

## The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 91

### #91 The Last Days

Kairen's kiss was gentle, slow and sweet. Cassandra couldn't help but smile against his lips. Now that she was done with her letters, she wrapped her arms around his neck, and let him pull her close, standing up and guiding her to their bed. Kairen's hands on her skin were warm, so warm that her skin would get little goosebumps from that delicious warm sensation. She loved the familiar smell of the War God. Her heart sank when Cassandra realized that, in a few days, she would have to say goodbye and wouldn't be able to enjoy this for a few weeks...

Hence, she was even thirstier for his kisses than usual, caressing his neck and brushing his hair. She suddenly stopped, though, looking at it.

"What is it?"

"Would you let me cut your hair?" She asked in a soft voice.

"My hair?"

"Yes... Do you mind?"

Kairen shook his head, and kissed her forehead. Of course, he didn't care at all. The War God never really bothered about his hair... The lustrous black hair was usually pushed back on his shoulders, he never really cared to cut it. His mother would do it for him from time to time, but there was really no particular attachment from him. He didn't care what Cassandra would do with it... Taking out the green cloth from his shoulders, Cassandra hung it next to hers, but as she did, Kairen frowned.

"Wait... I forgot about this," he said.

He stood and walked to one of the bags they had taken back from the Palace, searching for something, and eventually pulled out a little dagger from it, handing it to her. The blade was wrapped in a thick leather cloth, but Cassandra took it out carefully.

"I've seen it before..." said Cassandra, observing the weapon with a frown.

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"It was Phetra's... I modified it to make it a better weapon, and lighter

too. Keep it with you.”

Cassandra was surprised to receive the weapon of her enemy. Indeed, the dagger had changed a bit since Phetra had tried to harm her with it. She vaguely remembered Kairen working on it while she was making the concoction for Missandra’s injuries, but she hadn’t really paid much attention back then, and somehow forgot about it. Now, she could observe it a bit more carefully. The War God had removed all the unnecessary decorations, gems and gold for which neither of them cared, and sharpened it. Cassandra couldn’t have yield one of Kairen’s swords, as they were way too heavy for her thin build, but this little dagger was indeed just the right weight in her hand. She could move it easily, though she hadn’t much knowledge about how to use a dagger. She slid her finger on the blade, but avoided the edge. It was obvious this had been sharpened with precision, and she didn’t want to cut herself. 2

“Can I cut your hair with that?”

“You can tame it this way.”

Cassandra chuckled. She actually liked the symbolism behind keeping this weapon. The young concubine insisted on washing his hair first. Then, Kairen sat on the floor next to her, as even on a stool he would have been too tall for her. Cassandra was a bit excited to cut her Prince’s hair, but she had to think about what she wanted to do first... Kairen’s hair had grown long, to fall below his shoulders. She knew that length wasn’t comfortable for him to fight with. She combed his hair with her fingers first, pushing it back, and trimmed the ends a bit. Then, she decided to shave the sides. She had seen some men with this haircut at the camp. She proceeded carefully. Indeed, the blade was very sharp... Cassandra had to proceed slowly, as she was agonizing over the idea of cutting him. It took longer than she had thought because of that, but once she was done, the shaved sides pleased her a lot. She carefully kept his freshly cut hair, too, putting it on a little napkin on the side. Then, she put the dagger down on its leather wrapping, and braided the hair left on top of his head, which was still plenty and long enough to fall

between his shoulder blades. Then, she decided to tie it with some little gold rings she had in her chest, that she would probably never use. Once she was done, she stepped back a bit and looked at the result, satisfied.

“What do you think?” She asked.

“Do my beard too.”

Cassandra laughed. His heavy beard indeed felt a bit too much now that his sides were shaven. She grabbed the dagger again, observing it to think about what she should do.

“I need to think about it...”

“Just shave it.”

“I like your beard though...”

“Then just shave what you don’t like. It’s too long.”

Cassandra chuckled.

“Aren’t you a fussy customer, Prince Kairen?”

“I’ll pay you, then.”

“How much would you pay me?” Asked Cassandra, as she started trimming his beard.

“A gold bar.”

She laughed.

“I would be the most over payed barber in the Empire!”

“It’s fine.”

Cassandra shook her head, and focused on the trimming. It was his gold anyway... She knew very well he didn’t care much about it. The Imperial family was way too rich to really care. She focused on his beard, cutting it but leaving some, as she loved the spiky feeling of it. Once she was done, she had cut about two-thirds of it, but still leaving about half an inch for herself to play with.

“Alright, we are done...” She said with a satisfied smile.

Kairen nodded, checking his newly trimmed beard with his fingers.

Cassandra knew he was satisfied as he didn’t ask her to cut more. She put her dagger down, and went to gather the hair she had collected in a napkin. Then, she very carefully started washed it in the little bassin, and

braided it. Kairen frowned a bit, wondering what she was doing now. She even got up several times to look into her little chest full of jewelry she seldom used. Once she was done, Cassandra proudly showed it to him. She had made a bracelet of his cut hair, adding some of her little gold rings to it. Kairen was surprised. She finished braiding the silky black hair around her wrist, around the thread from their ceremony, and it was clear it wouldn't come off unless cut. (1)

"Did you intend to make this from the start?" He asked, stroking the little bracelet.

"Yes... Your hair is very long, and I like it. It will be my memento for when you're gone..."

He nodded, a bit curious. Then, his eyes went to her hair, frowning.

"Do you want one from me too?" Asked Cassandra, reading his mind easily.

"I don't want you to cut your hair..."

She chuckled and grabbed the dagger again. Kairen was frowning, but Cassandra knew very well he loved her long hair, and had no intention to cut it short either. Instead, she grabbed a strand around her nape, where it would be seen. She cut a good portion of it. Her hair was long enough, and that strand alone would suffice. 12

"Will a bracelet fit for you?" She asked, a bit unsure.

"Can you braid it into my hair?" (5)

Cassandra immediately loved the idea. She checked the braids she had done in Kairen's hair, and worked around it. The final result was actually surprisingly beautiful. From what she had done before, the black braids on his head were fading into her dark brown strands, and falling a bit lower down his back. It looked like his hair was naturally fading into hers, and the now rather long braids down his back were quite beautiful and unique. She had a wide smile observing the result. The War God, too, grabbed the braids to look at it, stroking the dark brown strands with his fingers. (5)

"Are you happy with it, dear customer?" Cassandra asked.

“Very,” he replied with a nod.

He pulled her in for a kiss, now that they were done with the hair-styling fun. Cassandra was so happy, she wished those few days of peace together could last forever. She felt safe wherever the Prince was, even more so when they were staying at the Diamond Palace. This Rain Ceremony had been a dream come true, some simple yet so beautiful. She didn't know if Kairen grasped the full extent of this vow, how much it meant for her, but she was satisfied enough to have been bonded with him in the ways of her people. She didn't want to take this silk thread or her newly made hair bracelet off, ever. Even if they had to part soon, she knew she'd cherish it and comfort herself with it. 4

She was just so eager to enjoy all of him while she still could. She kissed him back, so eager and demanding. She would never get tired of this man. Moreover, she really liked that new hairdo. Kairen looked even manlier, if possible... He truly looked like a God of War, like this. He wasn't a particularly handsome man, but Cassandra had grown to love his strong jaw, his obsidian eyes and his features. His muscles, too. She was never into hunky men, but Kairen's powerful arms just ignited all of her desire so easily, with those large hands. She would blush every time he caressed her, her body so conditioned to his touch after all of those hours of love making. ( 1 1 )

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Moreover, there was something about knowing those were their last days together before a while. Somehow, she didn't want to let go of him, not yet. Her whole world had been spinning around this man for several months now. The weeks without him had been hard. Now, how long would she have to wait until the next time they could be together again? Hence, for once Cassandra wasn't too shy about taking the lead. She pushed him gently on the bed, and of course, her Prince wouldn't reject her. Kairen actually liked to see her act a little bit bolder, to let her take the lead in bed. They had made love so many times, their bodies didn't

hold many secrets left for the other.

Cassandra sat across his hips, while, Kairen pulled them both on the middle of the bed. She felt a bit guilty about having sex after they had just both changed, but this was a bit too late to reconsider. Their passionate kissing wasn't giving much room for her to think, and her skin was burning up already. She undid the laces of her dress, and helped her Prince take off his pants. Within a few minutes, they had their skins against each other, and no piece of clothing left. Cassandra kept caressing the long, freshly cut braid in Kairen's back. She really liked his new hairdo, and her fingertips would caress his head, feel the bare parts behind his ears, caress it down to his nape, then find the braid, trace it back to the top, and redo that gesture over and over again.

"...Stop that."

Cassandra frowned, a bit surprised. She tilted her head, but, when she tried to pass her fingers behind his ears again, Kairen avoided it. She chuckled.

"Don't tell me... it tickles?"

".... Just stop."

Cassandra laughed. Who could have known the War God was ticklish behind his ears!

## The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 92

### #92 The Goodbyes

Cassandra slowly woke up to some rummaging behind the door. She frowned, wondering what was going on. If she focused enough, she could hear a bit of the conversation...

"But... It's been two days..."

"I told you, they are fine! Just leave it here. They eat it, don't they? Just come and clean it up later. Don't disturb them, they'll come out when they have enough."

"Oh... I see..."

Cassandra sighed and snuggled inside Kairen's arms. Has it been two days already? They hadn't parted and hadn't left the bed except for taking the trays of food inside and back outside. Her last three nights and two days had been filled with love and sex. She felt like they had gone in a little bubble, away from time. Or maybe just trying to forget about time. She wasn't ready to part with him, but she probably would never be. Kairen's slow respiration above her head made her a bit sad. She didn't want to have to sleep alone, without the sounds of her partner beside her. He had become everything to her... The fact that she knew this was going to come to an end soon was devastating her, making it way worse. She didn't know when, she just know that was going to happen soon. Cassandra hated that wait. The only way for her to forget was to sleep or have sex with her Prince. Somehow, she hated that depressed feeling before he was even gone...

She sat on the bed, sighing and pushing her hair away from her face. Of course, behind her Kairen immediately reacted, and came to wrap her in his arms.

"What is it?" He whispered against her ear.

"I just... I need to do something. I'm going to go crazy if I just stay here thinking about how you're going to leave soon."

"Are you sad?"

"I don't think I'm sad... yet."

Cassandra turned around, kissing him a bit, brushing his beard with her fingers. It had already grown back a little... Then, she took a deep breath and smiled softly.

"I'll be alright. Just focus on the war, and I will focus on our baby."

Kairen nodded, agreeing with her. Cassandra gently kissed him again and left the bed to go and see what clothes she could put on. She didn't want to stay locked in this room anymore. It had been a bit too long already, and she didn't want to be rude to their host, Lady Kareen, or make her sister unhappy. Kairen grabbed the food tray to bring inside while she washed with the little water basin, and they ate together in silence.

When they were done, both full, dressed, and ready, they walked out of the bedroom. The Diamond Palace was actually rather quiet, but first, Cassandra wanted to go and check on the Dragon Egg. It was a bit of a funny feeling, but she felt like she had neglected her baby by not going to see the egg for a while. Once they got there, to her surprise, Krai was wrapped around it and sleeping. She chuckled.

The Black Dragon woke up, and watched her come close, but did not want to leave its egg, letting Cassandra come to him instead. She got on her knees right next to him, and Krai's snout sniffed her belly, rubbing a bit against her dress curiously. She scratched his snout a bit, but her hand was busier touching the egg. It was still warm, with this strange light moving inside... It was almost as if something was beating inside.

Actually, the egg seemed even warmer than she remembered, almost hot now. How many more weeks until she gave birth? At this rate, it would be burning hot before her baby was born!

Krai softly growled when Kairen approached, and the War God also scratched his head. It was rare for the two to interact directly...

Cassandra watched them for a while, but she was most distracted by the egg. She had grown

attached to it a lot, and couldn't wait to meet both the baby dragon and her baby... The Egg was already so big, she wondered what size a newborn dragon could be? Maybe it was half empty of half-liquid in there, maybe the baby dragon was already as big as that?

"Oh, look who finally came out of the den!"

They turned around. Kareen was just at the entrance of the garden, followed by some servants carrying meat. She smiled wide and walked up to them. Krai, excited, suddenly got up, smelling the meat.

"Good Morning, Lady Kareen," said Cassandra.

"Good Morning, dear. You look well-rested!"

Cassandra blushed a bit. The Imperial Concubine couldn't ignore that they had just spent two days in bed. Of course, she would be rested,



having done nothing but sleep and... the rest. 2

“How come you are feeding Krai here?” Asked Cassandra, a bit curious. The Dragon would usually leave the Diamond Palace, or wherever they were staying in, to go and feed by himself. He was a good enough hunter to provide for himself. He only came around to steal some meat from their meals out of gluttony, not hunger.

“That big boy doesn’t need me!” Laughed Kareen. “This is for Srai... Srai, come here baby.”

Suddenly, a purple dragon head popped up from behind Krai. Cassandra hadn’t noticed Srai was here! The other dragon was so tiny Krai’s body could easily hide him. He climbed over his younger brother, and wiggled all the way to Lady Kareen, though Krai was right behind him, his ruby eyes lurking the meat.

“Don’t move, Krai,” said Kareen with her motherly voice.

The black dragon growled softly, sulking a bit, but stayed where he was, with no choice but to watch his big brother eat the meat. Srai’s owner had died at six years old... Would that mean her future baby dragon was going to be even tinier than him? Cassandra couldn’t be sure, though. Sephir and Vrehan’s dragons were both smaller than Krai... It was really too hard to say, though Lady Kareen had hinted before that their Dragon would probably be on the bigger side.

“Stop sulking you big boy, you should go out and hunt if you’re hungry!” Said Kareen, scolding Krai who was still growling, upset.

“Didn’t he go hunting yet today?” Asked Cassandra.

“He went this morning, but he’s been glued to his egg for as long as you two were locked in that room. He just leaves it to go hunting... I don’t know what’s wrong with him. Kairen?”

Both women turned to the War God, but Kairen stayed mute, looking at the egg with a little frown. Cassandra, however, was the quickest to understand what was going on.

They didn’t want to leave. Just like Kairen had kept her in the bedroom for three nights and two days, Krai didn’t want to part with its egg. The

Dragon probably didn't want to part with Cassandra, either. The pair was dreading this war, unwilling to part with their loved ones. This truth hit Cassandra right in the heart. She hadn't realized before. Because her prince seldom showed his expressions and was always so attached to her anyway, she hadn't even thought about how he could feel about leaving her here in the Diamond Palace. She had focused on her own feelings alone, and only realized now how selfish and self-centered that was of her. (2

Kairen was the one who had to leave. He was the one who would have to go to war, to fulfill his duty as the third Prince, the God of War of the Dragon Empire, while she'd stay back. Cassandra would be safe here in the Diamond Palace, while her lover was sent to the frontlines.

Underneath the armor, the War God was a man. Just a man, how had learned to muffle his feelings his whole life... However, Krai was a mirror of his owner's feelings. He didn't want to leave them.<sup>3</sup>

Cassandra got up and walked up to him, putting her arms around his chest, hugging him gently. Kairen didn't answer much, aside from his hand on her lower back, playing with her hair.

"Oh... I like this new hairstyle, son," said Kareen, looking it up from a bit closer. "Perfect for going to war... 3

"It better be soon!" Yelled someone behind her.

Shareen appeared, stealing some meat from the dragons to eat. Cassandra frowned a bit, as it was raw meat, but obviously, the Princess couldn't care less and was eating it directly on the bone. Lady Kareen clicked her tongue.

"Shareen, your manners!"

"I am starving, mother, I trained all morning with those useless guards of yours; They better get back in shape before I come back, or I'll have all those idiots replaced. Anyway, is the honeymoon over you two? I hope you do know you can't put another baby on the way before this one is out, though, right?"

Cassandra decided to ignore her. She was used to Shareen's crude ways

by now, and she was almost expecting this at this point...

“Enough, enough. I’m hungry too. Let’s have a late morning brunch, before you end up fighting with my babies,” said Kareen, walking back inside.

Cassandra chuckled. Anything was an excuse to have a brunch for Lady Kareen, as she liked holding big feasts for breakfast no matter how late or early in the day it was. Moreover, hearing her call both dragons her babies was so

cute. They all walked back inside, but to Cassandra’s surprise, though Missandra and Dahlia were here, Anour didn’t show up. When she asked about it, Missandra frowned, and Shareen chuckled.

“The young ones had a bit of a fight last night, so he’s been sulking. Don’t worry, this big baby will show up eventually.”

“A fight? What did you fight with Anour about?” Asked Cassandra, turning to Missandra.

Her younger sister pouted a bit.

“He kept saying how a woman will always be weaker than a man, and wouldn’t change his mind. So, I challenged him.”

“You fought with Anour? Missandra!”

“What, I lost anyway!” Protested the younger sister.

Shareen laughed loudly.

“You barely lost, that’s what upset Anour. He struggled so much he got a big black eye, so now that idiot is reflecting. Well done, by the way, Missie.”

“Stop calling me that...” whispered Missandra with a cute pout.

Cassandra couldn’t help but smile, thinking about how her younger sister had learned from her mistakes and was finally changing her attitude towards the Imperial Family. Of course, she shouldn’t fight, but from what she had heard, this was just normal bickering between teenagers. They set up for another brunch in one of the gardens, and, somewhat, Cassandra finally felt a bit better compared to before. Maybe staying in bed for so long had gotten to her... She felt better now, sitting in the

garden, breathing some fresh air, and spending time with everyone. Suddenly, loud noises were heard from the outside. The ruckus had lots of people cheering, and applauds. A servant came running inside the garden, but they all already knew what was going on.

“The Imperial Army has arrived, Your Highnesses! They are asking to see the third Prince Kairen, the War God of the Dragon Empire!”

Cassandra’s heart sank at those words. The Army had arrived even faster than she thought...

Somehow, Kairen, Anour, and Shareen got ready to leave incredibly fast. A couple of representatives from the army showed up, but there wasn’t much time to lose. The news from the eastern front weren’t good, they had to go as fast as possible. Hence, there wasn’t much ceremony involved, but everything was done in sad silence. Once everything was packed and ready, all dragons and humans gathered at the entrance of the Diamond Palace. Cassandra could even feel Krai’s unhappiness, as the dragon was phlegmatic, his head turned towards the direction his egg was in. 4

The young Concubine approached the Dragon, scratching its maw gently. “Don’t worry... I’ll take care of our babies...” she whispered to him. The Dragon growled sadly, rubbing his head against her belly. She stayed with him until Kairen had said goodbye to his mother, and finally turned to her.

She sighed, but she couldn’t say a word. Her throat was already choked up, despite her best attempt not to cry. The Prince gently took her in his arms. Cassandra hid her face in his shoulder, trying to breathe deep, to remember his smell and his warmth. She really wasn’t ready to let go...

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“Stay safe,” he whispered to her. “Take care of yourself and the baby. Eat well, sleep well... I’ll be back soon.”

“I know...”

She wanted to tell him the same, to stay safe and healthy, but the words didn’t come. Instead, she started tearing up, and rose her eyes to look at

him. She was going to miss him so much, again... Finally, she put her hands on his face, and kissed him longingly. This was going to be their last kiss for a long time... She needed that taste on her lips to linger as long as possible.

“By the great Golden Dragon, how much more cheesier and mushier can you two get? Alright, that’s it, I’m out of here,” declared Shareen.

The two lovers separated slowly, and Kairen put a last kiss on her forehead.

“I’ll be back soon,” he repeated. .

Cassandra nodded sadly, and took a couple of steps back. Kareen came to her side, putting an arm around her shoulder as they watch Kairen, Shareen, Anour and the two Dragons fly away, leading the Army.

Cassandra broke into tears a few minutes later.

## **The War God’ s Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 93**

### **#93 The New Project**

After Kairen’s departure, Cassandra was a bit sad for a couple of days. However, she knew she couldn’t stay like that forever. Once she was done crying, she tried to spend time with Kareen, Missandra, and Dahlia, and keep herself busy. Somehow, they all cooperated to keep her occupied.

Lady Kareen was used to her children being gone and having to find hobbies for herself. As it turned out, she was rather busy as the City’s owner and mayor already, but she still found time to have other hobbies. She liked painting and tried to talk Cassandra into it. Though the young concubine wasn’t fond of it, the young Missandra was interested, and even proved herself to be a good student. Eventually, Cassandra was used as a model a couple of times, as it allowed her to rest yet spend time chatting with them.

There was something else Lady Kareen did for her, however. Somehow, the Imperial Concubine was well aware of Kairen’s present for Cassandra

in the Imperial Palace, and decided to gift her a little garden in the Diamond Palace, too. This was probably the most successful attempt at cheering Cassandra up.

Once she started taking care of her plants, studying the books she was given about them or writing herself, Cassandra didn't see the hours pass. Missandra would join her often, too, and study from her as well as exchange her knowledge on the matter. Somehow, the two sisters started working on new hybrid species, trying to grow sprouts that would survive in the Shadelands. This little project was keeping Cassandra busy, and also helping her remember that, sometime soon, she would be able to go back there with Kairen. Anything was good to keep herself busy. She'd write, chat with Kareen and Missandra, work on her plants, write about new medicines, go to the local markets, study more books, and find more to keep herself busy with.

That workaholic behavior of hers started worrying Kareen and Missandra a bit, as it never seemed like the young concubine took a break, despite her belly growing quickly. Cassandra was busy, too busy. She'd spend all day working on one thing then another, only stopping to eat. The Imperial Concubine was starting to dislike this workaholic behavior and insisted on Missandra and Dahlia watching her from even closer.

However, one day, Kareen found her unexpectedly napping in the garden, in the dragon egg's garden. Cassandra was wrapped up in a warm blanket and had fallen asleep with some of her notes, right next to the egg. The discreet Dahlia was watching her from afar, making sure she wouldn't get sick, and silently smiled to Lady Kareen when their eyes met, meaning she already knew about Cassandra's little naps. After that, the Imperial Concubine Kareen decided to not be so much on Cassandra's back. When she wasn't constantly watched, Cassandra would eventually take breaks by herself, always agreeing to Dahlia's suggestion for some tea or a stroll to the gardens.

Unknown to Kareen, however, the hardest times for Cassandra were at night. The young concubine hadn't imagined she would have so much

trouble falling asleep by herself. The perspective of going back to an empty bed haunted her every day after dusk. She would drag on the time to go back to her bedroom, find excuses to stay up late with Lady Kareen or her notes, and when she had no choice but to go, she'd turn sad and silent. Dahlia had set up a little routine for her, where the young concubine would take a long hot bath in her bedroom, and chat with her about her day. Helping Cassandra bathe, wash her hair, and brush it before bed, somehow helped her get sleepy and fall asleep more easily. The weather was getting a bit colder, too, so Dahlia brought in little scented candles, finding the ones that supposedly helped with insomnia.

(2)

Her pregnancy was also a big help in keeping Cassandra from tiring herself out. Somehow, reaching the seventh month got her more tired than ever before, and she started taking naps by herself. Moreover, her big belly was incapacitating her in several ways, giving Dahlia and Missandra more excuses to stay around and help her.

Eventually, Cassandra's sadness passed. She wasn't over Kairen's absence, but at least, she reverted to her old self and didn't look as sad or on the verge of crying anymore. Truth was, Cassandra had spent many nights crying silently, but she couldn't take it anymore. She couldn't stand being a shadow of herself. She was even more worried it would impact her baby negatively. From then on, she started every day with a big breath, something to

look forward to, and did her best to live her days eating well and resting well, as she had promised her prince. When she missed him, she'd caress the little bracelet of hair around her wrist, or go to see the dragon's egg. Somehow, Cassandra got a bit better by herself, and life went on for everyone at the Diamond Castle.

After a few more weeks, however, Cassandra could tell something was wrong. There was no way Kareen hadn't gotten any news about the eastern war yet. It had been more than two months already. When she mentioned it to her, the Imperial Concubine always pretended like she

was going to ask about it soon, or was waiting to hear from some of her spies. Cassandra couldn't take it anymore. After a while, she had even received the answers from the people at the Onyx Castle and the North Army camp by a normal message-carrier service. There was no way Kareen had absolutely no news from the war against the Eastern Republic! That morning, she insisted once again, and this time would persist until she got the truth, with Missandra's support. After half an hour of arguing, Kareen was exasperated.

"You're so stubborn!"

"I need to know the truth! I know my Prince is out there fighting! I can wait but I can't stand not having any news, and I know you must have some information! That is all I ask, Lady Kareen!"

The Imperial Concubine looked about to throw her cup of tea across the room. Instead, she slammed it on the table, and rolled her eyes.

"Gosh, I didn't think you could be as stubborn as my children! Fine, I will tell you!"

"Really? So you know something?"

"Of course I do! Who do you think I am? There isn't a city in this Empire I don't have a spy in! Anyway, I did get some news half a month ago. While Shareen is perfectly fine in the north, on Kairen's side, the Eastern Army somehow got further into our territory than we thought. The Capital was actually notified of the attack very late, someone there didn't do their job correctly or couldn't. By the time Kairen got there, the situation was very messy, and you can't have a Dragon simply burn everything down when your enemies are spread in your own city, among our people."

"Oh God, no..." whispered Cassandra, shocked.

She hadn't imagined the situation was that bad! All this time, Shareen and Kairen had made it sound like this would be an easy task, that would be solved easily. Cassandra had no idea the frontline was in such a bad situation even before Kairen had gotten there...

"That's why things are complicated. He has to wipe out the enemy and



push them back to the frontier, but those imbecile republicans have understood that Krai won't attack, or at least fire, while they are still inside the Dragon Empire, and all of their strategies seems to focus on staying in..."

"Since when does the Eastern Republic knows so much about Dragons?"

Asked Missandra. "Even those tactics don't look like theirs at all."

"I know," sighed Kareen. "That is what worries me. I wouldn't be surprised if a little rat had gone ahead to give them those bad ideas..."

"Lady Kareen, do you think... The second Prince could have..."

However, the Imperial Concubine raised her hand to stop Cassandra.

"Let's be careful and keep what we think to ourselves for now. I already wrote to the Imperial Palace, but that snake Vrehan hasn't left his apartments there since we left, apparently on the pretense of looking after his sister."

"He definitely has people to do it for him!" Said Missandra. "Everyone knows the Imp... I mean, people like me never dirty their hands themselves."

Kareen smiled, but this was more of a scary smile than a heartfelt smile and nodded.

"That's right, dear. Just like me, he probably has people working for him. Vrehan is much smarter than Phetra. She's the type who will dirty her own hands if she's pushed over the limit. However, Vrehan learned a lot from his snake mother. He loves to scheme and get rid of people who annoy him without leaving traces. You can never, ever be alone with him or his people. I don't believe he'd stay locked up under the Emperor's nose only for his sister's sake, either. This sounds too much like some play he'd be pulling off."

"Can't we do anything?" Asked Cassandra.

"I have sent people to watch him, but he probably knows that too. In any case, Vrehan won't move until he's sure he can win, and I don't see how he could do that. No matter what, my son is the War God. He won't lose a war just because it started late."

Cassandra slowly nodded, but she didn't feel reassured. Kairen wasn't like Vrehan, someone who'd plot in people's back and use underhanded methods. She tried to think of several scenarios. Somehow, she felt it was unlikely her prince would die in this war. What could Vrehan do? Send an assassin, or worse, find some way to poison him? Cassandra knew the Dragon tamers like Kairen were more resistant to poison, but no matter how strong his body was, there was only so much a man could do... Moreover, Cassandra hated not doing anything for him. She suddenly stood up, surprising both women in the room. Kareen sighed.

"We are not done with the brunch, dear."

"I've had enough, Lady Kareen, thank you. Do you think you could have something delivered to the front if I was to give it to you?"

"Of course, dear. What are you thinking about now?"

Cassandra took a deep breath. The idea had just popped up in her head.

"I'll prepare so first aid kits for the military."

"First aid kits? For the front? Those men in the imperial army aren't trained to do any medical procedures, dear..."

"It's fine, they won't need training, just common sense. If I taught the men in the North Army camp, I can have those men in the Eastern front learn too, even without being there at all."

Missandra, smiling wide, got up too, excited.

"I love that idea, Hinue! I'll help you!"

"Oh, you young ones are so full of energy," sighed Kareen. "Anyway, Cassandra, I gave you young ones to work for you before, didn't I? They have learned how to write and calculate already. Just have those girls come over and help you."

"Thank you, Lady Kareen. Can I entrust you with the transportation part?"

"Of course, dear. As if that old lady would sit on her arse while my children fight here and there!"

Cassandra smiled. Only at times like this, Kareen would be even nicer than usual and hinting at treating her and Missandra as her own daughters. The two sisters then left the garden they were eating in, though Dahlia packed up some more food for Cassandra to snack on later, and went to the little room next to Cassandra's garden, which had pretty much become her office. Behind her, Missandra was excited. (2)

"Do you already know what we will do?"

"We need to list all kinds of injuries, diseases, and other health issues the soldiers in the front could have to face, how often, and find a way to answer to any of them in a short amount of time."

"Alright," said Missandra, grabbing what she needed to write down. "We can start by listing all of the most common diseases in that part of the Empire, common infection, and also some basic injury treatment they should use. Should we make some sort of notice to put in those kits?"

"It's a battlefield, Missandra, they don't have time to read, and it may even be possible that some of the soldiers don't even know how to read. So we need to make it as simple as possible..."

"We can make drawings or use colors. When I worked in brothels, some of the girls weren't literate, but they knew which medicine to take based on their stamping or colors."

"Right, we can use that. Do you still remember them? We need to think about how we can pack them in light, easily transportable ways..."

Just like that, both women started working together. Once they were done planning and compiling information, they brought their project to Kareen, who gave her own opinion on it, and called in some of her personal soldiers, military as well, for them to give their input. Within a week, Cassandra, Missandra, and several more people started working hard on this. Kareen had more than enough money to support their project and ship it to the front in record time. Not only the young concubine got her hands and money full with this project, but the whole Diamond City became aware of the efforts made at the Diamond Palace,

and offered to contribute to show support to the soldiers in their own ways, an unprecedented event in the Dragon Empire.

## The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 94

### #94 The News from the Palace

It took a couple more weeks for everything to be ready and the first samples to be sent to the frontlines. Eventually, Cassandra and Missandra had come up with little boxes, in two sizes: one that could fit in a pocket and be carried by any soldier, and a bigger one, for the ones who could store it in their horses' satchels or inside a chariot. Those medical boxes included medicine to the most common issues a soldier could meet on the battlefield, from fevers to large injuries, with very little explanation.

According to the Captain of Kareen's guards, even the dumbest soldier could use it with confidence. The girls had come up with a compartment system and little images engraved in it, so the soldiers could find what they needed in one glance even if they opened that box for the first time. The longest part had been to find how to fit everything in a tiny size, but Missandra was the one who found a way to make all the medicine in solid tiny and colored pills that wouldn't be crumbled by any rude movements. Cassandra had to come up with the improved medicine compared to the Empire's old ones, and Missandra would take care of finding how to fit them inside. They also included some bandages and little bottles of alcohol to disinfect, making sure the smell was not the kind that would make the men want to drink it.

The Imperial Concubine Kareen was most helpful in gathering the resources for all that. She spared no expenses to have all the bandages and medicine or plants Cassandra needed to be gathered to the Diamond Palace, even paying for the metal the boxes were shaped in, and every worker that participated in their large-scale production.

Soon enough, news came from the Imperial Palace that the Emperor knew of their project and would shoulder all the costs, which made Kareen laugh. She didn't dismiss the chests of gold bars that arrived in her garden the next morning, though, and even sent a personal letter to

thank the Emperor. Cassandra could easily picture the old man jumping around upon receiving a letter from the usually so cold concubine... Even after everything was finalized, they didn't stop producing more. The first feedbacks from the front were very positive, but Cassandra read every letter very carefully to see where and how they could improve their letter. She realized they could even send bigger containers, and the army accountants could spread the contents depending on the situation. However, Missandra, Dahlia, and Kareen all stopped her from working on that new project: Cassandra's pregnancy was starting to be too heavy for her to keep working like she was.

Hence, Cassandra was almost locked away from the next steps of the boxes preparations and found herself bored again. While Missandra worked hard in her stead, the sweet Dahlia stayed with her, or more exactly, watched her. Cassandra couldn't complain, however. Her belly was big and hindering her in many ways. She felt tired no matter how long she slept, and her back was aching constantly. Kareen gave her some hot balm to calm her pain, but even if Dahlia massaged her, it would only numb the pain a short while.

The only thing Cassandra was still authorized to do was taking care of her garden, and keeping her correspondence with her friends from the North. All of them answered her quite fast, and she was happy to get some news from Nebora and the girls, or from the camp. Evin was surprisingly diligent in telling her everything that was going on there, including how the Red Room had evolved. They now had a fully dedicated team taking care of it and applying all the instructions she had left to the letter. He would even include some more questions from them, compiling any issue they encountered for Cassandra to take care of from where she was. Orwen was now a full-time blacksmith, and quite busy, but he never missed a chance to tell Cassandra about whatever happened on his side of the camp. The men there still called her the Lady of the Mountain, as if she had been some royalty by herself instead of just the Third Prince's Concubine. He even let her know about how Shareen's command had changed the camp, and how the young Anour was doing

under his older sister's harsh training. It looked like the youngest prince wasn't particularly cut for the military. 2

However, no matter how fast they all tried to send their replies to her, it would take ten to twelve days for the letters to be delivered, and that was a long time for Cassandra to wait. She hadn't realized how the Dragon flights had modified her perceptions of distance before, but now, it was cruelly showing.

"Lady Kareen, you called for me?" Asked Cassandra one morning.

For once, the Imperial Concubine wasn't interested in her brunch. Instead, she was walking in circles in the rooms, looking very disturbed. That didn't look like her at all, and Cassandra immediately knew something was wrong. Missandra arrived behind her sister, looking as confused as she was.

On the side, a soldier was waiting, his head lowered, probably one of her spies. Finally, Kareen sighed.

"There is some bad news from the Imperial Palace. Prince Sephir died..."

"What?" Exclaimed Cassandra, astonished. "What happened?"

"Nothing is certain at the moment, the Emperor has closed down the Imperial Palace for an investigation."

"That doesn't sound like something they'd do for a natural death..." whispered Missandra.

"No, it isn't. Either the Emperor suspects Sephir was murdered, or he wants to be sure he wasn't. Either way, the Emperor will get to the root of it. I have a bad feeling about this..."

"Do you think he could really have been...?" Asked Cassandra.

Kareen hesitated a second, looking lost deep in her thoughts. She shrugged.

"The timing is really off. Only two princes are in the Capital at the moment, two are at the front, and the fifth went back to his own Palace days before that. There is no way Opheus has anything to do with it, that little idiot doesn't give a damn about becoming the Emperor. The main

suspects would be Vrehan, someone close to him or one of the other concubines...”

“You really think one of the Imperial Concubines could be behind his death?”

“I am not too sure. They might have thought it was a good time to get rid of him, with Kairen, Shareen and Anour gone, Sephir doesn’t have many allies inside the Imperial Palace. Even Opheus’ mother could have acted without her son’s knowledge, but those are all assumptions. I think Vrehan is preparing something...”

She turned to the servant that was waiting to the side.

“I want another report as soon as possible about this investigation. And don’t lose Vrehan or his sister for one second!”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

The soldier rushed outside. Cassandra already knew Kareen had an impressive network of spies, but she truly had no idea how it worked, and she wasn’t sure she wanted to know either. Kareen had probably dirtied her hands several times to protect herself and her children, and if she didn’t share about it with Cassandra, it meant she had no intention to. “Anyway,” sighed the Imperial Concubine. “We will know more about this soon... The Imperial Palace will have to make an official statement. This is truly too sad... Sephir wouldn’t have become an Emperor, but he was a smart and gentle boy. His mother would have been... Oh, poor Saphia...”

“You knew his mother personally?” Asked Cassandra.

“She and I got pregnant around the same time, and we both lost children. She was gentler than me, and way too nice. She died in childbirth, sadly.”

Cassandra immediately thought about her own baby. She couldn’t imagine her child growing without her around... She had seen it many times, though. The streets of the Capital were filled with orphan children, too young to fend for themselves, resorting to mendicity or slavery to survive. Cassandra was well aware that, even if no one attempted to kill her, she could die from the childbirth or natural causes.

She only hoped that, if anything happened, Kairen and his family would take care of her son...

“Have you heard anything from the concubines, Hinue?” Asked

Missandra. “Didn’t you exchange letters with them lately?”

Cassandra nodded.

“The last letter I received was already two weeks ago, but the concubines were saying Prince Sephir was well... My remedies were helping with his Dust Disease, there was nothing alarming about his current state. Maybe something happened since, or he had a bad crisis...”

“Or maybe someone pulled some dirty strings,” said Kareen. “Anyway, there is no use thinking too much about it, it’s all in the Capital for now. Let’s see in the upcoming weeks what becomes of it. However, be careful, dear. My spy also told me Phetra was getting back on her feet, and able to walk already.”

“What! Already?” exclaimed Missandra, shocked.

“She is of the Dragon Blood, just like Shareen. It’s not that surprising that she can heal that fast. It would have been more of a fuss for Kairen two throw her out the window if she’d die from this much!”

Cassandra didn’t know if she should be happy or sad about this. She certainly didn’t like the idea of Phetra getting back to her old state. The Princess was definitely waiting to pay them back for what Kairen had done to her... She may be healed, but this kind of pain would go away so easily.

The young concubine sighed, and after breakfast promptly eaten, she went back to her room. She needed to be alone for a while, and write to her Prince. She had no idea if Kairen received her letter at the front. She hadn’t gotten any answer from all the letters she had sent, but she was hoping he was only too busy to answer. Moreover, no matter if the Prince received them or not, those letters had become her personal therapy. Writing to Kairen every day, to let him know about what she had done that day, how she felt, how their baby and the dragon egg were



growing, about her project of a medicinal box, was making her feel so much better. It was her only get away from the Diamond Palace.

Anytime—Cassandra tried to imagine what her Prince could be doing at the moment, she imagined him on a throne, like the one in his tent in the North Camp, talking military strategies with some old general. She could only pray that he was doing fine, safe, and unharmed, and was winning this battle bit by bit. (8)

The news received from Lady Kareen were all going that way, too. The Eastern Army was slowly losing ground to the War God's men, and his fierce dragon. Cassandra even heard from it when she'd go to the markets, in the Diamond City. The locals all knew who she was and admired her a lot. Moreover, Cassandra never went alone, and always in a pink dress, but the merchants liked her very much. They were impressed to see a young concubine so graceful, gentle, and nice to the ordinary people, and would gift her with some extras at any given chance. Somehow, they had heard about her doings in the North Army Camp, too, and her nickname the Lady of the Mountain was now used here too to refer to her.

Just like that, Cassandra was getting her own reputation around the Diamond City and, by herself, she was given some rumors of how the war was going. Some merchants would congratulate her when it was known that the War God had freed another City. Some of the women would tell her to take care of herself and her baby, for when her beloved would come back. Truth was, under Kareen's impulse, the baby's room was already ready and full. The Imperial Concubine was ready for her first grandchild and was overdoing it a bit, in Cassandra's opinion. First, the nursery was way too big and full of so many toys for both the baby and the young dragon, it was almost ridiculous... Secondly, there were no less than three maids already hired to take care of her son, no matter how many times Cassandra argued that she wanted to take care of her son by herself, with maybe Dahlia's help from time to time.

However, as the weeks passed, Cassandra was slowly getting used to the

idea that Kairen wouldn't be able to keep his promise. The war would still be raging when her baby would come to this world...

## The War God's Favorite by Jenny Fox Chapter 95

### #95 The little Runt

Cassandra realized something was wrong a few days later, when, at dinner time, Lady Kareen barely ate anything, and looked extremely preoccupied. When she asked about it, the Imperial Concubine sighed. "I don't like this. I haven't heard from the spy I sent to the Capital yet. He was supposed to be back last night, and he is never late. I sent another one to investigate, but I'm afraid Vrehan took this opportunity to purge his surroundings. I haven't received any non-official news from the Imperial Palace in a while and I don't like it. I don't like it at all..."

Missandra and Cassandra exchanged glances, worried. For Kareen to be this upset was not reassuring at all. What if something wrong had happened in the Imperial Palace? No matter how she thought about it, Cassandra knew the worst that could probably happen was the Emperor's death. If the Dragon Emperor passed without having named any official heir yet, the eldest son would have to take over until the ministers elected the right heir. However, no one was blind. With Prince Sephir dead, Vrehan was the next in line, and while Kairen was away, he would definitely secure his position on the Golden Throne before his younger brothers could react. Cassandra was terrified just to think about this possibility.

"Don't worry," said Lady Kareen. "I will go by myself if necessary, but I won't stay still! I already sent news of this to Shareen and Anour, just in case. Kairen is stuck on the battlefield at the moment, but even so, Vrehan won't be stupid enough to try and act if Shareen is around."

"Aren't you afraid he'll try to harm her?"

"He can try! My daughter is not that weak that she would submit under this snake!"

Cassandra sighed. She didn't believe Vrehan would have acted if he

wasn't sure of himself... What was the point of killing Sephir now? Was it because Kareen was away? This felt terribly wrong. Things were not at the best state right now, and even in the Diamond Palace, they weren't fully safe. Cassandra put a hand on her belly. She really didn't need any additional stress right now... She took a deep breath. Anyway, the second Prince wouldn't be able to do much as long as the Emperor was alive and well. Prince Sephir's death was truly too sad, but for now, they had yet to confirm the causes. Perhaps they would hear it was a natural cause soon, and Kareen's spy would return with a good excuse.

Despite Kareen doing her best to act normally and not show how uneasy she was, Cassandra knew this was only to keep them from worrying too much. For Lady Kareen to be worried meant something really felt wrong, and Cassandra felt it too. She tried to convince herself that, at the moment, there was nothing more she could do as she walked to the little garden where, as always, the dragon egg was steadily growing.

Her project with the medical boxes was going well, too, so Cassandra could just oversee it and let Missandra take care of managing the flow of supplies sent, their people, and the stocks coming in and out. There really wasn't much to do for her, aside from taking it easy for the last weeks of her pregnancy and taking care of her plants. Thankfully, the baby was doing well. Kareen had hired a midwife from the City to take care of Cassandra and be ready for when the day would come, but once again, the young concubine didn't like all the extra attention. She could feel her son, very well alive and kicking. It was probably what rejoiced her the most in those days. Feeling her baby move. Every time he did, Cassandra took a minute to caress her belly. Sometimes, she would even talk to him, so much that even Kareen, Missandra, and Dahlia had started talking about the baby as if he was here too.

Shareen's answer arrived a few days later, around dinner. A servant brought it to Kareen, who put her cup down and opened it right away, reading the content quickly.

"Apparently, Shareen is busy in the North too... The barbarians heard of

the Eastern Empire attacking and thought this would be an opportunity for them. Hpmf! Anyway, Shareen says she will have settled this soon and will arrive here in ten days... Oh, that letter is from four days ago, so less than a week now. Fine!”

Cassandra felt a bit better while hearing this. Even if it wasn't Kairen, Shareen's presence would definitely make her feel a bit more secure. These days, she couldn't shake off the feeling that something bad was going to happen.

However, now, it would only be a matter of waiting a few days, and...  
“My lady!”

One of Kareen's servants rushed into the garden, out of breath. He almost fell on his knees at her feet, sweating and looking panicked.

“What is it?” Asked Kareen, unhappy.

“The... The... His Highness the Second Prince just arrived into the Diamond Palace! He is here to arrest the Lady of the Mountain.”

Next to Cassandra, Missandra jumped on her feet like a cat, all her senses alert. All the servants around, too, exchanged glances, and a couple of them ran inside to go and check.

“What is this nonsense!” Roared Kareen, slamming her cup on the table and getting up too.

“Th... They say she is an accomplice in the First Prince's murder! I... I don't have the details yet, but madam, the Second Prince will really be here any second!”

“Cassandra, let's go,” said Missandra, grabbing her sister's hand.

“But...”

“No, the young one is right, dear,” said Kareen, gently pushing her towards the end of the garden. “Follow me!”

While the servants hurried to take the remains of their dinner out of sight, Kareen led the two girls further into the garden, rushing between the trees towards one side. They were almost running. Cassandra's heart was thumping like crazy. Why would she be arrested for! An accomplice to Prince Sephir's murder? What had happened at the Palace for this to

happen!

The Imperial Concubine suddenly stopped in front of one of the walls surrounding the garden they were in and pushed some of the ivy covering it like a large curtain. To their surprise, it revealed a long and wide crack in the stonewall. It was tight, but definitely an entrance wide enough for them to sneak into. Missandra and Cassandra exchanged a glance, shocked. They had walked by that wall a thousand times but had never noticed this secret opening! Kareen pushed Missandra in, and they helped Cassandra get inside right behind her.

“Stay hidden here for now,” whispered the Imperial Concubine. “This is a secret passage only a handful of my servants know off. If things go wrong, start leaving this way immediately! This will lead to a secret room, I had everything prepared for you there, just in case. This place leads to the back garden. You can...”

Before she could finish that sentence, a ruckus was heard behind her, and Kareen left quickly to see what was going on, while the two sisters retreated a bit, Missandra grabbed her older sister’s shaking hand. For a few seconds, everything was silent in the Palace. Then, soldiers barged in the garden, surrounding the Imperial Concubine. Cassandra retreated a bit as she could hear men stepping close to their hideout, but she could barely see what was going on behind the thick curtain of ivy. However, the two of them were able to hear very well when Kareen started yelling furiously.

“What is this! How dare you barge into my Palace!”

“Good evening, Imperial Concubine,” replied a cold voice.

Cassandra shivered and retreated another step. That was definitely Vrehan’s voice. Next to her, Missandra was livid, her hand covering her mouth. Everything was so calm just a few minutes ago, but now they were kept hidden while the Second Prince had taken control of the Palace! “We are looking for a criminal, and I have the Emperor’s permission to do anything in my power to bring her to the Imperial Palace... Safe and unharmed.”

From his voice, Cassandra wouldn't even have trusted him for a second. How could the Emperor trust Vrehan with that task! She knew that, despite the Emperor's best intentions, Vrehan would have no second thought in killing her, and the baby she was carrying, the first opportunity he'd get, and the witnesses with her. She could easily imagine him reporting some unfortunate incident to the Emperor. There was no way Cassandra would ever give that man any chance to even touch her, no way.

"What does it have to do with me? This is my Diamond Palace! How dare you come and chase some criminal here! On what grounds!

Cassandra realized Lady Kareen was trying to play dumb on purpose, to get more information about what was really going on. It may win them some time, too. Behind her, Missandra was gently pulling on her hand, trying to bring Cassandra away from the opening, but she wanted to listen to what was going on.

"The said criminal is no other than Kairen's favorite, Imperial Concubine. I know she is here. Your son wouldn't entrust his woman to anyone else!"

"Oh? And what did she do for you to arrest her?"

"She is suspected of taking part in the First Prince's tragic death. One of his concubines poisoned him with some poison that slave gave her!"

Cassandra was astonished. The recipes she gave the concubines? Is that what Vrehan was chasing her for! Even if one of the concubines had meddled with the content of the teas, she had nothing to do with it! This was obviously his scheme to capture her! Did he poison Sephir's drink himself? What had happened to his concubines? Were they to be interrogated, too?

"How ridiculous! What would Cassandra poison Prince Sephir for!"

"Well, anyone can be greedy at some point. Who knows what a woman..."

"How dare you speak about greed! If anyone has that kind of dirt in her mind, it's anyone but my son or his concubine! You, of all people, are

the last one to accuse others of that!”

“What your words, Kareen! I am not...”

“It’s Imperial Concubine Kareen for you, little runt! Or do you think you can insult The Imperial Dragon’s favorite to her face? Huh?”

A tense silence reigned after her words, but Cassandra could feel Vrehan’s anger from here. Lady Kaireen’s nerves were really made of steel, to confront him like that... Cassandra was fearing for her, but she was well aware the Imperial Concubine would never submit to Vrehan, or do anything other than protecting her children.

“Enough, bring that woman here!” Yelled Vrehan.

“Have you heard anything about a pregnant woman being here, Vrehan? Did you question the people? Investigate? She isn’t here, Kaireen took her to the Onyx Castle!”

Cassandra could barely breathe. What if Vrehan’s soldiers really interrogated the people of Diamond City? Would they say the Lady of the Mountain was indeed here? Or had they tried already? She knew the local folks liked her very much, but would they lie to an Imperial Prince? “You’re lying!” Suddenly yelled a feminine voice. “I already know you wanted that slut to stay with you until she . gave birth, their Dragon egg is here!”

Cassandra’s heart dropped. Phetra was there too? How come that woman was already able to travel! Moreover, the Dragon Egg! They could never leave this Palace with it if they had to flee this place!

“Do you see a concubine here other than me? How dare you bother this old woman without any proof!”

“I will have my proof once I find this damn woman! I know you’re hiding her here, in this Palace!”

“Oh? Fine, you can look then. The sooner you find yourself empty-handed, the sooner you leave me alone, you arrogant little boy!” As soon as the soldiers started running and searching through the whole Diamond Palace, Missandra pulled Cassandra’s hand towards the rear of that secret conduct. Even for their small frames, it was hard to go through

the whole passage. Moreover, they had to be as silent as possible to not be noticed by the men searching for them. Cassandra had never been so scared before, but it became even worse when they heard a Dragon's screech. Both sisters froze, realizing the situation was even worse than what they had thought.

Missandra gasped, and turned to her.

"That wasn't the black one..." she whispered.

"No," whispered Cassandra, shaking her head. "That was... Vrehan's dragon."

The two girls were absolutely mortified. That crazy red dragon was looking for them.