

## Chapter 1569

On the day of the first snowfall, a sudden idea struck Salvador. He hadn't attended court in some time, and now, seated on the throne, he declared his plans for a private journey to admire Starhaven's beautiful landscapes. As for the kingdom affairs, they had already been entrusted to Rafael, and that arrangement would remain unchanged.

As Salvador appeared very thin and weary, many court officials tried to advise against the trip. But once he had made up his mind, there was no swaying him. He insisted that Carissa and Galen accompany him, along with Sebastian and Dorian.

The very next day, they set off.

It wasn't a spur-of-the-moment decision — Salvador had already discussed the matter with Rafael and Carissa beforehand. Sebastian had advised against it, but the king's mind was made up, so the renowned physician had no choice but to accompany him.

While Salvador certainly wanted to see more of the kingdom, his true destination was Eldermere Keep, as he longed to see his son one last time.

Sebastian had privately spoken with Rafael and Carissa about the trip, fearing that Salvador's visit to Eldermere Keep might not end as planned. Worst of all, he worried the king might not survive the journey.

Rafael and Carissa also believed that it would be best not to go. Though Salvador intended to travel incognito, such a journey would certainly attract attention. The lingering threat of rebels could still be a risk, for one.

Moreover, there was the matter of Connor. The fact that the eldest prince was still alive was a closely guarded secret, known to only a few. If Salvador's journey to Eldermere Keep became known, it might raise suspicions. After all, Sebastian had once spent a year there. If someone were to consider everything, they might pick up some clues. 1

But as much as they worried, they understood Salvador's desire as a father. How could they stop him from seeing his son for the last time?

They couldn't. In fact, the night before they were set to leave, Carissa quietly suggested to Rafael that they might bring Ryan along, as he had always missed Connor.

Rafael didn't think it was a good idea, at least not now. Ryan spent his days with Cecil, and the topic of conversation was always Connor. If Ryan found out the truth, he might reveal it to others in a moment of carelessness, which would create potential trouble down the line.

Cecil was still young and didn't know that Connor was a threat to him. In time, he would grow up and become king, facing the inner turmoil every king went through. When that time came, he may not think of his oldest brother the same way he did now. 1

Connor had suffered so much to stay alive, and Salvador wished for his safety and peace in the future. If his journey led to danger, all the suffering would have been for nothing.

Carissa had also acted on impulse, not thinking things through. After hearing Rafael's concerns, she agreed that the risks were too great and simply chose a few trusted companions. Along with Galen, they set off to accompany Salvador on his private journey.

With the king away from the capital, Rafael continued his duties as

regent, managing the court and overseeing the Mystic Army. He held both political power and control over the army—a clear sign of how much Salvador trusted him.

However, just two days before his departure, Salvador had summoned Jeremiah and Thomas to the palace for a private meeting. The three of them discussed matters for nearly an hour.

Rafael didn't know what was said during their meeting, and frankly, he didn't care. His duties were plentiful, and with the added responsibility of training Cecil, he barely had time to breathe. From morning to night, there was no moment of rest. 1

Now, he realized just how tiring it was to wear the crown.

Each day, he had to rise before dawn for the morning court session. Afterwards, lunch was often a hurried affair. Then, he spent his afternoon discussing policies with the court officials and reviewing reports. 1

The reports were no longer filtered before reaching him. He had to read through all of them with Cecil. Many were filled with praise for the king, offering little more than empty words about prosperity under their rule.

Some reports had real issues, though they were often minor matters. In the past, these would have been screened, but now Rafael had to handle everything himself. For the next couple of years, at least, he would need to personally go through the mountain of paperwork. Most importantly, he had to teach Cecil how to spot the real problems buried among all the flattery.

Of course, the most important reports were those from the military, particularly the ones from Victory Pass and the Southern Frontier. Rafael

made sure to give those his full attention.



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