

Chapter 1576

Rafael glanced at the robe. "Isn't that mine? Are you saying I've gotten fat? I'm not fat."

"Oh, is it yours? It's too long, then. I'll have someone alter it for me," Carissa replied casually.

Rafael shook his head. "If you want something loose, just have someone make it for you. Why bother altering my old clothes? It's not even comfortable."

"I'm going to Meadow Ridge for a year. Wearing your clothes will make it feel like you're still with me," Carissa said with a bright smile, as if the idea of being apart for a year was no more serious than being apart for a day.

"A year?" Rafael looked shocked. "You're going back for a whole year? Why?"

"Well, of course, my mentor misses me, and I miss him too," Carissa replied, placing her hands on her hips as she handed the robe to Lulu, who was standing by with a hand over her mouth, trying not to laugh.

"But I won't leave right away. Since Ryan is about to inherit the duke's title, I'll wait until that's settled before I go back to Meadow Ridge," she added.

"Why does it need to be for so long?" Rafael asked.

Though he found her stance strange, he didn't dwell on it too much, focusing instead on the details.

Carissa sat down slowly, taking her time before saying, "I'm going to

stay at Meadow Ridge for a year, then adopt a child and tell everyone we had one ourselves." 1

"Why go to all that trouble?" Rafael frowned. "It wouldn't be difficult to adopt in the royal family, would it? Besides, saying you had a child when you didn't... That's not right."

Carissa shot him an exasperated glance.

It was so obvious, yet he still didn't get it? How boring. 1

Lulu couldn't help but laugh out loud. "Your Highness, my lady is pregnant. She plans to go to Meadow Ridge to rest and prepare for the birth." 2

"What?!" Rafael's voice nearly shook the walls.

It was supposed to be just a small chance. Did they really get this lucky?

He quickly knelt down, carefully placing his hand on his wife's stomach. Was there really a child in there? A child of his and Carissa's? It felt unreal.

"Really?" he asked, clearly in disbelief. "Are you happy? Do you want to have the baby?"

Carissa lowered her gaze to meet his, a smile lingering at the corner of her lips. "Of course, I'm happy. I want to have the baby. What about you? Are you happy?"

"Of course, I'm happy," Rafael said, his dark eyes lighting up with a grin.

"I told you, I would be happy either way, whether we had a child or not. But now that we're having one, I'm even happier."

Carissa tilted her head, amused. "Is that what you said?"


"Yes, that's exactly what I said," Rafael replied.

Whatever decision Carissa made, he would support it. He was happy, but there was a lingering fear deep inside. Childbirth was always a perilous journey for a woman. He dreaded it, but didn't want to let that fear show and spoil the moment.

Today, he decided to focus only on joy.

He held her tightly, his hands trembling with emotion. Lulu, noticing them sharing a special moment, wisely excused herself and left the room.

"Why go to Meadow Ridge? Wouldn't it be better to stay here and prepare for the birth?" Rafael asked.

Carissa sighed lightly. "With my nature, I can't stay idle here in the capital. It's better to go somewhere far away where I won't be constantly reminded of things I could be dealing with. Besides, I don't want to be seen wandering around the capital with a large belly. I'm not young anymore; I'm 30. I need to make sure both me and the baby are safe." 

Rafael considered her words. The past few years had been a whirlwind for her—working with the military as well as managing the workshops, women's schools, and martial arts academies. She had hardly any time to relax. How could she possibly focus on her pregnancy with all that?

"Alright, I'll send you off in a couple of days. And every week, I'll visit you when I have time," Rafael said softly, pulling her closer. His face was full of happiness and contentment.

Two days later, a carriage from Hell Monarch Estate rumbled down the main road. It wasn't traveling quickly, but was heading towards Meadow

Ridge.

Carissa lifted the curtain and rested her hands on the small window, gazing out at the passing scenery. Unlike most days, she felt dizzy today. She never got motion sickness, but for some reason, it overwhelmed her now. She opened the curtain a bit more and let the breeze ease her discomfort.

In a daze, she saw a carriage rush past her. A little head peeked out from inside, and dark eyes darted around, filled with curiosity.

"Dad, are you really going to take me to learn martial arts?" a young girl asked.

A hearty laugh came from inside the carriage. "Of course, I am! Your mentor is none other than the renowned head of the Pathfinders Guild, Adrian Russell. Train hard, and once you're ready, I'll take you to fight enemies on a battlefield."

"Great! I want to be a female general!" the young girl declared excitedly.

The carriage sped past without disturbing a single particle of dust, as though it were but a fleeting vision, or perhaps a mere figment of Carissa's imagination.

She lowered the curtain and rested in Rafael's embrace, much as she had once nestled against her father in her youth.

'Dad, perhaps you spoke those words in jest that day, but I've done it.'