

THE PALACE OF THE
KING OF HYRKANIA.

OH, MY
BELOVED,
YOU'VE
RETURNED---

SAVAS!





HEH.
I SUPPOSE I
DESERVED THAT,
SONJA.



YOU'RE LUCKY
YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL,
SONJA. ANYONE ELSE
AND I'D HAVE THEIR
HEAD ADORN MY
GATES.

YOU ALWAYS
DID FANCY YOURSELF
CHARMING,
SAVAS.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA
WHAT YOU HAVE DONE
TO HYRKANIA?!



SOLDIERS TERRORIZING
FAMILIES, THE TAVERNS, DENS OF
POISON AGAINST OUR ALLIES--
AGAINST OUR FRIENDS!--AGAINST
SOME OF OUR OWN PEOPLE, IF THEY
WERE BORN IN ANOTHER LAND!--

MITRA!
HYRKANIANS ARE
PUNISHED FOR FAR
LESS THAN KNOCKING
THE KING ON HIS
ROYAL ARSE.



YOU ALWAYS
DID HAVE A MOST
WONDERFUL FLAIR
FOR THE DRAMATIC,
SONJA.



I SEE THAT TRAVELLING WITH AN ACTRESS HAS GIVEN IT MORE FLESH.



WHAT IS YOUR NAME, MY DEAR?

...MIDYAN, YOUR MAJESTY. HOW DID YOU KNOW--?

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD AN EYE FOR WHAT PEOPLE ARE.

AND, TOO, AN UNDERSTANDING FOR WHAT THEY ARE NOT.



AND HYRKANIAN ARE NOT BUTCHERS.

OH, SONJA.

I KNOW THE PAST FEW WEEKS SINCE YOUR RETURN HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATING FOR THE SHE-DEVIL IN YOU, BUT SURELY THE QUEEN IN YOU CAN SENSE THE GOOD WE ARE DOING!



ONCE, THOSE NATIONS EYED HYRKANIA IN HER HOUR OF WEAKNESS, AND THOUGHT TO SEIZE HER AS A VASSAL PROVINCE...

...BUT UNDER MY REIGN, NO ONE WILL EVER THREATEN MY PEOPLE AGAIN.

THEN.

"WHEN I LOST YOU, SONJA..."

"IT...IT CHANGED ME."

"I KNOW, I KNOW YOU TOLD ME, FROM THE BEGINNING, YOU HAD ONLY SIGNED ON TO GUARD THE CARAVAN FOR A SEASON, BUT I KNEW..."

"DEEP DOWN, I KNEW IT WAS BECAUSE I WAS NOT WORTHY OF YOU."

"A PETTY MERCHANT, AND THE SHE-DEVIL HERSELF?"

"SO I ELECTED TO MAKE MYSELF WORTHY."


"I AMASSED AS MUCH WEALTH AS I COULD AS A MERCHANT, DROVE FARTHER AND FARTHER AFIELD, INTO REALMS MOST HYRKANIAN TRADERS WOULD NEVER DARE VENTURE."

"WHAT I SAW IN THOSE LANDS DISGUSTED ME, BUT THEIR RICHES AND SPICES AND CLOTH SOLD QUICKER THAN HOT MEAT AT MARKET."

"AND WHEN I HAD THE WEALTH I DESIRED—"

"I SOLD MY CARAVANS, AS I HAD GAINED MANY, FOR A COMMISSION AMONG HYRKANIA'S COUNCILORS."


"I WAS AN AMBASSADOR NOW, WITH MY KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER LANDS, OF THEIR CUSTOMS AND THEIR TONGUES."




"I ROSE THROUGH THE RANKS,
AND FOR MY SUBTLETY AND
TACT, BECAME A TRUSTED
HAND OF THE OLD KING.



"AND I WATCHED, POWERLESS, AS HE
LET THE WOLVES OF OUR NEIGHBORS PROWL
AND CIRCLE OUR HOMELAND--WATCHED
RAIDERS SLAY OUR PEOPLE,
CARRY OFF OUR GOODS--



"AND WHEN HE DIED AT LAST,
AND YOU SPURNED THE THRONE,
THE COUNCILORS CHOSE ME TO
RECTIFY THE CRISIS CLOSEST AT HAND.



"THE SAFETY OF
OUR HOMELAND."