

The War God's Favorite by Jhonny Fox

Chapter 3

#3 The Third Prince Kairen

He was tall, and his bare torso was covered by a large, black fur cloak. He was obviously a warrior. Two large swords were attached to his belt, and out of all the Princes, he was the only one wearing barely any jewelry, and the least expensive fabrics. Instead, he simply wore black leather pants, large boots, and dragon scale bracers on his forearms.

At this man's feet, Cassandra appeared extremely vulnerable. Realizing that he was a member of the Imperial Family, she immediately averted her eyes. Why was she brought there? Would he kill her himself? Had she somehow offended the Royal Family?

"She is indeed quite pretty..." whispered one of the Princes.

"Brother, what do you want to do? Shall we get rid of her?"

"Just keep her, Kairen. You could use a few more slaves anyway."

She shivered. Prince Kairen, as in the Third Prince, the Empire's War God? Of all people, it had to be the most terrifying Prince! She bowed even lower, ready for a blade to slice her at any moment. But what were the Princes talking about?

A long and scary silence ensued. She waited, becoming more confused with each passing second, but it didn't seem like anyone was planning to kill her. What was going on?

"Alright, enough. Let's move on with the next performance before I get bored. Brother, you'll do whatever you want with her later. Who cares about a slave anyway."

The First Prince clapped his hands, and down in the arena, servants rushed to clean the bloodied sand on the grounds and prepare for the next show.

Cassandra was still frozen, kneeling at the Prince's feet. She knew she absolutely must not raise her head in front of the Imperial Family, but the Third Prince still hadn't moved. All of a sudden, a loud growl took her by surprise, and she turned her head, just slightly, to see the Black Dragon still behind her. It was close enough to envelop her in huffs of hot breath and for her to see its large fangs.

- Suddenly, she heard the hiss of a blade. Before she could even move, the sword plunged towards her,

and she prepared for the worst, closing her eyes. The manacles fell with a clang and her wrists no longer felt so heavy. He had severed the chain from her back! Cassandra slowly moved to look at her wrists. The iron bands were still around her neck and wrists, but they were no longer held painfully together from her back. Her arms were now free to move as she pleased.

Her relief was short-lived though as he suddenly grabbed her collar, pulling her to his side. She didn't have time to struggle, as he roughly dragged her to his seat. Cassandra was shocked to be placed against his golden chair, but even more surprised to see him simply sit without adding a word. She was on her knees at his feet, her shoulder against the throne, but the Prince didn't even look at her, focusing back on the arena again.

What was all that? He had placed her facing the arena so she couldn't even sneak a glance up at him.

She was completely shocked and at a loss. Looking around, she realized she was the only slave on the platform. Aside from the Princes, only some palace attendants stood behind the seats, like statues, with no one paying her any more attention.

Cassandra was breathing erratically, and trying to understand her current situation. Suddenly, she felt warmth covering her shoulders. Surprised, she glanced to the side, only to realize that it was a part of the Prince's large coat! Did he purposely move it so that it would cover her, too? Or was it mere luck? Her bare shoulders were now covered by the thick fur, shielding her from the wind and bitter cold.

"What is coming next?" One of the Princes suddenly asked.

"Dancers! I heard this group came from across the North Sea!"

It seemed like they had all forgotten the macabre show that had occurred just mere minutes ago. Cassandra kept her head low, silently praying they would ignore her for the rest of the day. As she knelt, frozen in place, she felt a hand caress her hair without warning. It took her a few seconds to realize, as the fingers that gently played with her long waves were so light she barely felt them. For a minute, she was dumbstruck, wondering if she was dreaming. No one but the Third Prince was close enough to be able to reach and touch her. His large hand slowly stroked her hair, almost touching her back. She could feel his warm skin flirting with hers.

Was the War God really petting her like this? She could barely breathe under his touch. She didn't dare to move a muscle. On the arena floor beneath them, a splendid dance performance was taking place with dozens of performers, yet all she could focus on was the faint brushing of his fingertips on her slender nape. Did anyone else notice the Prince's actions under the cloak?

When Cassandra finally dared a glance to the side, it didn't seem like it. The other Princes seated to their left were solely focused on the performances down in the arena, not paying any attention to her or her new master.

Because this was her situation now, right? Within minutes she had become property of the Third Prince. It was almost as if he had collected a stone from the sidewalk. But instead of a stone, he had picked up a slave.

All that Cassandra knew of him had come from rumors. When it came to the Third Prince, the gossip mill ran deep. The Emperor's favorite son, he was said to be a dark, cruel, and merciless man. The Empire's War God. Was he really the one who, against all odds, had spared the life of a slave? Did he just decide to do so because of the actions of his willful dragon?

The beast was now peacefully resting a few feet away on a lower step. It seemed bored, laying down while its peers had been brought back to their cages, or chained and seated at the sides of the arena. Cassandra observed the magnificent dragon again, mesmerized by the obsidian scales. She found it more distracting than any performance, especially since she couldn't look at the owner of the hand that was playing with her hair.

Would the Prince order the dragon to kill her if she asked him to let her go? Cassandra didn't even dare to look at him or move. She was submitting to his hand, and the caresses in her long hair. A few times she shivered, not because of the cold, since she was now under the cloak, but from the contact of the Prince's hot hand against her skin. Moreover, his hand was venturing further and further down

She had never been touched like this by a man before. Slaves were not concubines, nor were they worthy to even be seen as women. They were often dirty and poorly dressed. Unlike the noble women who went to extreme lengths to have the prettiest dresses, jewelry, and the most expensive make-up available. Cassandra never had any of those luxuries, but she possessed a natural beauty that even years of enslavement and abuse could not take from her.

Like a flower in a bed of weeds, she had managed to stay beautiful. She was tall and thin, with pale skin that had been permanently scarred by a whip in several places. Her breasts were not large, but still round and full enough to make her look feminine. Had she been fed properly, she would have had a beautiful silhouette. But despite the years of malnourishment, the graceful beauty of her face was undeniable. She had large green eyes, a small nose, and thin but full lips. A pure, fragile beauty – like a water lily. 3

As the afternoon passed, Cassandra gradually grew accustomed to the Prince's touch. She couldn't ignore it, but she didn't shiver or overthink it anymore. After a dozen performances, the Prince suddenly stood up.

"Brother?" asked the youngest prince.

But Kairen didn't bother to answer. Instead, he simply left his seat. Cassandra, wondering for a second if she should follow, decided it would be better than to stay with the other five Princes on the platform she had no reason being on to begin with.

Leaving the balcony, the Third Prince walked through the many corridors so fast that she could barely keep up. To her surprise, the War God's quarters were located in the farthest wing of the Palace. By the time they arrived, she was exhausted.

He opened the double doors, revealing a very simple room, by a Prince's standards, that is. But to Cassandra, that place was still unbelievably large and luxurious with a canopy bed, large enough to welcome four people, and adorned in silk sheets. There were also two chairs and a table made of redwood, one of the most expensive and valuable materials, an empty desk, a wardrobe containing a warrior's armor, and a bath.

Cassandra was shocked by how bare the room was. Had it just been prepared to welcome him during his stay during the festival? She had heard each Prince lived in his own Palace after all.

Kairen left his large fur cloak on one of the chairs and massaged his neck. Cassandra suddenly realized that she was his only attendant! Did he come without any slaves or servants?

The War God sighed.

"I want to take a bath."

These were the first words he had spoken to her. Despite her surprise, Cassandra's years in slavery had her obeying right away. Leaving the room, she found the first palace servant she could and asked them for hot water to be prepared for the Third Prince, as well as several herbs for the water. The servant, not knowing the slave girl, was inclined to whip her and send her back where she belonged, but her words of "Third Prince" had the impulse stuck in his throat. If there was one man no one wanted to anger, it was the Third Prince. So, after a doubtful second, he nodded with disdain and turned on his heels.

A few minutes later, Cassandra was busy pouring the hot water into the bath along with a few herbs she had ordered.

"What are those?"

The young woman looked at him, meaning to answer, only to realize her master was undressing right in front of her! She only had a glance at the warrior's impressive musculature before she shyly looked down, yet the image was surely engraved in her mind. A War God, indeed! She blushed while answering. 3

“Those are medicinal herbs to... to relieve fatigue and muscle pain, my Lord.”

Kairen frowned. How did this woman know of his strained muscles? He never showed any weakness. Is it because of the way he had stretched once they had entered the privacy of his quarters? As he pondered this, he realized his slave was looking down again with a flush of red in her cheeks. He snickered while entering the bath. Had she never seen a naked man before?

“Do you need more water, my Lord?”

“Come here.”

Hesitantly, Cassandra walked the few steps back towards the tub, trying hard to refrain from taking a peek at him. Indeed, having served only women before, she was totally disarmed while facing a grown man's body. Kairen's body wasn't merely handsome. He was more like a dangerous alpha male, strong and imposing. 2

Watching her struggle to look away, he knew he was right.

“Massage me.”

“...My Lord?”

But he didn't bother ordering again. A bit surprised, Cassandra obediently stood behind him and started massaging his broad shoulders. Her fingers were trembling. She was touching a Prince! While trying to contain her inner turmoil, she focused on her movements. She knew what kind of being he was. In a split second, he could decide to end her life. For the young slave, this was infinitely more terrifying than standing in front of wild, scaled beasts.

As she kept massaging, she felt his muscles finally begin to relax, filling her with satisfaction. She moved on to his left arm, using her prior knowledge of healing to properly massage every muscle. When she finally looked back at his face, she realized he had closed his eyes as if he was asleep, allowing her to breathe a little easier. O

Cassandra moved on to his other arm, skillfully kneading the bicep of the War God. She felt some pride to see that the medicinal bath she had prepared was so effective. Was the water still warm enough? She glanced down at the water and that's when she saw it.

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Her Prince's member, fully