

## Chapter 1570

Before Salvador left the capital, Rafael had already become regent and taken on the required duties. With his great military achievements, he had earned respect from both civil and military officials. At first, no one questioned his authority, and many even held him in high regard.

However, with Salvador now ill and traveling incognito, rumors began to spread within the palace, warning people to be wary of the regent. The fear was that, as Cecil was still so young, Rafael might take advantage of the situation and eventually replace him.

As often the case, such suspicion and rumors spread like wildfire, fueled by the mouths of many. Consequently, a number of officials lost their previous respect for Rafael. They even began to disregard his orders, paying them little heed and carrying out his commands half-heartedly.

Noticing this troubling shift, Davis felt a sense of urgency. He decided to speak with Patrick, the Minister of Justice, who was also Cecil's grandfather and the father of the late Sylvia. Given the rumors circulating about Rafael, Davis hoped Patrick would step forward to defend him and set an example by offering his support.

However, Patrick had been deeply affected by the loss of his daughter. Though Cecil wasn't Sylvia's biological child, she had protected him with her life. While Patrick trusted Rafael's character, he worried about the influence of power. 1

He thought of Nicholas, who had risked everything to seize power. Patrick didn't doubt Rafael's integrity, but with such an opportunity before him, wouldn't he be tempted to do the same?

Though all that was running through Patrick's mind, he simply shook his

head and said, "Those rumors are baseless. I doubt Prince Rafael would care about them, so you needn't worry so much."

"Gossip can be dangerous. They undermine the regent's authority, which in turn affects his ability to govern. His Majesty chose Prince Rafael to support Prince Cecil, but if the regent loses his credibility, how will the crown prince stand strong in the future? As his grandfather, shouldn't you care about that?" Davis said earnestly.

Patrick was quiet for a long moment before he replied, "Perhaps it's not all bad. If the regent's reputation becomes too great, it might make people start thinking differently."

Davis let out a sharp laugh. "Ha! Well, it's true that people might change. I'm not sure if Prince Rafael has changed, but I'm sure you have. I've been wasting my time here. Farewell."

Patrick watched Davis leave, his mouth half-open as if he wanted to say something. But in the end, he said nothing and watched as the other man left.

Having overheard the conversation from the back room, Gladys came into the front hall and saw her husband sitting in deep thought.

She sighed. "You may suspect anyone, but you shouldn't doubt Prince Rafael and Lady Carissa. Don't forget, it was Lady Carissa who worked tirelessly to clear Sylvia's name, and Prince Rafael has been guiding Prince Cecil with his own hands. If you speak like this, you will only drive a wedge between Prince Rafael and Cecil. What are you thinking?"

"I didn't spread those rumors. I've done nothing and hold no suspicions. I'm just a bystander in all this," Patrick replied slowly, looking up at his wife.

"You shouldn't be just a bystander in this matter," Gladys said gently. "You must stand by Prince Rafael. Many people in court are watching your actions. If you show your trust in him, the rumors will fade away on their own."

Patrick paused and thought momentarily, then replied, "What you say has some truth, but it's a woman's kindness—a short-sighted view. I'm thinking of the long-term future."

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Meanwhile, Davis had gone to Rafael. He shared his concerns about the growing rumors and suggested they find a way to address them.

Rafael chuckled. "Let them doubt and speculate as they wish. If anyone fails in their duties, they will be punished. A few lashes will make them think twice before speaking out of turn."

This was exactly what Rafael had expected. When he had been a marshal and later Chief Judge, no one had ever questioned him. But now, he was the regent. There was no one to challenge him, and everyone would judge him based on their own perspectives.

With the throne came power—who wouldn't be tempted by it?

To win the trust of the court would take time, effort, and determination. Rafael had accepted this responsibility, well aware it would be a tough battle, but prepared for it.