

ELLE KINGSLEY



IS WAR KIND?

“Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.
Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom --
A field where a thousand corpses lie.
Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.
Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.
Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.”

- Stephen Crane (1899)

Prologue:



I can hear Father speaking about “growing tensions.” Father’s temper with my younger brothers is becoming quicker. His monthly meetings with plantation owners around us has increased to weekly meetings. The usual parties and dances have turned from lively to dull. Mother says not to listen or worry, but I know something is going to happen.

Chapter One:



“June 25, 1860 - Through my sixteen years of life, I have realized three things: I am dreading this coming Saturday, I am absolutely livid with my parents, and I despise Benjamin Lepuy. Saturday is a ball dedicated in my name to announce to society that I am ready for marriage. Of course, this was all planned by Mother and Father. As their only daughter, I am expected to marry a perfect gentleman with pounds of money. One may ask themselves, who is this perfect gentleman with pounds of money? It is Benjamin Lepuy. Among parents, he is known as a young man with impeccable manners – and pounds of money. Any mother or father would be delighted to have him as their son. However, among young ladies, including myself, he is known as a vain, selfish, pretentious, and haughty boy. I assume you understand the type of person he is. Mother and Father seem to think that I shall marry this boy and lead an impeccable life with him. Run our own plantation, have children, earn pounds of money, live the most bori” “Veronica Laura Cadden!”

Mother’s voice rang throughout the house. “Coming Mother!” I yelled back. I ran out of my bedroom and down the stairs to the source of the voice. “No running in the house! Goodness, what has gotten into you this week? I called you down here because your gown for the ball has a stain on it. Missy told me so. You have only tried this dress on twice!” “Oh, Mother, I know why Vera has a stain on her dress! She did it on purpose!” interrupted my youngest brother, Benton. My other young brother, Henry, replied, “Vera doesn’t want to go to her ball!” “Be quiet and mind your own business!” I hissed back at them, even though I just might have spilled my tea on my gown. On accident, of course. “Veronica, your father and I have worked very hard on putting this ball together for you. Any other young lady would be delighted to have this lovely of a ball put on in their honor. Now, I expect Missy can

get this stain out, but stay out of the house today. We are still preparing for Saturday and do not need you in the way” Mother suggested. I slowly climbed the stairs, as to not upset Mother. I grabbed my favorite book, *Jane Eyre*, and retreated outside to the porch. As I sat down on one of our wicker chairs, I tried to remind myself that Mother and Father had my best interests in mind. Even though they had a strange and quite forceful way of showing it.