

Surprised 1681

Chapter 1681: Claire Meets Ivan

"Do you still have any food samples on hand?" Jennifer asked, "Take another look. We need to determine as soon as possible if it's this toxin so that we can prepare a large amount of antidote."

"I have a sample that was brought to the dining table. I'm currently studying it. These instruments were delivered just in time, and they will speed up the results," Rowan replied with increased confidence.

"How is everything at my hospital?"

"I went to handle the handover for you. Everything is running smoothly, so you don't have to worry."

"Alright, thank you for your hard work. But please take care of yourself, especially since you're pregnant."

"I'm doing fine," Jennifer reassured. "I won't take up any more of your time. If you find that it's poisonous, check if the ingredients match what's written in the book. If they are exactly the same, then the culprit must have read this book."

But if that's the case, then who is the culprit?

In fact, Jennifer also found it very strange. Master's efforts had always been cherished by Master's

nephew, so how could they have been seen by someone else?

It was a medical book, but it was also a poisonous book. Good and evil were just a thought away.

Even if it was accidentally seen, who would remember the formula for the poison and take action based on it?

But the medical book clearly stated that if poisoned for five years, how to prepare the antidote, and if poisoned for ten years, how to prepare it as well.

Even if all the organs of the poisoned person failed before death, there was still a chance to turn the tide.

After the call ended, Rowan put everything aside and began using the sophisticated instruments brought over to study the food samples collected by Claire.

If the food on the dining table was poisoned, it would narrow down the range of suspects.

He was meticulous, composed, and fully dedicated to his research.

After Ivan finished delivering the sculpture to Tyler and Catherine took him to the palace to have tea, the treatment was excellent, and she was focused on getting closer to Ivan.

Since Claire learned about Ivan's arrival at the royal palace, she called him. "Brother, where are you? I

heard that you came to Lu Layeka."

"I just arrived. I'm having tea with the queen. It's a good opportunity to discuss the project as well. The design draft is already out, and construction will start soon," Ivan's voice was gentle. "Do you want to come over? It's been a while since we last met, and there are some things we need to talk about."

When Ivan answered the call, Catherine was by his side. From the tone and choice of words, she guessed that the other person was Claire, and her whole demeanor became a bit off.

Slightly awkward and embarrassed.

Claire's lips curled up. "Sure, I'll come right over."

She wanted to see if Catherine had realized her mistake and how she was behaving now, and how she would treat her in the future.

Catherine wanted to please Mr. Marsh but didn't use her brain, misunderstandings arose for no reason, and she even warned her sister.

Claire didn't want to sour her relationship with Catherine either because she might unknowingly help her in some way in the future.

After all, she was the queen, and causing trouble wouldn't lead to anything good.

So, Claire informed the king and, after receiving his permission, she walked towards the queen's palace.

Claire's arrival made Catherine feel a bit embarrassed. Although she warmly welcomed her, it had only been an hour since they were at odds and she had warned her.

"Brother, Merry Christmas," Claire greeted with a smile, her eyes shining as she looked at Ivan, as if she had forgotten the previous unpleasantness.

"I have good news to tell you," Ivan said to her. "Your brother is going back to take over our family's company, but for me, it's not necessarily good news."

"Thank you for nurturing my brother so well and giving him so many opportunities for development."

"What? Claire also has a brother?" Catherine interjected appropriately to ease the tension between the two, considering they hadn't had much communication before.

Chapter 1682: Reporting the Situation

Claire turned her gaze and smiled gently, "Yes, I have a brother." She completely disregarded past grievances and hoped that the princess could let go of her resentment.

Her response eased Catherine's embarrassment to some extent.

Catherine thought to herself, this girl looks quite smart, she probably won't tell Mr. Marsh about the trouble I caused her, right?

If she did, then that would be really... sigh, how troublesome.

Catherine felt regretful. She had let jealousy cloud her judgment before, but now that she had calmed down, all she wanted was to hold onto Ivan's thigh tightly!

On the other hand, Claire was a novelist. She often created characters, so she could perceive the princess's inner thoughts from her subtle expressions.

The siblings had a cup of tea with the princess and then Ivan bid farewell to her, taking Claire with him.

Throughout the entire encounter, Claire never had a falling out with Catherine. Her attitude remained gentle as if the previous grievances never existed.

This relieved the middle-aged woman to some extent.

Ivan took Claire back to the accommodation arranged by Catherine earlier.

"Mr. Marsh, something happened today that I want to tell you." As soon as they entered the gate, Claire changed her lively and spirited demeanor. She suppressed her smile, and her face suddenly became a

bit heavy.

"Go ahead," Ivan said.

She sighed lightly, "Prince Taylor has been clinging to me. He followed me all the way to the king's palace and even to my study. I explained to him multiple times that I need my own space to study."

Listening to her, Ivan realized that the situation was not ideal, but he didn't interrupt. He just looked at her with a puzzled expression.

Claire continued, "Then he actually had someone bring a table and chair and stayed outside my door to study. Unfortunately, the king found out about it and got very angry. He scolded Prince Taylor and forbade him from coming over again."

As Ivan listened, his brow furrowed slightly. "So, has your relationship with Rowan been exposed?

That's not a good thing."

"Not yet. However, the king knows about my identity and he knows that Rowan and I are in a romantic relationship. So maybe he's trying to protect me and keep Taylor away from me," Claire explained.

"The king knows about your identity? Did you tell him?" Ivan asked.

"It wasn't me," the girl shook her head. "Rowan told him a long time ago, probably hoping that the king could cooperate with us in gathering evidence. That's why I've been having meals with the king recently, even entering his private dining room to obtain food samples again."

"Doesn't that raise suspicions?" Ivan expressed his concern. "And what about Eden?"

"I don't think so, because the king also provided a reasonable explanation for dining with me. It's just that this incident made Catherine jealous," Claire replied.

"Jealous?" Ivan was a bit confused. What's there to be jealous about between generations? What's so tasty about this jealousy? Who is jealous on behalf of whom?

"She had Jolie come and find me, summoning me to her palace. Then she warned me, thinking that I had some improper relationship with the king."

Now that was beyond reason! Ivan furrowed his brow lightly. He entered a contemplative state.

Claire sighed softly again, but then she had a different thought. "Actually, it's okay like this. At least there's no misunderstanding about me and Rowan. It greatly protects him and also benefits our upcoming actions. If my undercover identity is exposed, the culprit will definitely be more vigilant."

"Don't worry, I'll try to give Catherine some information," Ivan came up with an idea. "I'll say that you

and your boyfriend have a stable relationship, that you're each other's first love, and that you'll be getting married soon."

Claire also thought about the scene where she had a chance encounter with Rowan today.

She desperately wanted to see him, even if it was just for five minutes. She had something to explain to him.

Chapter 1683: Alleviating Lovesickness

"He knows too?" Ivan was surprised. "Does he also suspect you and his father?"

"People in love have strong possessiveness and are often irrational," that was her opinion. She wrote romance novels, so she understood.

Claire said, "Of course, he won't suspect me and his dad, but I can't guarantee he won't suspect me and Tyler."

Tyler, in this way, always made her a little worried.

"Mr. Marsh, I write novels frequently, and novels derive from life. If we don't resolve this misunderstanding in a timely manner, it really affects the relationship between two people. He can't focus on his research, and I won't be happy either."

"Alright," Ivan agreed. "This matter is simple. I will handle it." However, he needed to come up with a good plan that could avoid suspicion, proceed smoothly, and buy enough time.

Soon, news of Ivan giving sculptures to Prince Lu Yi and Prince Tyler spread within the royal palace, mainly due to Catherine's boasting.

She emphasized that the Marsh Group had further developed its relationship with the Lu Layeka royal family and would continue to do so in the long term.

Meanwhile, in Rowan's palace.

He locked himself in the spacious and bright study on the upper floor, taking out all the tools from the box.

He was conducting serious experiments, and the research results were about to come out. He was nervous and excited.

Afraid that it was poisonous, yet afraid that it wasn't.

If it was non-toxic, it meant the killer wasn't planning to strike again, and finding them would be even more difficult than reaching the sky.

As he took out the litmus paper, dabbed it with some liquid, and stared intently, eagerly observing...

Five minutes passed in this anxious and uneasy state of mind.

He watched as the white litmus paper gradually turned black, and Rowan's heart sank along with it.

The food in the kitchen was not poisoned, but the food served on the table was.

Therefore, during this process, everyone who had contact with the food became a suspect.

At the same time, he felt deeply saddened.

His father's health was already in a very precarious state. The royal physician had pronounced his life

to be in its final countdown, yet this heartless and insane killer didn't intend to spare him!

Rowan clenched his fists, hating himself for not coming back sooner. He crushed the litmus paper with

his fingernails embedded in his palm. The hatred in his heart was overwhelming!

If the culprit was discovered, Rowan would execute them according to the law!

Gradually, he calmed himself down a bit.

But when he thought about Tyler's entanglement with Claire, about his master being pregnant, and Mr.

Marsh coming all the way here to help, Rowan felt extremely guilty.

It seemed that none of the people he cared about were well-protected.

What was going on between Claire and Tyler?

Why were they talking and laughing? Why did he even put his arm around her shoulder?

At this moment, Rowan felt a bit restless, not knowing that this feeling was jealousy.

Soon, the doorbell rang.

He forcefully pulled back his thoughts, suppressed his emotions, and calmly organized everything on the table before placing them neatly in the cabinet.

Only then did he open the door. "What is it?" he asked indifferently.

He had told the servants that as long as the study door was locked, he was studying seriously, and no one should disturb him, even if it was mealtime.

"Sorry, Your Highness," the servant lowered her head, afraid that he would blame her. She apologized sincerely, "Mr. Marsh has come, and he's accompanied by Miss Claire."

Rowan's expression eased, and he felt a bit of anticipation. He continued to listen to her explanation.

"Miss Claire wants to see your sculptures. I heard she's been interested in learning painting recently."

The servant explained, "Although Prince Tyler also has these sculptures, Mr. Marsh mentioned that she

is someone with a boyfriend, and with Prince Tyler developing feelings for her, it's not convenient for

Miss Claire to go to his place. So she could only come here to disturb you."

Rowan understood. He would give them some time alone to alleviate their lovesickness.

He casually said, "Then let her come up." He was very happy, but he couldn't let the servant see it.

Chapter 1684: I'm Not Afraid of Danger

"Yes," the servant also breathed a sigh of relief. After all, Mr. Marsh was a prominent figure. With both

sides settled, she turned and left with peace of mind.

Rowan glanced at her receding figure and left the study door slightly ajar.

But he couldn't help but recall the intimate and cheerful moments between Claire and Taylor, which

stabbed at his heart.

It was difficult for him to even utter a word to her now, while Taylor could freely get close to her.

Rowan loved her deeply, but recently, love had become a bit of a hardship for him.

But wasn't Claire the same? A young girl who wrote novels, with a mind as delicate as sand.

Soon, the servant led Claire upstairs.

Meanwhile, Ivan sat downstairs, waiting. The palace was spacious and bright, and he would handle

everything here, even if Catherine arrived unexpectedly.

He had a feeling that Rowan's place was being monitored.

Although the prince didn't come down to greet him, the servants had prepared tea and exquisite pastries for Ivan.

Following the servant, Claire made her way up the stairs. Her heart felt complicated, and as she turned the corner of the staircase, her heartbeat suddenly accelerated, pounding heavily.

She really missed him, but now that she saw him, a thousand words swirled in her mind, and she didn't know which one to say first.

"Miss Claire, please." The servant bowed respectfully at the door and then knocked on the slightly ajar room door, reporting with a slightly louder voice, "Prince, Miss Claire has arrived."

"Come in."

Rowan's familiar voice came from inside the room. Claire softly thanked the servant, "Thank you," and then withdrew her gaze as she gently pushed open the door.

She took a step inside.

Entering his study for the first time, Claire's emotions were incredibly complex. The moment the door

opened, the gazes of these lovers collided.

She stopped in her tracks, reached out, and gently closed the door.

Standing three meters away from Rowan, she stared at each other like this. Suddenly, her nose tingled, and her crystal tears began to fall.

Rowan's chest tightened, and he quickly walked towards her. As he locked the door with one hand, the other arm wrapped around her, and at the same time, his lips pressed against hers.

His familiar scent, which belonged to him, descended directly onto her. Claire reached her hand around his waist, holding him tightly, responding to his kiss. Suddenly, she had an urge to cry.

Rowan's kiss was tender, full of deep affection and longing.

This kiss lasted for a full three minutes...

Claire's mind cleared, and she worried that time would not be enough, afraid that Catherine would rush over as soon as she found out.

So, she gently pushed him away.

"Claire." Rowan embraced her tightly, "I missed you so much." In his mind, flashes of Taylor embracing

her shoulders continued to appear.

"I'm sorry, Yi." Claire felt his warmth, listened to his heartbeat, and felt deeply distressed. "Did you hear about Taylor today?"

"Yeah." He didn't inquire in detail; he still unconditionally believed in her, although he was jealous.

But if she was willing to tell him, he was also willing to listen.

"There's nothing between me and him." Claire held him tightly. "I've told Taylor many times that I have a boyfriend."

On this point, he believed her.

"Taylor probably always got whatever he wanted from a young age, so he doesn't care about my relationship status. He feels superior."

"The trouble he caused you." Rowan blamed himself. "I didn't take good care of you and got you involved in a dangerous whirlpool."

"No." She lifted her gaze from his embrace, her teary eyes filled with determination. "I want to be with you. I'm not afraid of danger!"

Chapter 1685: Catherine's Fear

Claire was not a romantic person. She simply fell deeply in love with someone and was willing to give up everything, even her own life, for him.

"You look exhausted..." She gently held his face in her hands, noticing the dullness in his complexion and the stubble on his chin.

She felt genuine heartache, her heart on the verge of breaking.

"Promise me that you'll take care of yourself, okay?" Claire looked at him with sadness, her crystalline tears rolling down once again.

Rowan couldn't bear to see her cry. He gently cupped her face and lovingly kissed away the tears that welled up in her eyes.

Writers are naturally empathetic, kind-hearted, and always considerate of others. They are more sensitive than others and have a tender exterior.

Sometimes they can feel upset for a long time just by seeing a cat shedding fur...

Rowan's kiss gradually warmed Claire's body and also warmed his heart.

Claire stood on her tiptoes and took the initiative to kiss his chin, kissing away the prickly stubble... and then his lips.

The two embraced and kissed each other once again, their hearts drawing closer.

Meanwhile, in Catherine's palace, one of her subordinates approached her and whispered something in her ear.

Catherine furrowed her brow upon hearing it, then waved her hand at him.

The subordinate bowed and turned to leave.

Jolie looked at her and asked, "Your Highness, what's wrong?"

Catherine replied, "Mr. Marsh took Miss Claire to see Louis, and they haven't come out for twenty minutes."

Jolie pondered for a moment and guessed, "Could they be having tea? After all, the prince extended an invitation."

Catherine thought to herself that if these twenty minutes were extraordinary, then they must have a lot to discuss. This woman seemed inexplicably anxious.

"No, Mr. Marsh must not be swayed by Louis. Let's go and see for ourselves!" Catherine couldn't contain her impatience and took quick strides toward the door.

"Your Highness!" Jolie, the voice of reason, hurriedly caught up with her. "How will you explain your sudden visit? Going there without a valid reason will raise suspicions! How do you plan to handle it?"

"... " Catherine stopped in her tracks. Jolie had a point, but she felt a deep sense of discontent and wanted to see the situation for herself.

She couldn't let Louis win over Mr. Marsh!

Jolie stood by her side and reminded her, "Your Highness, if you go, Prince Louis will suspect you of sending someone to spy on him. Given the current situation, it's better not to offend him."

"... " Catherine turned her gaze, feeling frustrated, and asked, "So what should we do now? Let them have a pleasant conversation? Louis may seem like someone who only cares about superficial matters, but he is definitely not a fool."

"I also think he is inscrutable," Jolie pondered. "He's too calm."

Catherine's eyes turned fierce, her tone icy. "In any case, the throne must never fall into his hands."

"Let's go see the king now," Jolie suggested. "It's been a while since you last visited."

The woman finally calmed her emotions a bit and let out a sigh. "Let's go." She took a step forward.

Jolie followed behind.

Meanwhile, in the king's palace.

The bedroom was incredibly spacious, with extravagant decorations and gilded splendor everywhere.

Exquisite sculptures were displayed on the showcase, and the enormous oil paintings were all masterpieces.

On the grand bed, the king struggled to prop himself up, coughing violently. Several servants attended to him anxiously.

He had just given an order not to call a doctor.

The servants could only support him, hold a handkerchief for him, and provide a spittoon. Everyone was filled with anxiety.

"Cough... cough!" The king felt like his lungs were about to be coughed out. Veins bulged on his forehead, and even breathing became difficult.

Chapter 1686: The King's Critical Condition

At the same time, a severe pain engulfed his entire body, causing his gaze to become unfocused.

"Your Majesty! Please let me inform the royal physician!" The servant was in a panic, tears streaming down their face. "You can't hold on much longer! This is very dangerous!"

The king continued to cough violently, waving his hand dismissively, refusing their request.

The servants were extremely anxious. If something happened to the king, and they hadn't even notified a doctor, it would be an unbearable guilt to bear!

The king knew that Louis was conducting research, and he didn't want to disturb Louis. He believed that he wasn't about to die immediately and could hold on a bit longer.

The food was taken away, and soon there would be results from the research. After all, Rowan was a genius doctor.

"Cough... cough..." The king clutched his chest, trying his best to restrain himself and calm down as waves of excruciating pain surged through him.

"Your Majesty!!" The sight made the servants kneel down with a thud, their hearts filled with fear.

"Ah...!" The servant holding the handkerchief saw the bloodstains on the pristine fabric, and her heart tightened. "Your Majesty! You're coughing up blood!"

This was a dangerous sign! Notifying a doctor was urgent.

The servant immediately stood up, going against orders, and shouted, "Quick! Inform the royal

physician! Call for a doctor!"

Another servant didn't hesitate, risking blame, and hurriedly rushed out of the palace!

She had to make a call in the hall!

Meanwhile, the king, amidst the violent coughing, had no way to stop it. His lips turned purple, and his body trembled uncontrollably.

The servants were at a loss, standing by the bed, almost losing their minds.

The king gasped for breath, feeling his body deteriorating.

His health had been stable until recently, and he didn't know why it suddenly worsened.

He wasn't afraid of death, but he worried about the struggle for the throne and Louis's situation.

It was strange that he wasn't worried about Taylor at all, not even a bit.

The servant rushed back to the hall, trembling as she picked up the landline phone and quickly called the royal physician, urgently explaining the situation.

Soon, the royal physician was on his way, and the Arabian doctor, upon hearing the news, hurried over with a medical kit, racing towards the king's palace!

Meanwhile, Catherine and Jolie were about to arrive.

News of the king's critical condition spread throughout the entire royal family, and everyone whispered if he would make it through the day.

This news quickly reached Rowan's palace, and Ivan and Claire also learned about it, rushing over with great anxiety!

Rowan discreetly brought along the life-saving potion!

Catherine, accompanied by Jolie, had originally planned to visit the king, so they were the first to arrive.

As soon as they entered the gate, they heard the dreadful news.

Catherine's face changed, and she hurriedly ran inside!

"Berti!! What happened?! How did this happen all of a sudden?!" She anxiously rushed to his bedside.

"Your Highness!" The servants all knelt down.

Catherine sat at the edge of the bed and held onto him. "Why did the situation suddenly worsen?" She

angrily shouted, "Where are the doctors?! Why weren't they notified? Where are Eden and Arthur?!"

The king could feel her heightened emotions and grabbed her wrist. "I'm fine..." Amidst the coughing,

he whispered.

He tried to calm himself down, not wanting to worry everyone.

Soon, Eden and Arthur arrived, shocked and concerned by the scene they witnessed.

The royal physician arrived, and so did the Arabian doctor. Everyone was rushing to find the most effective medicine.

Rowan almost ran all the way here!

Just as the royal physician prepared the medicine and warm water, intending to administer it to the king, Rowan appeared at the door--

"I have sour plum soup here! Don't use the medicine for now!"

Chapter 1687: Could it get any worse?

Everyone turned their heads when they heard the sound. They saw Prince Louis rushing in, holding a bottle!

He made a beeline for the bedside, saying "Let me through!"

The Arabian doctor voluntarily stepped aside, and the royal physician also moved to the side, but he was full of worry. "Prince! The King is coughing so badly, yet you let him drink sour plum soup? It could be fatal! He should take medicine immediately!"

But Rowan did not care about all that. He sat down at the bedside, propped up his father, and quickly opened the medicine bottle!

He brought the bottle to his father's purple lips.

The King was very cooperative. His whole body trembled, but he knew this was medicine, and he also had a hunch that he should trust his son.

"Louis!!" Catherine was anxious. She rushed forward and grabbed Rowan's arm forcefully, trying to pull him away. "This is not the time to show your filial piety! What on earth are you trying to do?! Do you want the King to die?!"

Rowan's brow furrowed as he steadied himself with all his might, insisting on feeding his father the medicine!

The King's lips trembled. He wanted to cooperate but was a little weak. Still, he managed to drink some.

"Louis! Get away from him! This is murder!!" Catherine was anxious and angry.

Because she had pulled quite forcefully, some of the precious medicine splashed onto the blanket. This made Rowan very angry too. He was fuming and wished he could slap her!

Seeing that the King had indeed drunk the stuff, Catherine became even more anxious. As she pulled, she looked around pleadingly for help. "Quick! He's trying to kill the King! Drag him away! He's the murderer!!"

Murderer?

That word made Rowan's heart skip a beat. He had been looking for the murderer all this time, yet that word slipped so easily from her mouth.

The servants and guards were conflicted, unsure of what to do. The King was willing to drink, and the one feeding him was the Prince. The one shouting to stop them was the Queen Consort. They were all people one could not defy, so for a moment the servants did not know what to do.

Just then, Ivan and Claire rushed to the doorway and saw this tug-of-war!

"What are you doing, Queen Consort?" Claire shrieked.

Ivan immediately rushed over to stop her. "Let go!" And forcefully pulled Catherine away!

By this time, Rowan had also fed the King the right dosage of medicine. He quickly capped the bottle and tucked it back into his pocket, then gently laid the King back down.

Father and son's eyes met, conveying thousands of unspoken words.

After settling his father down, Rowan slowly stood up, his powerful aura apparent as he told the two doctors, "From now on, do not feed any other medicine to my father. Just let him rest."

He did not need to test the medicine for poison anymore. He had confirmed it was in the food. By eliminating a few suspects, he could identify the culprit and trace it back to the mastermind.

"Louis!" Catherine angrily pointed at him. "Are you trying to kill your own father? So you can inherit the throne?!"

Her words were grating to hear, and made Rowan's brow furrow slightly.

"You know very well he's critically ill! Yet you won't let him take medicine?! I see you have ulterior motives!" Catherine shrieked at him uncontrollably. This was the first time she had openly clashed with him.

Rowan was accused to his face, and his actions had undoubtedly raised doubts among many.

At this moment, the weakened King could not speak, but he was very clear-minded as he gasped for breath with his mouth wide open.

Rowan slowly turned to look at Catherine, his eyes flashing sharply.

That cold gleam made her flinch. She did not dare confront him directly anymore and kept quiet.

"This sour plum soup is a folk remedy," Rowan told her, and everyone present. "Since eating medicine for so long has shown no effect, let's try this from now on!"

"Do you have any basis for this?" Iden asked in a deep voice. "What if it has the opposite effect?"

"Could it get any worse than now?" Rowan looked at him expressionlessly, just short of saying they all knew very well.

The King was barely hanging on.

Uncle and nephew's eyes met, a strange aura swirling between them as both kept expressionless faces.

Chapter 1688: Speaking as if Giving Last Instructions

After a while, Rowan withdrew his gaze. He directly said to the royal physician beside him, "Royal physician, I have been giving you opportunities to treat my father all this time, but there has been no good effect. So starting today, your job as my father's attending physician ends here."

He was going to start the mission to save his father and send away unrelated people.

The royal physician was disgraced, yet unable to refute, because what Prince Louis said was the truth.

"Louis!" Catherine was emotionally agitated, even hysterical. "Are you just going to watch your father die like this?! You don't even need a doctor anymore?! He's Lu Layeka's royal physician! And you're denying him just like that? He's not been idle all these years! It's just the king's condition is too serious!"

Rowan was really annoyed by this woman! She was like a pig brain, although he didn't think Catherine had the intelligence to commit the crime, so he had already ruled out the possibility that she was the murderer.

So Rowan looked at her again, his eyes also becoming sharp, "No one hopes for his death more than you. The sooner my father dies, the more beneficial for you, because your power remains, while I just got back alone."

Catherine was confused when she heard this. What did he mean by that? How could he say such things in front of so many people?

The king also heard it. He smelled the scent of war, so he endured the pain in his body and tried to get up to resolve everything.

Because he least hoped to see these two forces in opposition, they were both his sons, the palm and

the back of a hand were all flesh.

"Louis! Don't make wild accusations!" Catherine was very angry. She felt extremely wronged!

And being accused by him in front of so many people, she had to explain herself clearly, "The king and

I have a stable relationship! I have always been sincere to him! I hope he lives to a hundred!"

Rowan didn't want to argue with her at all, because such an argument was meaningless.

At this time, the king had already struggled to get up, and two servants hurriedly reached out to support

him, "Your Majesty!" attracting everyone's attention.

"Father!"

"Dear!"

Rowan and Catherine almost rushed to the bedside to support the king at the same time. They were

both very nervous and had sincere love for him.

The king was in a particularly bad state at this time. After a violent coughing fit, the medicine he had

just taken had not yet taken effect.

"Don't argue..." His voice was weak as he gasped for breath with a hand on his chest.

Ivan and Claire were also worried, this medicine had not undergone clinical trials. Everyone was just

unconditionally believing in Jennifer and looking forward to a miracle happening.

The king's face was ashen, but his lips were terribly purple. "You must... get along... in harmony." He clenched his fists, then slowly turned his eyes, glancing lightly over everyone.

The servants and guards knelt down, and everyone was very apprehensive. Could this be his last instructions?

Would there be a change of monarch? Would a new king take the throne?

"Dear, what do you want to say? Don't rush, take your time, I don't want to oppose him, it's just that what he said earlier was too much. He slandered me!" Catherine advised him anxiously. She was really worried and also wanted to defend herself again, hoping not to be misunderstood.

The king nodded. With so many years of feelings, he could feel it.

"I may... not have much time left." The king said with difficulty. Cold sweat had soaked his black hair.

"Louis... Louis has been away... I hope he... can accompany me... in my final days."

Catherine was jealous, but she could not defy the king's meaning, let alone he was a dying man!

Unconsciously, there were some tears in Rowan's eyes, which had also turned somewhat red. He

regretted so much not coming back sooner.

Ivan's gaze fell on Rowan, observing his expression.

Chapter 1689: Primogeniture

"I... I want to leave quietly, to stop seeking medical treatment," the king said resignedly and weakly,

making his wishes very clear.

Catherine's heart ached, filled with reluctance and sorrowful tears welled up in her eyes.

She saw the king clutch the bedsheet, his sweat gradually soaking through it, and beads of sweat

dotted his forehead...

She heard him say with difficulty, "I know my own body very well... It's just... the matter of succession, I

will make it clear here, it must follow primogeniture, Louis should take over when I leave, the day I

depart will be the day he assumes the throne."

Catherine's heart thudded heavily, her heart instantly cooled halfway, but at a time like this, she could

not utter a word.

After all, the king was critically ill, and that rascal Tylor was nowhere to be found.

Ivan stood ramrod straight, observing the king's condition with his keenest sense, his gaze fixed on

Ethan.

At this moment Ethan's thoughts were fully on the king, standing vigil at his bedside, also with a tense and worried look.

But in Ivan's eyes, this merely looked like he was closely observing the king's condition.

When he heard about the succession, Ivan noticed Ethan's expression was a bit odd. At this point, he had made a judgement in his mind.

"I want to rest now," a chill came over the king's chest, he sighed, his complexion still pale, his breath still weak, "Just let Louis accompany me through the final moments of my life."

His tone was full of regret, as if this was his only wish.

Rowan looked at his father with great sorrow, feeling like a thousand-pound boulder weighed down his heart. He watched as Catherine gently helped his father lie back down, and finally let go of his father's hand.

The king laid down and opened his eyes, looking directly at his son by the bedside. His voice was weak, "Louis, move your personal belongings over, live here starting today, we've missed out on... so many years, just... keep me company for the final stretch of my life."

Every word from his father felt like a needle pricking Rowan's heart, the pain so distinct.

In the opulent bedroom, the air was heavy with grief, the atmosphere of impending separation by death.

The servants kneeled and wept, stifling their cries.

The scene also greatly moved Claire, she felt very distressed, tears welling up as she held the antidote, but the king's current condition... it was uncertain how long he could endure.

"Everyone withdraw, only Louis remains..." the king said softly, breathing with difficulty as he gave the order, "I wish to be alone."

Catherine was envious and unwilling, but seeing the king's state now, she didn't have the heart to make things difficult. In fact, she wanted to stay as well.

She thought, Tylor was also his son, why keep only Louis by his side? He didn't even mention Tylor, and directly announced the succession.

Catherine was resentful.

At this time, Ivan pulled Claire along as he strode out. Claire's worried gaze lingered on Rowan before

she followed Ivan's steps out.

At this moment her heart was filled with complex emotions.

Then the servants and guards also got up one by one and left the king's bedchamber in utmost grief.

Lying in the bed, the king had his eyes closed weakly, breathing with his mouth open, no longer speaking, just silently listening to the footsteps fading away.

Ethan and Arthur also went out, the entire room suddenly quieted down.

Catherine still had not left, standing by the bed with tears in her eyes, her nose tingling, vision blurred.

"Bertie..." She was very distressed, also very worried that if he passed, her own situation... would surely become extremely difficult.

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"Get out," the king repeated softly. He did not reject or disdain her. After all, their marriage had been decent over the years.

He did not want to talk much now, as it took too much energy. "When it's time to settle my affairs, I will... I will notify you all to come back. I want some peace and quiet these days."

His tone contained helplessness and pleading.

"Alright," Catherine said as tears rolled down her face. She glanced at Rowan's profile, then slowly turned around and left sorrowfully.

Almost everyone was blinded by the illusion that the king wanted to chat with Prince Louis, whom he had not seen for years, during the final moments of his life.

But that was not the case. The king wanted to hand over duties to him and cooperate with his medication. No matter who it was, there was an innate will to survive.

Hearing Catherine's footsteps fade away and the door close, the room became completely quiet. It was about a minute before the king slowly opened his eyes again. He was still weak, but the pain had subsided significantly.

What he saw was his son sitting on the edge of the bed. He had grown tall and matured into a handsome adult. The king sighed at how time flew.

Father and son's gazes converged and lingered... in silence.

Rowan's eyes brimmed with tears and his heart ached as if torn. Regret, anxiety, impatience... various complex emotions intertwined in his heart.

"Father, I'm sorry..."

"Those words are meaningless... don't say any more," the king interrupted.

"You must persevere and have a strong will to survive," Rowan said encouragingly. "I already have the antidote, although there is only one bottle. But I will figure out the second bottle very soon."

"Who do you think... the culprit is?" The king was really weak and had to pause to catch his breath even to say a complete sentence.

Rowan thought for a moment. He was actually a very composed person. Without solid evidence, he did not want to make rash judgments.

"Father, what do you think?" Rowan looked at him, wanting to hear his assessment instead. He felt the king had something to say.

Perhaps it was the 'sour plum soup' taking effect. The king's complexion had improved significantly and his breathing had stabilized quite a bit.

He did not name anyone either, only saying, "It can't be Catherine. She wouldn't..." This was his intuition after living with his wife for so many years.

He also said, "It can't be Taylor either. Although impulsive, Taylor is kind at heart. He has been spoiled

since childhood. Even if you didn't come back, I would not leave Lu Layeka to him."

"So... assuming I don't make it, who are you planning to pass the throne to?" Rowan asked.

Several faces flashed through the king's mind and he sighed softly, "There are no ifs, heaven has eyes.

You came back."

"..." Rowan actually had no interest in the throne and did not understand governance. Currently, he only

had one simple wish-for his father to recover.

Other than doing his best, this wish was also somewhat up to fate.

"Louis, no matter whether I can make it through this or not, one day I will have to go first eventually."

As a father, he held his son's hand and instructed, "Although you and Taylor are not blood brothers, you

share half the same blood..."

As he spoke, the king's throat choked up a little as well. His eyes also brimmed with tears. "We are of

the same root."

The silent Rowan shed a tear. "I know. I won't make things difficult for him." He looked quite calm.

"You are more steady by nature and have had your own views since young. You can take on important

tasks. I hope you can be more forgiving of him." The king was settling his last wishes, it seemed.

"Alright," Rowan agreed. Even without his father's request, he would not harm anyone. He would do his best to reconcile all these relationships and properly settle the mother and son.