

## Chapter 1571

Salvador didn't fare well along the long and tiring journey, his condition worsening with each passing day. Sebastian did what he could—applying needle treatment and using medicine—but all he could offer was temporary relief. As they pressed on, the king's condition only seemed to deteriorate further.

Fortunately, Salvador was a man of remarkable willpower. Despite his suffering, he gritted his teeth and carried on, unwilling to give in. He could not afford to back down—not now.

Eldermere Keep lay in the southern province of Mendoria, where the climate was mild and temperate, perfect for someone needing rest and recovery. Even though it was now winter, the air was neither cold nor biting, more akin to the gentler days of autumn.

The locals knew little of Eldermere Keep, though they often spoke of a physician's office that was the largest in Mendoria, as big as the one in the capital, also called Arcane Sanctum. There were other keeps, but this one was renowned for its abundance of rare and valuable herbs, while the surrounding hills were said to be full of hidden treasures.

Eldermere Keep itself stood nestled in the low hills, not towering, but still a place of quiet beauty. The winding paths were shaded by an abundance of flowers, vivid and bright in every direction.

Salvador had never seen so many blooms in his life—roses, camellias, azaleas, and hydrangeas, with countless more he couldn't name. Golden maple leaves fluttered down like bits of sunlight. His spirits lifted as he took it all in, his discomfort forgotten for a moment.

Though Connor was destined to be trapped here for life, with such a

beautiful sea of flowers to keep him company, perhaps the days wouldn't seem all that bitter.

As they continued, the path led them into a grand grove of maple trees. Beyond that, a large estate came into view. Nestled in a mountain hollow, it had white walls and a green roof. Mist curled around the peaks, covering the mountaintop. Sunlight shimmered on the path beneath them, casting a golden glow that blended with the mist in a way that felt almost unreal.

A cool mountain breeze sent a chill through Salvador. He pulled his robes tighter, staring at the estate ahead with a pounding heart.

At last, he was about to see his son again.

Carissa instructed the servants to wait outside as she led the men carrying Salvador into the estate compound. As they reached the end of the path, the sound of laughter greeted them.

"Otto, you dare tell me there isn't any Evergreen Root in this soup? I can taste it!"

The voice laughed weakly, but with a lightness that was pleasant to hear.


"There really isn't any," came the reply, a more cheerful voice this time. "It's just chicken soup, but I used the pot that was used to boil Evergreen Root soup yesterday. I washed it several times! How do you still taste it?"

"I've drunk Evergreen Root soup since I was a child. How could I not know? I can detect even the faintest taste of it," the voice said proudly, followed by a few soft chuckles. "But I never cared for Evergreen Root soup. When Grandmother used to get someone to make it, I'd only have a few sips, then give the rest to Ryan."

Salvador was still seated in his litter. At those words, he felt his eyes burn with sudden tears. As they approached the mountain gate, his gaze fell upon two figures lounging in chairs, the golden light of the afternoon sun falling across their faces. When one of them turned his head, his gaze met Salvador's for a brief, unexpected moment.

The figure turned away quickly, but then he froze and his head snapped back. He rubbed his eyes, his face filled with astonishment and disbelief. Tears began to fall, but he seemed to remember something and quickly wiped his face with his sleeve, taking deep breaths to regain his composure.

No. He couldn't cry. His father had always despised such signs of weakness.

Sebastian entered first, and the people who came to greet him were all dismissed with a wave of his hand, including the child named Otto. Carissa motioned for Salvador to be laid down on a reclining chair, then led the others out, giving the father and son some privacy. 

The warm sunlight bathed the pair, casting a soft golden glow that seemed to highlight their similar features. Salvador struggled to hold back the lump in his throat, his heart aching as he studied his son. His eyes lingered on the blanket draped over Connor's legs.

"Does it still hurt?" Salvador asked softly, his hand resting gently on his son's knee, careful not to press too hard.

Connor still seemed as if he were dreaming, gazing intently at his father's face. He had once been the most afraid of his father, but now missed him deeply.

"It doesn't hurt anymore, Dad," Connor replied, his eyes reddening as he

choked up. "Why have you grown so thin? Are you still sick?"

"I'm much better now," Salvador said with a smile, though it was a fragile one—like a veil that couldn't hide the sorrow beneath it.

"Why did you come here?" Connor asked in confusion.

"I missed you, so I came," Salvador said softly, his gaze full of tenderness.

The longing and guilt he felt for his son made him cast aside any remaining restraints, speaking his heart openly without hesitation.

Connor was momentarily stunned. How could his father say he missed him? He had never said such a thing before, nor had he ever been so gentle.



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