


THE BRIDGE KINGDOM BOOK 3



THE
INADEQUATE
HEIR

DANIELLE L.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *A FATE INKED IN BLOOD*

JENSEN

PRAISE FOR THE BRIDGE KINGDOM SERIES

“Heart-pounding romance and intense action wrapped in a spellbinding world. I was hooked from the first page.”

—Elise Kova, *USA Today* bestselling author of *A Deal with the Elf King*, on
The Bridge Kingdom

“Exquisite, phenomenal, and sexy, *The Bridge Kingdom* is the epitome of fantasy romance perfection. I adored Jensen’s world and characters. Aren and Lara were magnificent individually and together, a couple you’ll root for from beginning to end.”

—Olivia Wildenstein, *USA Today* bestselling author of *House of Beating Wings*

“An epic, action-packed tale of love, revenge, and betrayal.”

—Jennifer Estep, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Kill the Queen*, on
The Traitor Queen

“The next installment in the Bridge Kingdom series is not to be missed. Do not walk to pick up this book. Run.”

—Jennifer L. Armentrout, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *From Blood and Ash*, on *The Inadequate Heir*

BY DANIELLE L. JENSEN

THE MALEDICTION TRILOGY

Stolen Songbird

Hidden Huntress

Warrior Witch

The Broken Ones (Prequel)

THE DARK SHORES SERIES

Dark Shores

Dark Skies

Gilded Serpent

Tarnished Empire (Prequel)

THE BRIDGE KINGDOM SERIES

The Bridge Kingdom

The Traitor Queen

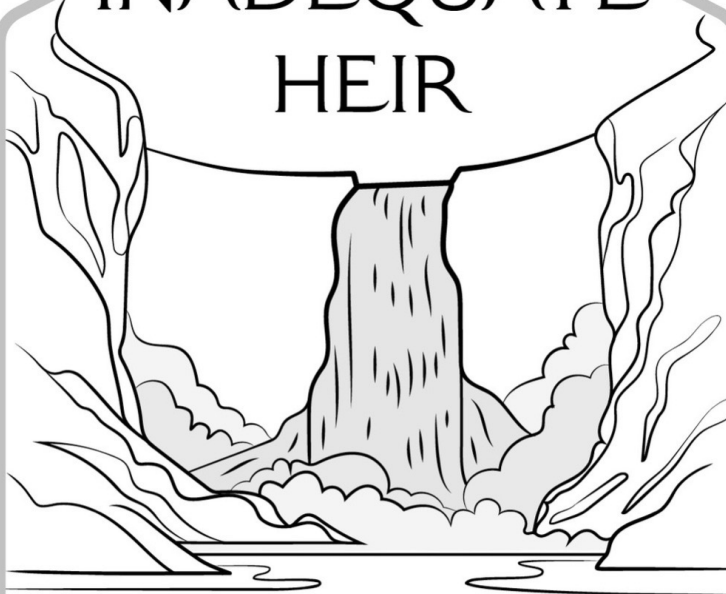
The Inadequate Heir

The Endless War

SAGA OF THE UNFATED

A Fate Inked in Blood

THE
INADEQUATE
HEIR



DANIELLE L.
JENSEN



NEW YORK

Copyright © 2021 by Danielle L. Jensen

“The Calm Before the Storm” by Danielle L. Jensen copyright © 2022 by Danielle L. Jensen

Penguin Random House values and supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin Random House to continue to publish books for every reader. Please note that no part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems.

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Del Rey, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

DEL REY and the CIRCLE colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin Random House LLC.

Originally published as an audio original by Audible in 2021 and subsequently self-published in print and digital formats by Danielle L. Jensen in 2022. “The Calm Before the Storm” was originally self-published in digital form by the author in 2022.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Jensen, Danielle L., author.

Title: The inadequate heir / Danielle L. Jensen.

Description: New York: Del Rey, 2024. | Series: The Bridge Kingdom series; 3

Identifiers: LCCN 2024043324 (print) | LCCN 2024043325 (ebook) | ISBN 9780593975244 (trade paperback; acid-free paper) | ISBN 9781737924807 (ebook)

Subjects: LCGFT: Fantasy fiction. | Romance fiction. | Novels.

Classification: LCC PR9199.4.J455 I53 2024 (print) | LCC PR9199.4.J455 (ebook) | DDC 813/.6—dc23/eng/20240916

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024043324>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024043325>

Ebook ISBN 9781737924807

randomhousebooks.com

Title page art by Vibrands Studio © Adobe Stock Photos

Book design by Sara Bereta, adapted for ebook

Map: Damien Mammoliti

Cover design: Regina Flath
Cover illustration: Eevien Tan

ep_prh_7.0_148674786_c0_r0

Contents

Dedication

Chapter 1: Keris

Chapter 2: Zarrah

Chapter 3: Keris

Chapter 4: Zarrah

Chapter 5: Keris

Chapter 6: Zarrah

Chapter 7: Keris

Chapter 8: Zarrah

Chapter 9: Keris

Chapter 10: Zarrah

Chapter 11: Keris

Chapter 12: Zarrah

Chapter 13: Keris

Chapter 14: Zarrah

Chapter 15: Keris

Chapter 16: Zarrah

Chapter 17: Keris

Chapter 18: Zarrah

Chapter 19: Keris

Chapter 20: Zarrah

Chapter 21: Keris

Chapter 22: Zarrah

[Chapter 23: Keris](#)
[Chapter 24: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 25: Keris](#)
[Chapter 26: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 27: Keris](#)
[Chapter 28: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 29: Keris](#)
[Chapter 30: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 31: Keris](#)
[Chapter 32: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 33: Keris](#)
[Chapter 34: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 35: Keris](#)
[Chapter 36: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 37: Keris](#)
[Chapter 38: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 39: Keris](#)
[Chapter 40: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 41: Keris](#)
[Chapter 42: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 43: Keris](#)
[Chapter 44: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 45: Keris](#)
[Chapter 46: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 47: Keris](#)
[Chapter 48: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 49: Keris](#)
[Chapter 50: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 51: Keris](#)
[Chapter 52: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 53: Keris](#)
[Chapter 54: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 55: Keris](#)
[Chapter 56: Keris](#)
[Chapter 57: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 58: Keris](#)
[Chapter 59: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 60: Keris](#)
[Chapter 61: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 62: Keris](#)
[Chapter 63: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 64: Keris](#)
[Chapter 65: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 66: Keris](#)
[Chapter 67: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 68: Keris](#)
[Chapter 69: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 70: Keris](#)
[Chapter 71: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 72: Keris](#)
[Chapter 73: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 74: Keris](#)
[Chapter 75: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 76: Zarrah](#)
[Chapter 77: Keris](#)
[Chapter 78: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 79: Keris](#)

[Chapter 80: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 81: Keris](#)

[Chapter 82: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 83: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 84: Keris](#)

[Chapter 85: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 86: Keris](#)

[Chapter 87: Zarrah](#)

[Chapter 88: Keris](#)

[*The Calm Before the Storm*](#)

[*About the Author*](#)

For the bookworms with big dreams

1

KERIS

KERIS VELIANT, LATEST HEIR TO the throne of Maridrina, followed his father down the gangplank and onto the pier of Southwatch Island. They hadn't spoken a word to each other during the short crossing, his father remaining on deck while Keris closeted himself in the captain's quarters. Though in truth, even if they'd stood side by side the entire voyage, the result would've been the same: the taciturn silence of two men well aware that each wished the other dead.

A masked Ithicanian, his shoulders stooped with age, approached, bowing low. "Welcome back to Southwatch, Your Majesty." Then he inclined his head toward Keris. "Welcome, Your Highness. I understand this is to be your first venture through our bridge?"

Keris opened his mouth to answer, but his father interrupted, "Are they here?"

"His Grace sends his regrets, I'm afraid. His presence was required elsewhere."

A flicker of disappointment passed through Keris at the Ithicanian king's absence. Aren Kertell was a man much discussed, though the rumors surrounding him were at odds with his recent actions. Actions that had the Maridrinian people singing his name in the streets, claiming him a king that all rulers should aspire to emulate.

And Keris's father hated him for it.

Yet King Silas Veliant showed none of that ire, his tone steady as he asked, "What of my daughter?"

Lara. She was Keris's younger sister—his only full-blooded sibling in the sea of half sisters and brothers produced by his father's harem. He hadn't spoken to her in over sixteen years—not since she'd been taken away to be raised in secret. Keris had believed her dead until the day she'd passed through Vencia on her way to be married to the king of Ithicana as part of the Fifteen-Year Treaty. A bride of peace, they'd said.

Keris didn't believe *that* for a heartbeat.

The Ithicanian said, "It is the queen's preference to remain at His Majesty's side, though she sends her regards."

"I'm sure."

On the surface, his father's voice was cool, but for the sake of his own self-preservation, Keris had long ago made a practice of reading the tiny tics and tells that gave away his father's true sentiments. As such, he heard the hint of amusement in the king's voice, the tone causing Keris's skin to prickle. What amused his father tended to elicit a rather different reaction from everyone else.

The Ithicanian's eyes narrowed slightly, and wary of anything that might jeopardize his escape to Harendell, Keris said, "I'm sorry to have missed my sister, but pleased to hear of her loyalty to your king. Give them both my best wishes."

His father huffed out a soft chuckle, giving Keris a condescending pat on the cheek. "My son is sentimental. Gets it from his mother."

That would be the mother you murdered, you cold-blooded reptile? Keris wanted to say, but today was not the day to test his father's patience. Not when he was so close to finally escaping him. "We all have our faults, Your Grace."

His father's azure eyes, which were twin to Keris's own, regarded him, unblinking. "Some more than others." Then he clapped his hands sharply. "I came only to see your sister and her husband. Given they are absent, I don't care to belabor my presence. Let's get this over with."

Sentiment was *not* one of King Silas Veliant's faults.

The pier turned into a flurry of activity, two dozen young Maridrinian men in tight coats made with vibrant fabrics disembarking, the stiff breeze tugging at their slicked-back hair, much to their obvious consternation. The smell of wine came with them, which accounted for their overloud voices as they shouted at the sailors to take care with their belongings or suffer the lash. Between his teeth, Keris asked, "Who are they?"

His father crossed his arms, a slight smile growing on his face. "Your entourage."

"I'm going to university, not to court, Your Grace. This is an unnecessary expense."

"You are heir to the throne of Maridrina," his father answered, "which means you must arrive in Harendell with a suitable entourage." Under his breath, he added, "You're embarrassment enough—no need to add to the shame."

Don't argue. Keep your damned mouth shut, Keris silently ordered himself. But the temper he usually kept in check was rising. "This will cost a fortune. Better for us to go by ship. It's the calm season—there's no reason not to." On a ship, it wouldn't matter if these men behaved like idiots, whereas the Ithicanians had rules of conduct for their bridge and no patience for those who broke them, which these buffoons would inevitably do within the day.

Perhaps that was what his father was counting on.

"Don't be a fool, Keris. The seas are swarming with Valcottan vessels, and the last thing I need is for my heir to be killed."

"Given my eight predecessors are in their graves, I'd think you'd be used to that by now."

The words sneaked out, and Keris immediately braced for the blow, long used to his tongue earning him beatings. Yet instead his father gripped him by the shoulders, pulling him close so that his mouth was inches from Keris's ear. To anyone looking on, it would appear nothing more than an intimate exchange between father and son, but Keris's arms were already numb with pain from where his father's thumbs pressed against nerves.

“Your older brother was twice the man you are,” his father hissed. “I’d exchange your life for Rask’s in a heartbeat, if such a thing were possible.”

And not just Rask. Despite Keris having brothers who were arguably worth less than the detritus of humanity, his father held every one of them in greater esteem. It was only Keris whom he hated, only Keris whom he mocked without mercy.

“I wish Rask were still alive as much as you do.” Not because he’d liked his brother, but because with Rask performing all the duties the heir was supposed to do—soldiering, politicizing, and warmongering—Keris had been able to avoid them. But Rask had gotten himself killed in a skirmish with the Valcottans, and Keris’s greatest fear since his brother’s death was that he’d be able to avoid soldiering, politicizing, and warmongering no longer. Which was why his father not backtracking out of his agreement to allow him to go to Harendell had seemed like nothing short of an act of God.

Which, given he was a disbeliever of the first order, made Keris extremely suspicious.

“You are pathetic and weak, and your tongue is not worthy of speaking your brother’s name.” His father’s grip tightened. “But you are still my son. Which means I must find ways to capitalize upon your attributes, limited though they may be.”

And there was the catch.

Of course his father wanted something from him. He wouldn’t allow Keris to go without making him pay a price. “What will it be, Father? Spying on the Harendellians, I assume?”

He chuckled, and the sound made Keris’s skin crawl. Then his father released his shoulders. “No, Keris. I’ve spies aplenty. But rest assured that I will find a way to use you to my benefit.” And without another word, he strode up the gangplank and disappeared onto the ship.

Not spying, but *something*. And whatever it was, Keris knew he wouldn’t like it.

The old Ithicanian still stood a few paces away, waiting patiently. “If you’d follow me, Your Highness, we will get under way. We have

restrictions on what is allowed through the bridge, which means all persons and baggage are subject to search. And”—his eyes flicked to the stacks of chests and to Keris’s entourage—“that might take more time than anticipated.”

—

HOURS WAS WHAT it took, the Ithicanians removing them to a stone warehouse where *everything* was thoroughly searched before being loaded into narrow wagons. And though Keris had watched his father’s ship sail away, he couldn’t escape the sense that *something* would happen that would see him not in Harendell but back in Maridrina, once again immersed in a war he wanted no part of. A war he was opposed to on every possible level.

“They ready?”

A female voice caught his attention, and Keris lifted his face from the book he was reading to find an Ithicanian woman striding into the warehouse, several other armed Ithicanians on her heels. She was tall and lean, her dark-brown hair shaved on the sides of her head and the rest pulled back into a long tail at the back. She wore the drab grayish-green tunic and trousers that the Ithicanians favored, her thick leather boots rising to her knees and a multitude of weapons belted at her waist. Her arms were bare except for the vambraces buckled around them, her skin tanned but for the few pale scars lining it that suggested she was no stranger to combat. Like the rest of her countrymen, she wore a leather mask, making it difficult to guess her age with any certainty, but Keris doubted she was more than twenty.

The old Ithicanian nodded. “Their luggage is in order. An overabundance of drink, but they assure me it is for the journey, not to sell.” His jaw tightened. “Their...*conduct* gives verity to the claim.”

“Lovely. There is nothing I like better than escorting drunk Maridrinian pricks.”

Keris laughed.

Her head jerked sideways, gaze lighting upon Keris where he leaned against the wall, far away from his companions.

After coughing to clear his throat, the old Ithicanian said, “This is Crown Prince Keris Veliant. The queen’s elder brother.”

The woman inclined her head. “My apologies, Your Highness. I regret you overhearing my comment.”

But she did *not* regret saying it. Keris liked her already. “Given I’m quite sober, I assume you’re delighted to escort *me*.”

Her hazel eyes flickered with amusement. “Sober...but you *are* a Maridrinian.”

“And a prick, as luck would have it.” He smirked at her. “I hope your king pays you well.”

“Not well enough.” She gestured toward his entourage. “If you’ll join your companions, Highness, you’ll be searched for weapons, and then we’ll be on our way.”

Keris made no comments as one of the soldiers accompanying her searched him from head to toe for weapons, pulling off his boots and inspecting their soles, the man’s efficiency suggesting he’d done this a hundred times and knew his business well. Keris’s entourage, on the other hand, snickered and laughed through the whole affair, making comments that had Keris grinding his teeth. He was on the verge of shouting at them to shut their damned mouths when one of them said to the Ithicanian woman, who was kneeling while searching him, “You look well practiced in this position, girl.”

Every Ithicanian in the room went still, their anger palpable even to the fools in his entourage, whose faces quickly drained of humor.

Shit.

The Ithicanian woman’s jaw had visibly tightened, but she said nothing as she finished her search. Then she stood abruptly, her shoulder catching the idiot between the legs hard enough that he screamed. Toppling over, he lay on his side, cursing and moaning while he clutched his groin.

The woman turned to the old Ithicanian, snapping, “There a Maridrinian ship in port, Rin?”

“Two.”

“Good. Pick one and tell them they’re taking His Highness and his men back to Vencia. Passage through the bridge is denied.”

Keris’s stomach dropped, panic rushing through his veins. He’d known this would happen. That his father would find some way to go back on his word.

“Raina.” The old man’s voice was disapproving. “Prince Keris is Queen Lara’s brother.”

Her eyes flicked to Keris, looking him up and down. “We’ll take him, then. But not the rest.”

It was tempting. Oh so terribly tempting to take the woman up on her offer and go through the bridge alone, but Keris knew his father would make him pay for such a decision. He always did.

“I’m sorry for his disrespect.” Walking over to the woman—Raina—Keris stopped a courteous distance from her. “He’s a fool, but he doesn’t deserve to die.”

“I didn’t hit him *that* hard.” Her voice was withering. “He’ll live.”

“Not if you send him back.” Keris lifted one shoulder. “My father tolerates embarrassment poorly. The unfortunate sot will be dead within an hour of making port unless he finds the courage to jump overboard on the journey back.”

“Perhaps he should have considered the consequences before he spoke.”

“I doubt he’s capable of that much foresight.” Keris glanced at the men, who were silent for once, and he could see in their eyes that they knew the threat was real. Not only to the idiot on the ground but to all of them. “They won’t step out of line again; you have my word.”

She exhaled a long breath, rocking on her heels. “Don’t make me regret this.”

“We will be on our best behavior.”

Even with her mask, he saw her eyes roll. But she gestured to the wagons. “Get in.”

His entourage scurried toward the traveling wagons, polished affairs with well-upholstered seating that were pulled by pairs of mules.

Comfortable enough, but far too close in quarters for Keris's liking. "Do you mind if I walk?"

Raina shrugged. "Be my guest."

The caravan creaked into motion, nine more heavily armed Ithicanians flanking the wagons as they trundled out of the warehouse and into the light rain. Raina led the way, and Keris followed at her heels, his eyes going up the slope to the cavernous mouth of the bridge. Mist emanated from the gray stone as the rain struck it, and as they approached, a heavy steel portcullis rose, the rattling of chains rivaling the distant rumble of thunder.

Raina cast her face skyward, the rain splattering against her mask. "Be glad you chose not to go by ship, Your Highness."

Keris eyed the dark opening, the steel bars of the bottom of the portcullis looking remarkably like teeth. "Why is that?"

"Because there's a storm coming." Then, taking a glowing lantern from one of the waiting guards, she led Keris inside the bridge.

2

ZARRAH

LIEUTENANT ZARRAH ANAPHORA, NIECE TO the Empress of Valcotta, cast her eyes skyward, watching the clouds swirl north, the deck beneath her feet rising and falling with growing violence. “The calm season is coming to an end, would you not agree, cousin? Time for us to return home?”

“Soon. But not yet.” Her cousin Bermin’s voice was deep as the thunder rolling in the distance, and she cast a sideways glance to where he stood at the rail. Head and shoulders taller than her, and more than twice her weight, Prince Bermin Anaphora was everything that could be asked for in a warrior. Unparalleled in strength and bravery and martial skill.

Unfortunately, he was also something of an idiot.

Which was why, when their fleet returned to Nerastis, Zarrah would be taking command of Valcotta’s armies.

The letter she’d received from the empress containing the orders was hidden in an inner pocket of her uniform, and it took a great deal of self-control not to take out the heavy piece of stationery, the power it granted her making her blood boil with anticipation. Making her want to reach for the knife belted at her side, the opportunity to enact the revenge she’d sought for nearly a decade so close she could almost taste it. Especially with Vencia only a half day’s sail away.

A shout filtered down from the lookout above, and a heartbeat later, the captain of the ship was at her cousin's elbow. "General, there is a fleet on the horizon."

"How many?"

"Fifteen, at least, sir."

"Hmm." Her cousin pulled a spyglass from his belt, Zarrah doing the same.

Since the Ithicanians had sided with the Maridrinians and broken the Valcottan blockade on Southwatch, her cousin's fleet had been patrolling the Ithicanian coast, gleefully sinking any Maridrinian ship that came in range even while it protected the Valcottan merchant vessels risking the violent seas to bypass Ithicana's bridge. They'd had a few glorious skirmishes with the Maridrinian Navy, but their murderous prick of a king, Silas Veliant, seemed content to use his forces to protect his own merchant vessels running the gap to Southwatch.

Except judging from the flags flying on the ships racing in Zarrah's direction, that was about to change.

Her pulse throbbed, her weapons begging to be drawn, to be drenched in Maridrinian blood. Vaguely, she heard her cousin give the orders to sound the alarm and ready for battle, her ears ringing a heartbeat later as the bells jangled, the dozen ships that formed Bermin's fleet echoing them.

Soldiers poured onto the deck from below, men and women armed to the teeth and ready to fight, and Zarrah pulled loose her staff, lifting it into the air. "Perhaps fortune will smile on us today and there will be a Veliant princeling aboard," she shouted. "And when we are through, we'll sail back to Nerastis with the vermin dangling from the mainmast by his entrails!"

The soldiers roared, lifting their own weapons to the sky, all eyes fixed on the approaching fleet.

Laughing, Zarrah lifted her spyglass. But her heart skipped, anticipation washed away by concern even as those in the crow's nest shouted warnings.

Not fifteen ships, as had originally been counted, but many more. Twenty. Thirty.

And though they must have caught sight of the Valcottan fleet by now, they weren't moving into position to attack. "Cousin..."

Bermin didn't answer, so she twisted to grab him, her hand looking like a child's against his massive forearm. "Look! They're bypassing us."

All around her, soldiers paused in their preparations and moved to the rail, eyes on the fleet that was upward of fifty ships, all sailing wide of the Valcottan fleet and heading north.

"Where are they going?" someone muttered.

But Zarrah knew. The empress had said this moment was inevitable—it was only a matter of when and how. Yet knowing didn't lessen the shock. "They're attacking Ithicana."

Bermin made a sound of agreement, then rested his elbows on the rail, a slight smile curving his round cheeks.

"We must engage." Zarrah's heart thundered in her chest. "Disrupt the attack!"

Bermin ignored her. "Stand down."

The alarm bells went silent, no one on deck speaking a word.

She rounded on him. "They're stabbing Ithicana in the back! We need to engage and send warning to Southwatch."

"No." Her cousin's word rolled across the deck like thunder.

"We have to!" The words came out breathy as panic rose in Zarrah's chest. Silas Veliant wouldn't commit this many ships to an attack unless he was certain of victory. And if Ithicana fell, it would mean the bridge and all its wealth in Maridrinian hands. In her *enemy's* hands.

"You bed down with snakes, you must expect to be bitten," her cousin answered. "The empress saw this and warned the Ithicanian king, but he seemed more content to listen to the snake in his bed."

The soldiers around them laughed. Zarrah did not. "Our ship is faster. We can beat them to Southwatch and warn them. If Ithicana knows the Maridrinians are coming, they'll at least have a chance of repelling them."

"And risk having them fire their shipbreakers at us? I think not. And as it is, the empress was specific that if this were to come to pass, we were not to interfere." Her cousin motioned to the captain. "Set sail for Nerastis. It

might be the Rat King has left himself exposed, and we must capitalize upon the opportunity.”

As alluring as that opportunity was, Zarrah *knew* what would happen if they allowed this. Had seen the results of Maridrinian raids before, burned homes and slaughtered civilians and orphaned children, and the sickening helplessness she felt every time she came too late to stop it churned in her guts. The same helplessness she’d felt ten years ago when Silas Veliant had murdered her mother and left Zarrah for dead.

“We must act!” Cold coils of panic filled her guts. “If they take Ithicana, it will be a massacre. Not just soldiers, but families. Children! We must intervene.”

The soldiers within earshot shifted uneasily at her words, their eyes moving to the fleet, every last one of them familiar with the outcome of a Maridrinian attack. But her cousin only shrugged. “It is not our concern. Ithicana spit upon our friendship, and now they will pay the price.”

Except it wasn’t Ithicana’s people who deserved to pay.

The letter in her pocket giving her the authority to take command burned like fire, but her aunt had been specific: *Say nothing until you are returned to Nerastis.*

Zarrah’s mind warred with the order, with her desire to do something, anything, to stop what was about to happen to Ithicana. “Cousin, please. King Aren may have spit on our friendship, but it will be his people—innocents who had nothing to do with that decision—who will pay the ultimate price. For them, we should do this.”

Bermin only shook his head. “Let this be motivation for Ithicana to choose a better king.” Then he roared, “Now, set sail!”

Ignore your orders and take command, her conscience screamed. *Stop this!*

But instead, Zarrah only watched in silence as the Maridrinian fleet passed, heading north toward Ithicana’s destruction.