

Chapter 1562

In the end, Grace couldn't hold out for long and passed on.

When she learned that Caden, having lost his mind, had been sent away to a monastery to spend his days, she was already near the end of her strength. The pain, relentless as a shadow, gnawed at her day and night. And on a bitterly cold night, she breathed her last.

Victoria took charge for a time, sending away all the palace servants involved. What happened to them remained unknown to Carissa and the others.

With the sudden loss of the queen and two high-ranking concubines, coupled with the queen dowager's declining health, the task of overseeing the harem fell to Penelope for the time being.

Salvador had no plans to marry again. He preferred to keep the harem simple and avoid any further complications.

But despite her best efforts, Penelope lacked the strength to handle things properly. Every few days, there was some new problem. The matter of the concubines' allowances and the monthly payments to the servants caused endless complaints and unrest.

Penelope had hoped to gain a good reputation by saving the palace money. She reduced the monthly allowances and limited the spring clothes for the concubines to just one set each, saving a fair amount of money.

But the truth was, the harem was already quite frugal. In the past, anyone who wanted to spend lavishly would use money from their family. Now, with cuts upon cuts, the women began to feel displeased.

Salvador was forced to visit the harem frequently. Each time, he only heard complaints, which wore on his patience. The situation soon reached Victoria, as the allowances for the concubines of the previous generation had also been sharply reduced. 1

With no other choice, the queen dowager summoned the king to dinner to discuss the matter. 1

Penelope currently held the most power in the harem. Promoting anyone was tricky, as they couldn't rise above her. The selection of new concubines would bring too much commotion, so it seemed better to simply choose a new queen—someone more talented and virtuous, who could also care for the crown prince. 1

Salvador muttered that he didn't know how much longer he would live, earning a glare from Victoria.

"If you think like that, you truly won't live long. You must believe in yourself and Healer Dalton," she chided.

Salvador finally agreed to choose a new queen, but insisted on waiting for news from Eldermere Keep before making any decisions. The waiting was torturous, agonizing, and filled with anxiety. It wasn't just Salvador who felt that way. Anyone who knew about the situation shared the same feelings.

However, no one spoke of it openly. If the subject came up by accident, they would quickly change the topic. Everyone remembered the pain Connor had endured, the terrible suffering he had been through. It was a memory too heartbreaking to bear.

Upon arrival at Eldermere Keep, Sebastian sent a letter. But as it only mentioned that they had arrived and said nothing about Connor's

condition, no one knew exactly how the prince was faring.

Kyle and Isaac, who had been tasked with escorting them, hadn't returned yet. If everything had gone well, they would have come back by now.

By April, as the weather warmed and spring arrived, they finally returned. They went straight to the palace, bringing good news. Connor's condition had stabilized, and though he wasn't out of danger yet, he was recovering from his internal injuries.

Salvador let out a long sigh of relief, both happy and sorrowful at the same time.

He knew that "stabilized" meant his son had gone through a great deal of suffering, enduring many painful treatments just to reach this point. And from now on, Connor would have to stay at Eldermere Keep, his life bound to medicine.

No one knew how long the eldest prince would live. There was a chance he might not even live to adulthood.

That evening, after Rafael finished teaching Cecil, he took Ryan back to Hell Monarch Estate. He didn't say much the whole night, simply sitting in the garden, lost in thought.


Carissa brought him a glass of wine and sat beside him. "What's wrong?"

Taking the glass, Rafael drank it all in one go. "Is this fruit wine?"

"Yes. People with troubled minds shouldn't drink strong liquor. It only deepens the sorrow and makes everything worse," Carissa replied.


She watched him carefully, asking, "So, what's wrong? Didn't you get

good news today?"

Rafael sighed quietly, still holding the glass. "After practice, I overheard Prince Cecil asking Ryan if he was really the crown prince now. He said a lot of people wanted that position, so it must be something incredibly rare and precious. Then, he asked if he could use the title to bring back his mother and older brother... And then they both sat there and cried." 

Stunned, Carissa's eyes filled with tears.

Cecil had learned too early the worst kind of pain—the pain of loss and separation.

Rafael opened his hand, revealing a small pill. "This is a medicinal pill I got from Rowan. It prevents conception. Whether I take it is up to you." 



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