

## Chapter 1582

Before I took the vows and entered the monastery, my name was Caden.

From the time I was young, I often heard the same praise whispered around me: "This child is sharp beyond his years—clever, quick-witted, the finest of the three princes."

I heard it so often that I came to believe it myself. At times, I even felt proud. But whenever I let that pride rise too high, Mom would bring me back to earth.

She would look at me, her eyes soft but filled with something I couldn't quite name—pity, perhaps. And then, she would sigh and say, "What a pity you were born of my womb. If not, you might have risen above that foolish one. But fate favored him, not you."

That "foolish one"—I knew well enough who she meant. I had heard her say it so many times in private, though never once in public.

It puzzled me greatly as a child. Mom clearly disliked my eldest brother, Connor, more than anyone. Yet, whenever he came near, she would smile warmly and speak kindly. She would even flatter him, calling him wise when he clearly was not. 7

I couldn't understand it, so I once asked Lyra in secret. She had served my mother faithfully for years, but she only sighed and brushed my hair back.

"Your Highness, Her Grace is planning ahead for your sake," she said softly.

At the time, I didn't know what she meant. I only knew that if I obeyed and behaved well, Mom would be pleased. She would not look at me with those sad, weary eyes.

Whenever the king, my father, came to see me, Mom would speak of how much I loved to read. Dad would smile and ask what books I had been reading lately, as well as whether I could remember any great sayings or lessons.

I always answered well, and he always left satisfied.

It wasn't hard, as I had memorized those answers beforehand. My father, after all, was not terribly original. He asked the same few questions every time, so my mother knew them by heart.

However, sometimes, he would ask something else. He might ask whether Connor had ever bullied me or taken my toys. But even then, there was a right answer.

I always said, "It doesn't matter, Dad. I am the younger brother. It is only right that I give way to my elder brother."

Whenever I said that, Dad's gaze became especially complicated. I didn't understand it, and it didn't matter to me. I just liked that, after a moment of silence, he would pat my head.

Dad was always terribly busy. Mom often said he only visited the harem a few times a month. So, if I could speak with him, feel his hand on my head even once, it was already more than enough for me.

As she put it, "Affection from the king must be won. Every time you win it, you've gained something others haven't."

And somehow, Mom always managed to help me win it. So, I naturally listened to her in all things. Whatever she asked, I did.

She often told me that Connor and I were born to be enemies.

"The two of you want the same things," she would say. "Where there is him, there cannot be you. Where there is you, there cannot be him. On this matter, you must not give an inch."

But then, in the very next breath, she would remind me to be polite and respectful to him, telling me to act like the good younger brother I was meant to be.

It was confusing. To me, it meant I was supposed to both dislike him and please him at the same time. Because of this, I often didn't know how to act around him. So, whenever I could, I stayed out of his way.

I remember one particular day, Mom told me to go wait for my aunt, the Hell Monarch's princess consort. Mom wanted me to act sweet and childlike, to show Aunt Carissa that I was both clever and obedient, and to flatter her just enough to make her smile.

I didn't mind. That day, I had been given candy to eat, so I was quite happy. I had memorized everything I was supposed to say, and once I said it, I could have my candy. That was enough for me.

But in the days that followed, Mom was in a terrible mood. I overheard her telling Lyra that Aunt Carissa hadn't been fooled at all, as she never once came to visit us.

"She's nothing but a person of shallow interests. She looks down on us," Mom said bitterly.

After that, I often heard her mutter that my aunt was no good, and neither was my uncle, the Hell Monarch. But later, I began studying and training in martial arts with Connor and Ryan. From my time with them, I thought my uncle was actually quite nice.

And as for Connor... he wasn't foolish at all. He just learned things a little slowly, that was all. Ryan and I would help him from time to time, and once we explained something to him, he understood quickly.

One day, I told my mother about it, saying that Connor was a hard worker.

However, she only scoffed and said, "Hard work is useless. A fool is a fool. He'll never be clever, no matter how hard he tries."

SURPRISE GIFT: 100 BONUS FREE FOR YOU

GET IT



Comments



Support



Share