

## Chapter 1575

On the 13th day of winter, Salvador suddenly woke up feeling clearer than before. Saying he was hungry, he specifically asked for beef stew and milk pastries.

Derek hurried to make the necessary arrangements. When the food arrived, Octavia sat by the bed as she had done many times before, ready to feed him. But Salvador insisted he wanted to sit up to eat himself.

Derek gently helped the king sit up, placing a soft cushion behind him to support his back. Salvador had grown so thin that he seemed to be nothing but skin and bones. His body slouched as he sat, so Derek had to kneel beside the bed, holding his waist to keep him steady.

Salvador finished an entire bowl of stew, eating it all without leaving a single bit behind. Then, he picked up a small milk pastry. But after a bite, he felt a little nauseous, so he didn't eat any more.

Sebastian sent word to Victoria. After a brief conversation, her face turned pale and tears started to fall almost immediately. Though she had tried to prepare herself, now that the moment had come, it felt as though a knife had pierced her heart. The pain left her trembling.

After a long silence, she instructed someone to bring Rafael and Cecil, along with the concubines and the children.

Salvador seemed unaware of how seriously ill he was. Seeing so many people gathered at his bedside, he looked surprised, though he greeted each of them kindly.

Afterward, he looked around and asked Derek, "Where are Connor and Caden?"

At his words, some of the concubines couldn't hold back their tears.

Derek smiled, but his eyes were unbearably red. "Your Majesty, please wait. I've already sent for them. They'll be here soon." 2

"Don't rush them. Let the royal chancellor finish his lesson first. No need to risk his scolding," Salvador said with a weak smile.

He tried to lift his hands, but had no strength left. Instead, he sighed. "I'm feeling a bit tired. Help me lie down. I'll rest for a moment, then we can go to the study."

Derek quickly helped him lie back down.

As Salvador heard the sound of crying, he propped his head up slightly and asked, "Who is crying? What happened? Who is hurt?"

Octavia turned around, her gaze sharp, and the crying instantly ceased.

Salvador slowly closed his eyes, feeling the weight of exhaustion and darkness closing in from all sides. And once they shut, they never opened again. 1

On the 13th day of winter, Starhaven's king passed away. The entire nation mourned.

A kingdom could not be without a ruler, so during the mourning ceremonies for the late king, Cecil ascended the throne, taking Everhart as his new surname, as per the royal tradition. As regent, Rafael would oversee the governance of the kingdom to assist the new king. 2

Salvador's funeral and the new king's ascension were attended by envoys from friendly kingdoms.

The Halcyon Monarch, Faelan, had once said they would meet again in three to five years. And indeed, they did. But Faelan and his princess consort, Elysia, only stayed in the capital for one day before announcing their plans to head south. They had heard of a city in Starhaven that was said to have spring-like weather all year round, and were eager to see it for themselves.

After two busy months, Rafael finally found a moment to relax.

The martial arts examination had concluded, with Roxana only placing in the top ten. At fourteen, she was still too young, despite her immense strength and the careful guidance of her mentor, Cynthia.

After all, the martial arts examination wasn't just about combat. It also included archery, horseback riding, weightlifting, and other events. On top of that, she had been competing against many other martial arts students who were eager to earn military achievements. To place in the top ten was already a remarkable feat, one that caused quite a stir.

Roxana had been assigned to the Capital Guard under the Mystic Army. Carissa's plan was to give her some time to gain experience.

But once there was one Roxana, there would be a second, and a third. Cynthia and Violet both believed it was time to form a women's military unit. Carissa had already set things in motion, sending out invitations and encouraging women to study and practice martial arts.

By the fifth year of Cecil's reign, Starhaven had established over 100 workshops, more than 300 charity centers for children, 38 women's academies, and over 20 women's martial arts schools. 1

There were fewer and fewer voices questioning Rafael as the regent. He was clear in his rewards and punishments, decisive in his actions, and

bold in reforming corrupt practices. He had even restructured the official departments, making everything much more organized and efficient. 2

This year, Carissa turned 30.

Over the years, both she and Rafael had been busy with their own responsibilities, but had reached an understanding. No matter how hectic things got, they would always return home before nine at night and wouldn't handle any official matters during their rest days. The kingdom was important, but so was their family. 1

After her 30th birthday, Carissa promoted Michael to acting commander of the Mystic Army, having decided to take a year off to rest.

When they returned to their room in the evening, a very curious Rafael asked, "You, the workaholic, are actually willing to take a whole year off?" 1

Sebastian came every month to check on their health, so Rafael was certain that Carissa was fine.

Carissa stood in front of the mirror, holding a loose robe in her hands. She didn't answer his question but instead asked, "If I get this fat, will you still like me?" 3



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