

735 A Promise to Grow Old Together — The End —

One week later

Leif VI brought Kelly back to the palace. Sebastian, Magnus, and Kasha were waiting at the gates to welcome them.

"How are you feeling?" Sebastian asked gently.

"I'm fine," Kelly said with a soft smile.

"Welcome home," Magnus added warmly.

Kelly nodded in gratitude, then looked at the young woman beside him. "And this must be your girlfriend? She's lovely."

"Yes. This is Vanessa," Magnus replied, smiling.

"Thank you, Your Majesty," Vanessa said politely. She already knew who Kelly was—the biological mother of Caitlin and the future Queen of Asteria.

"Come," Leif VI said, offering his arm to Kelly. "I want to show you around."

They entered the palace together, followed by everyone else.

As they walked through the gilded corridors, Kelly quietly took in every detail of the royal residence—the offices where the King worked, the private quarters of the princes and princesses, the vast marble halls that echoed with history.

Leif VI then led her onto a small carriage and drove through the palace gardens until they reached the royal lake.



On its far shore stood a small white palace, newly renovated, its reflection shimmering across the water.

“Kelly,” he said, turning toward her, “this place is for you. From now on, we’ll live here together.”

Kelly’s eyes softened. She said nothing, but she could feel the love he had poured into every corner of this place.

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Meanwhile, Caitlin was walking with Sebastian, who had been acting mysteriously all morning.

“What are you up to?” she asked, suspicious.

“You’ll see,” he replied with a grin.

Caitlin opened a door—and before she could take in her surroundings, several small voices cried out.

“Mommy!”

“Mommy, Mommy!”

Four children rushed toward her, wrapping their tiny arms around her legs.

“Bruce, Howard, Arthur, Patricia—you’re all here?” she gasped, eyes wide with joy.

Sebastian laughed as she dropped to her knees, gathering the children into her arms.

“I thought I wouldn’t see you until we went home,” she said tearfully. “



You brought them all the way here?”

“Of course,” he said softly. “I wanted to surprise you.”

“Mommy, we missed you so much!”

“Mommy missed you too,” she said, hugging each of them tightly.

Patricia began to cry, her little face pressed against Caitlin’s shoulder.

“There, there, my sweet girl,” Caitlin soothed. “No more tears. Tonight you’ll sleep with Mommy, all right?”

When the children had calmed down, Caitlin noticed the others in the room.

“Raymond, Eliza, Simon, Molly, Yosef, Hazel, Faith, Quincy—you’re all here!”

Eliza smiled warmly. “Caitlin.”

The group exchanged glances, a little awkward now in the presence of a royal princess.

“What’s with you all?” Caitlin teased. “Don’t tell me my title scares you.”

“Forget the title!” Molly declared, running up to throw her arms around Caitlin. “I’ve missed you so much! You disappear for a few months and come back as a princess!”

With that, the tension broke. The others followed—Vincent, Hazel, Eliza, even Faith—each giving her a hug.

Once the laughter died down, they gathered around the sofa. The children snuggled close as Caitlin caught up with her friends.

Eliza sighed happily. "Our Vanderbilt family must be the luckiest on earth. We actually have a princess among us now."

Molly grinned. "Caitlin always had that royal aura. Now it's official. Guess we'll have to call you 'Your Highness' from now on, right?"

Caitlin laughed. "If anyone calls me that, I'll be angry. I'm still me."

They talked about everything — old times, their families, their plans.

"Caitlin," Molly said, "Simon and I are getting married. Will you come to the wedding?"

"Of course," Caitlin replied. "Sebastian and I are planning to visit soon anyway."

"Perfect!" Molly squealed.

Then Caitlin turned to Simon. "I haven't had time to check in with Wendy lately. How's she doing? And Rebecca?"

"They're both good," Simon said. "My mom's been stable, and my sister's been taking care of her. She's recovering well."

"I'm so glad. I really miss Wendy," Caitlin said softly.

"She said she'll come back for Christmas," Simon added.

"Really? Then we'll get to see her soon."

The conversation turned to Caitlin's mother.

"So it's true," Raymond asked. "You found her?"

Caitlin nodded. "You'll meet her later. She's recovering well and wants to visit once she's strong enough."



Eliza's eyes brightened. "That's wonderful. She deserves happiness after everything. And if your father truly accepts her, you'll all be together in the royal family again."

Molly added, "Harrison and Caitlin will be officially crowned as Prince and Princess tomorrow. The King treats Caitlin's mother so kindly. He's been waiting for her all this time. They belong together."

Patricia, who had been listening with wide eyes, tugged at her mother's sleeve. "Mommy, are you really a princess now?"

Caitlin smiled and nodded.

"Then do we have a big castle too?"

"We do."

"Really? Mommy, can we see it?"

Caitlin laughed. "Of course. Come on, I'll show you. Everyone, let's go. You can all stay at the palace tonight."

Molly clapped her hands. "We get to sleep in a royal palace? This is amazing!"

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Caitlin and Sebastian walked hand in hand through the moonlit path leading back to the palace. The night air was cool and still.

"It feels like everything's finally come full circle," she whispered. "No more regrets. I love this life—being surrounded by all of you."

Sebastian stopped and turned to her, their fingers still entwined.



"I love it too," he said softly. "But what I love most is you."

He drew her close, his gaze deep and steady. "Caitlin, meeting you was the luckiest moment of my life."

Caitlin looked up at him, eyes glimmering like the stars overhead. "And mine, Sebastian."

"I love you," he murmured, lowering his head to kiss her.

The waves brushed gently against the shore, the stars reflected in their eyes.

In that moment, time seemed to slow, as if the world itself held its breath.

I want to spend every lifetime with you, forever and ever, he thought.

And she whispered back, "Yes. Forever, and never apart."

— The End —

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