, did you?" 10

"She doesn't need to know. Well, not anymore... Poor girl. Come on, let's go back downstairs. I want to put the production of the medical kits back on track to help your brother, and I need to recruit more people as soon as possible." (2)

"What are you talking about? Medical kits?"

While they walked back inside the Diamond Palace, Kareen quickly explained everything Cassandra and Missandra had done to help Kairen's army while staying there. In a few words, she let her know about the production of medical kits and the feedback they had gotten from the front before Vrehan's arrival. Shareen nodded.

"Oh, I was almost fed up about all those officials praising her all the time back at the Northern Camp as if she was some Messiah, and now that girl has done it again. Kairen really knows how to pick them. Does that woman ever stop?"

"As if. It's not like everyone can go around playing with a sword to solve every problem!"

Shareen rolled her eyes over again, exasperated. Her mother had been very happy to see Shareen and her sword just minutes ago to clear her Palace of all of Vrehan's men, didn't she!

"Anyway, we still need to figure out where the girls might go once they reach the Capital," said Kareen. "They probably won't be able to enter the Imperial Palace like that, and we might not get to the Capital before they do, but we can find ways to help them before that. If only I knew exactly where they will go..."

"Missandra mentioned a... an ex-husband," said Anour, a bit bitter. 18

"I have better than that," said Shareen with a smirk. "I had almost forgotten about that guy before you mentioned the medicinal kits and all Cassandra's doings, but..."

The Princess walked back to the entrance of the castle, where the man

she had come with was still looking a bit sick. He was standing very straight, and trying to look anywhere else but at the bodies, Shareen had left behind during her cleaning episode earlier.

Kareen looked at the man, a bit confused. She had never seen him before, but he was obviously dressed as an Imperial Servant, and had the demeanor of a man who had been trained for that as well. He kneeled respectfully as soon as the Imperial Concubine, Princess and Prince were in sight. 1

“Greetings, Imperial Concubine Kareen.”

“Who is that?”

“Cassie’s former babysitter,” said Shareen.

“My name is Evin, your Highness. I was indeed Lady Cassandra’s escort and assistant back when she resided in the Northern Camp with his Highness, a few months ago.”

“Oh. Why did you bring that man here, then?”

“Tell her.”

“Yes, your Highness,” said Evin, bowing again. “This humble servant happens to have exchanged a flattering amount of letters with Lady Cassandra over the last few weeks. I mentioned our close relationship to her Highness Princess Shareen, and she... nicely agreed to bring me to see the Lady again here.” 1

Kareen exchanged a look with Shareen, but the Princess immediately turned to Evin again.

“You know where Cassie could go in the Capital, don’t you?”

“Yes, Your Highness. In her latest letters, Lady Cassandra happened to mention a residence she had acquired in the Capital recently, thanks to His Highness the Third Prince. As suggested to her Highness Princess Shareen, I strongly believe Lady Cassandra will be very likely to go there first.”

Kareen was baffled for a few seconds.

wa

“A residence? Since when did my son have a residence in the Capital to

gift to Cassandra? When did he buy it?"

Evin cleared his throat, a bit embarrassed.

"Well, His Highness didn't exactly... buy the said residence, your Highness. I would classify this as a... forcefully retrieved compensation from Lady Cassandra's former... owner."

"Oh, now that makes more sense," said Shareen, nodding. "Anyway, you know where that residence is?"

"I do not have an exact address, but I certainly have enough description of its outlook and neighborhood for someone who knows the Capital well enough to find out, Your Highness."

"Good. Go get one of my servants you can find and have them send a courier in my name to the Capital right away. We can't lose any more time. I'll make sure our Cassie and her sister get everything they need and some extra protection. If Vrehan wants to attempt my beloved grandson's life, he's going to have to kill me first!"

Evin bowed once again and left quickly to follow Kareen's orders and send that courier right away, making a clear detour around the bodies scattered in the Palace. Meanwhile, her daughter turned to Lady Kareen with suspicious eyes.

"Aren't you going to get there yourself, mother?" Asked Shareen, crossing her arms. 2

MS.

"What are you talking about? I'll go with you once you retrieve your brother from whichever battlefield he is! Moreover, now that Vrehan's little mutts are done, I need to interrogate his useless sister some more."

"You think you can be more convincing than me?" Asked Shareen, putting a hand on her sword.

"Shareen, I am your mother. I was dealing with the Palace's schemes and those hoes long before you were born, dear. This isn't my first fight and she isn't the first person I am interrogating. If I couldn't make a girl like her talk, I wouldn't be worthy to be called the Emperor's Favorite anymore!"

As Kareen walked back to the garden, Anour made a grimace.

“She’s really scary sometimes...”

“Well that’s my mom. Come on Anour, let’s get going before Kairen gets himself killed like an idiot. Mother is able to burn the Capital down if anything happens to him or her new grandson...”

## The War God’s Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 104

### #104 The Evil Plan

The little dragon crouched in the grass, had its eyes set on the target. His thin long tail waving in the air, he had his big green eyes focused on his prey, waiting for the perfect moment. His little hips were moving a bit, getting ready to jump. His little snout was twitching. 5

Suddenly, the little rodent moved, and the dragon jumped to get it. The little creature squeaked under the sudden attack, but it was too late, the fierce hunter had his prey trapped. He had his paws on it, and was watching the rat trying to escape from his claws, curiously. He was much too hungry to wait any longer though. It was time to eat! He finished the meal in four bites, licking his chips and paws carefully to make sure he hadn’t left any. Then, he turned around and trotted back, very content with himself. What a fierce hunter he was!

“Kian, did you eat again?” Asked Cassandra, seeing the little dragon come back to them.

He scooted over to her side, rubbing its head against her hip. Cassandra smiled, caressing the young Dragon’s head. She was seated against a tree, busy breastfeeding her son. Just like Kian, Kassian had a ferocious appetite. Both never seemed to have enough. Moreover, whenever Cassandra saw Kian walk away to go hunting, she knew her newborn was probably hungry as well. Though it was tough caring for the two of them, there were some advantages as well. The only problem they had was that a hungry dragon could get very fussy, and bite pretty much anything. Kian would never hurt Cassandra, but Missandra quickly had to buy a

pair of very thick shoes...

“Hinue, I’m back!”

Missandra appeared between the trees, carrying a bag with her recent buying. They had agreed that she would always go alone shopping, as Cassandra was afraid someone would recognize her in town. Moreover, Kian never left her, and he didn’t understand well the concept of having to hide...

The younger sister kept watching the little dragon’s movements as she approached. Kian had a bad habit of trying to hunt her fingers or toes as a game, but the young Dragon wasn’t really aware that biting for the play was still rather painful. She had several bandages on her extremities to prove that.

“Kian’s done eating already,” chuckled Cassandra. “They are probably just going to nap next.”

Indeed, Kassian wasn’t really drinking anymore, and his eyes were starting to close a bit. They were still dark, but Cassandra was suspecting they might turn a bit lighter when he grew up, as she could see hints of green in it.

“Good,” said Missandra, still talking in their native language. “Because I won’t be able to keep walking much longer if that little guy keeps chewing on my toes...”

Kian raised his head, turning to her with curious eyes as if he knew she was talking about him.

“Yes, you!”

He let out a little growl, that actually resembled a cat’s husky meow rather than a scary growl. Missandra shook her head. She actually liked the little mischievous dragon, if only he could hold back on the biting and chewing anything he could. 4

“I still don’t know how Lady Karen could handle two or three of these,” sighed Missandra, opening up her bag.

Despite her complaining, she probably had bought some more dry meat for the little dragon. Kian had only begun to hunt recently, and he was still perfecting it. From what Cassandra had learned from Lady Karen, a

dragon's parent would share his food to feed him until he could hunt enough by itself. She felt a bit sad. If only Krai was there, Kian would have learned how to hunt properly already... and bite less, too.

"Anything new?" Asked Cassandra, looking at what her sister was pulling out of her bag.

"Well, first I got more diapers for the little Prince because I can't believe how many times a day we have to wash those, I even feel sorry for the poor river fish. Also, more food... Oh, I found your favorite berries.

Some dry meat for the little carnivore..."

"Do we still have enough money?"

"Yeah, don't worry. I'm making sure to get a good deal of everything.

Plus, your stuff we sold was really worth a lot. I've never carried so much money on myself, it even makes me glad to buy and get rid of it.

We will have enough until reach the Capital if we keep going like this."

Cassandra nodded. The girls had left the Diamond Palace almost a week ago now. They were finally close to the Capital, despite having walked slower than she had anticipated. It was mostly her fault, though. Even if Missandra helped her carry her son, Cassandra was tired after giving birth, she couldn't walk as fast as she had hoped the first few days.

Moreover, there had been news of soldiers looking for her much sooner than she had anticipated. Vrehan had left some of his soldiers in two of the towns he had stopped by before the Diamond Palace, but thankfully, no one recognized Missandra. However, that pushed them to walk even further away from the towns, and waiting for each of Missandra's trips back into town was a little delay in their trips, though they tried to do as few as possible.

"Plus, your little sister is really good at getting discounts," added Missandra with a wink.

Cassandra sighed. Truth was, even with her short hair, Missandra was really pretty, and she knew very well how to use her charms. Even so, she couldn't help but worry a bit about her ways to get discounts. She knew there was nothing wrong in seducing the merchants a little, but she

was afraid she'd overdo it and have to face one of those men by herself.

"Don't get into trouble, Mie..."

"Don't worry, I can handle myself. I'm used to it, remember? Plus, those townfolks are nothing like the Imperial Family, I can defend myself just fine. Moreover, it's their mistake for being morons..."

Suddenly, Kian's tail started wagging again, his eyes rivetted on Missandra's bag. She noticed it and sighed.

"He definitely smelled the dry meat. Damn, I thought I had wrapped it up enough! He's worse than a dog, and you can't even tame him!"

"He's a baby dragon," chuckled Cassandra. "I don't think there's any way to tame him yet."

She put her hand on Kian's back, though, scratching his back to distract him and hold him back from jumping on the bag.

"Well, at least he knows how to listen to his mom... Also, Hinue... I heard some weird stuff while being there."

Cassandra frowned. Missandra's expression wasn't good. What had happened? Could it be about Vrehan? Or the Emperor? They had tried to ask for information at every town Missandra had stopped in, but as they tried to live off what they could find in the forest and avoid going back on the main road as much as possible, they haven't heard much so far. The information wasn't traveling into the little town as fast as it did between the bigger cities, and most town folks didn't pay much attention to the news of the Capital either, unless it involved their taxes.

Missandra sat in front of her, pouting a bit, while Cassandra put her top back on, Kassian being done eating.

"Some guy at one of the stands was saying the Capital is getting ready to crown a new Emperor... They said the old one is dying."

Cassandra's heart sank. Dying? The Old Emperor, Kairen's father? She bit her lip, worried. This was really bad news. At first, she had really been hoping the Emperor would help her seek refuge inside the Palace and protect her from Vrehan, but now, to hear he was dying? What had

happened ?

“Did they say more ?” She asked.

“Not really. That guy at the shop had heard it from his brother’s wife who had heard from her cousin who knew a soldier’s sister, bla bla bla, and so on. You know, the modern way of getting information around here... I don’t really know if that’s reliable, but it sure sounds fishy.”

“It really does,” whispered Cassandra.

This was just too much to be a coincidence. The Emperor was perfectly fine and healthy just a few weeks ago, so what could have happened to him ? Cassandra couldn’t just believe this was some coincidence. Not after Kairen was sent to the battlefield, and the first Prince Sephir unexpectedly died. This was just too much at once. A bit too convenient for the Second Prince...

Missandra bit her fingers, too, looking worried as well.

“Are you sure we should keep heading to the Capital ? If something happened to the Emperor, it’s going to change everything, right ? You wouldn’t be protected at all...”

Cassandra was trying hard to think of which way to take. Indeed, if anything had happened to the Emperor, the Imperial Palace wouldn’t be safe for her anymore. She wasn’t sure Kairen would return there before she did, and if she just appeared while the Palace had a new owner, she may not survive his time. Cassandra wasn’t losing sight’ of the fact that the Second Prince also had a Dragon. Her injury was carefully wrapped in some bandages, but she wouldn’t forget about the pain of it so soon. That Dragon was the third largest of the Empire, after Glahad and Krai. She had escaped him once, but Cassandra wasn’t in any hurry to face it again.

“Hinue ?” Missandra called her gently.

“Let’s keep going. For now, we don’t have anything confirmed yet. As you said, those may only be rumors. We can always confirm them once we reach the Capital, without going to the Imperial Palace directly.”

Missandra frowned, a bit unsure about this. She wasn’t fond of going

back to the Capital, to begin with, but now, this could even be a deadly decision. She was going to follow her older sister's decisions, in any case, but she couldn't shake of that funny feeling that not everything would go as Cassandra hoped.

"The Emperor is definitely still alive," said Cassandra.

"How do you know?"

\*Lady Kareen. When Vrehan arrived in the Diamond Palace to capture me, she opposed him, and he couldn't retort back. If the Emperor was dead, he definitely wouldn't have let her talk back. So, Lady Kareen is still the Emperor's favorite concubine, and untouchable. The Second Prince hates her just as much as he hates Kairen or Shareen, if not more."

"Oh...

Missandra realized Cassandra was right. It definitely made sense...

However, for how long would that still be valid? The rumors said the Emperor was dying, not dead. Which meant, if they were right, that this was going to be a race against the clock from then on.

"Have you heard anything about the war?" Asked Cassandra.

She shook her head.

"No... Which means it's still ongoing."

Cassandra nodded with a dark expression. No matter how isolated some towns were, news of the Victory would be the fastest to travel, notably because people would spot the black dragon in the sky of the Dragon Empire. Plus, if Kairen was searching for her, he would have been to both the Diamond Palace and the Imperial Palace already. Which made Cassandra think something wrong had happened. Shareen had hinted that this should be a quick win, but the Princess had obviously been wrong.

"Don't worry, I bet he is fine," said Missandra. "Whatever the Eastern army planned, he is the War God. Everyone knows he is the best fighter of this Empire."

Cassandra smiled gently.

"Lady Kareen mentioned this war was probably no coincidence, either. Prince Vrehan's arrival at the Diamond

Palace, too, with Prince Sephir's death."

"That rat face is definitely pulling the strings," added Missandra. "His whole plan was probably to get the third Prince as far as he could from the Imperial Palace, and keep him at the battlefield for as long as possible. That way, he could eliminate people quietly, and make his move quickly."

"I don't understand. Even if Sephir and the Emperor die, and Vrehan is made Emperor, Kairen can still return anytime..." whispered Cassandra.

"What is he thinking?"

"Cassandra, your Prince is with the Imperial Army. No matter who the Emperor is, they'll act as he says. Imagine you have an evil mind and crazy ambition for a second. I mean, if I was Vrehan, I would try to get rid of all my enemies at once. Send the most threatening one to a faraway battlefield, try to get him killed there, or at least busy so I can get rid of the other obstacles, the big brother and the Emperor with a shiny Dragon. That way, even if the War God doesn't get killed during the war, he can be the one to give orders to have the Imperial Army kill him."

Cassandra sighed.

"Sometimes you're awful perceptive, Mie."

"Try growing up in a brothel," scoffed her sister. "You have no idea how petty and wicked people can be in there..."

Cassandra tried thinking, but actually, her sister's theory sounded pretty right... The only odd thing was the timing. All of it felt awfully rushed. She couldn't picture Vrehan as a man who would put such a risky plan into action. When she shared her doubts with Missandra, her younger sister nodded.

"Well, you know, there might have been a little detail that rushed things..."

Without saying anything else, Missandra pointed at Kassian.

**The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 105**

## #105 The Art of Deception

Cassandra and her sister exchanged glances, worried. For a long while now, they had been looking at the long, long line that was waiting to enter the Capital, among a massive crowd of people. Dozens of people of all ages were waiting to come in, a lot of them surprised by this impressive security check. Around ten guards were lined up, checking every man and woman, even the children.

The sisters, both hidden in the crowd, were wondering how they were going to be able to come in, and how risky this could be. The soldiers were scrutinizing every person, not even letting a toddler in without glancing at them. Cassandra and Missandra had covered themselves under newly bought shawls and were trying to avoid suspicion. There were actually quite a few habitations and shops outside the walls, so the crowd wasn't that surprising, and they could easily hide like trees in a forest. Kassian was sleeping in Cassandra's back, but Kian kept trying to pop his head out of Missandra's bag and tried to bite her fingers every time she pushed him back in, thinking she was playing. 5

"They are really checking everyone," whispered Missandra. "This is definitely one of this stupid Prince's moves to prevent you or the War God from coming back..."

Indeed, this much checking at the wall wasn't normal. Usually, people could come in and out as they pleased, the guards at the doors only checked to see if they weren't carrying weapons illegally, or would check the merchandise. Cassandra bit her lip. She truly hadn't predicted such a problem. Moreover, with their white skin and green eyes, the sisters would be recognized immediately if they tried to go in like this. She couldn't even sneak Missandra in, her sister would fit most of the description Vrehan could have given about her!

"Alright, plan B then I guess," sighed Missandra, suddenly opening the little pocket where she kept their money.

"What plan?" Asked Cassandra, surprised.

Missandra kept looking counting how much money they had left and nodded.

“We need someone’s help to get us in, and I do happen to know someone who could help with that, but not unless we give him lots of money, so... I really hope you still have that residence and people who can at least feed us afterward.”

Cassandra hesitated for a while, and suddenly remembered a little detail.

“Mie... You’re thinking about the men you owed money to?”

“Yeah. I mean, I owe them a lot, but if your Prince can pay once this is over, and I tell them they can make more if they help us, then...”

“Missandra, I’m... not sure those people you owed money to are alive anymore?”

Missandra lifted her head from the bag, frowning.

“How is that?”

“When we were looking for you, Princess Shareen and I ran into a bunch of bandits, with tattoos. She and Krai kind of killed them all...”

Missandra seemed surprised for a moment. Then, she seemed to think deeply, lost in her thoughts, and turned to Cassandra again.

“How many people do you think they killed?”

“Maybe about... twenty or thirty, in total? I’m not sure.”

“Oh, that’s fine then. I pissed off more people than that.”

Cassandra stayed speechless while Missandra went to the closest shop. There, she bought some paper and ink and wrote a note quickly. Then, her younger sister found a young boy in the crowd, and gave him the letter, asking

him to deliver it to the Red District in exchange for a bit of gold. The boy nodded and happily took it.

The two sisters watched him walk up the line, but Cassandra was still unsure about this plan.

“Is it fine if he just hands it to anyone in the Red District? Didn’t you have a name or something?”

Missandra smirked.

“I really pissed off a lot of people there.”

Cassandra nodded. Well, she did remember the quite exhaustive list of

establishments that kept a bitter memory of her younger sister, for having visited each of them and listened to Missandra's mischief first hand.

"Trust me," added Missandra. "If we don't hear anything in the next hour, it only means that boy kept the gold. I can always send another one."

So they waited. To Cassandra's surprise, the answer wasn't long to come. The sisters watched an older woman storm out of the gate, carrying a bag, clearly glaring at the crowd as she seemed to be looking for someone. Of course, Missandra had watched the whole scene from afar with a little smile on.

"Not a bad pick, I guess..."

They didn't approach, waiting for that woman to spot them. When she did, she ran their way, looking furious. While Cassandra was worried, Missandra was quietly waiting, with a hint of a smile on, crossing her arms.

The woman was about twice their age, very muscular, with short black hair and some tattoos on her face. She looked like a furious tiger as she approached.

"You little bitch! I can't believe you have the fucking balls to send me this crap!" She yelled, throwing Missandra's not at her feet.

"Nice to see you, Verna. I missed you too."

"Don't give me your arrogant crap, Mie; I only came because you owe me some damn money, a fucking lot, and you paid that boy three gold coins! Three! Where is my money? Give me my money!"

The woman tried to grab Missandra's bag, but unfortunately for her, it was well guarded. As soon as she reached her hand for it, Kian furiously tried to bite it, making her scream and retract her hand quickly.

Missandra chuckled, while the woman had her eyes wide open in shock, staring at the bag.

"What the heck was that thing? What was that?"

"A unique security system," said Missandra. "Now, before I give you any money, did you bring what I asked?"

The woman frowned, dropping the bag at her feet.

“I did, you damn little... Yes, I do have it, but I want my money, you little swine!”

Ignoring her, Missandra crouched down to inspect the content of the bag, Cassandra frowning behind her. To her surprise, her younger sister pulled out some little pots, what looked like some makeup, two big circles of metal, and two white dresses.

“That’s...”

“My plan,” said Missandra with a little smile. “I know it’s probably no good memory for you, but we are going to have to disguise ourselves as slaves to get in. Those men won’t spend too much time checking slaves when they think they are looking for a concubine.”

“A concubine?” Repeated Verna, glancing at Cassandra. “Mie, what the hell have you done this time?”

“Mind your own business, V. Anyway, thanks, you did get everything!”

“Hey, I want my money, Mie. Now, Or I’m bringing you two to the soldiers. I’m not stupid, you know!”

Missandra sighed, took out the little purse, and threw it to her. Verna reception it, avidly counting the money. It took her a minute, but she soon went back to her angry expression. 1 !!

“Are you kidding me! There’s not even a finh of what you promised! I know I couldn’t trust you!”

Don’t you think I’m walking around with gold bars in my purse? You’ll get the rest once you take us inside!”

Verna seemed to hesitate, glancing at Cassandra and Missandra. Her eyes fell on kassian, too, for a couple of minutes. The baby was now awake, but quietly hanging in the fabric tied around his mom, his mouth making a little O. Verna spent a few more seconds, detailing his features, his mother’s skin tone, and her eyes went back to Missandra’s bag with a suspicious frown.

“A concubine, you said...? You’re not going to get me into more trouble, are you?”

“I promise, as soon as we get to my residence safely, I’ll make sure you

have your money,” said Cassandra.

She was a bit desperate, but if that woman didn't help them now or decided to sell them to the soldiers, the situation would take a tragic turn in minutes. Cassandra could only hope that the people at the residence still had enough money left, but at least, once they would be inside the Capital and past the gates, they would be much safer. Moreover, she didn't want to lose any more time. If Kassian cried or Kian got impatient, the soldiers could notice them and capture all four of them.

Verna clicked her tongue.

\*Fuck you, Mie, you better have my money! Or I swear I'm denouncing you to the first guard I see!”

Missandra nodded, gathered everything that was inside the bag again. Then, she grabbed Cassandra's arm, pulling her sister further away from the crowd, in a spot under the trees, where no one would come.

“So, these people are probably going to be looking for our physical description, even if we disguise as slaves, we can't just going in. That's why I asked Verna to bring all these.”

“You want us to disguise ourselves as Dragon Empire people? Is that even possible?”

“Of course. You have no idea how much the girls spent on makeup inside the brothels... This is for dying our hair black, first. It's rather quick, they used it all the time. It was a ruckus every time someone spotted white hair... Oh, and this is for naturally tanning the skin. I'm not sure how much it can work on us but at least we won't look as white. Crap, I hope there's enough... Well, we don't need to look healthy, and we can always cover our arms and be careful about our hands.”

Cassandra kept nodding, truly impress. Her sister had truly become a master at deceiving people... To even think of such a plan so fast. It was a little bit scary but still impressive.

“What about Kian and Kassian? They are going to search our bags, and if they find us with a baby...”

“We can have Verna carry him, she doesn't look anything like you and

thankfully, he looks more like his dad too.”

“Excuse me!” Said Verna, looking astonished. “I never agreed to smuggle someone else’s brat!”

“Stop fussing, think about the money,” retorted Missandra, brushing her aside. “The problem is Kian... It’s not that easy to conceal a dragon, he’s already almost too big for the bag and they are definitely going to check it...”

Cassandra glanced at the sky, with a little frown on.

“We can try having him fly over the wall... If he follows me, he might not like the crowd and fly over us naturally.”

“Yeah... That could work. We just need to make sure the baby flying lizard looks like a bird. A big bird...”

Hence, the two sisters spent the next hour dying their hair black and covering their skin with that bronzing powder, making sure nothing was amiss. They couldn’t hide the color of their eyes, but this was another advantage of posing as slaves: their eyes would be riveted to the ground with no one to question that. It actually took them not too long to cover Kian with some dust, making sure his silver scales weren’t shining anymore, and covering his tail with leaves to make it look like feathers. The result was really strange, letting Verna, who was still speechless about seeing a baby dragon, with a grin.

“You think people will take that for a bird? Are you insane? He would have more chances of posing as a cat with wings!” 1

“Oh, shut up,” retorted Missandra. “We’re not taking him to be examined from up close anyway, he just needs to fly above us for less than a minute and come back. No one will care about a bird, there are several falcons and all living in this area. We just need the illusion to last for as long as it takes us to cross that frontier.”

“You’re crazy,” concluded Verna. “A crazy genius, but crazy. I’m still waiting for my money, though.”

“Stop whining. We just need to equip you with Kassian, cross that stupid gate and you’ll get your money.”

Cassandra frowned. She was very reluctant on letting another woman carry her child, aside from Missandra. However, they didn't have much of a choice, and it would only be for a few minutes. The two girls made sure the baby was comfortably hung against Verna, and Cassandra kissed his forehead gently, making sure he wasn't too perturbed by the change. He had been carried by Missandra several times before, and barely cried anyway. Kian was usually the one getting impatient first.

Cassandra focused on him for the next minutes, while her younger sister checked her hair once more while braiding it quickly.

“Alright, it doesn't really suit you, but at least it should deceive the guards unless they are makeup experts, which I highly doubt.”

“Can we just go already?” Sighed Verna.

“Ready, Hinue?”

“Ready...” sighed Cassandra.