

27. Bridget

Bridget embarked on a goodwill tour across Eldorra with her team, including a bodyguard named Rhys, to reconnect with her future subjects and understand their concerns. Despite holding no legislative power, she promised a struggling dairy farmer, Ida, that she would ensure the voices of Eldorrans like her were heard in Parliament. This impulsive promise worried her team, who feared complicating relations with Parliament, but Bridget insisted, showing her commitment to her future role as queen.

Throughout the tour, Bridget felt more fulfilled engaging with locals than attending official palace events, finding purpose beyond the ceremonial aspects of her position. She discovered issues like the struggling dairy industry firsthand, offering a direct line of communication to herself in an attempt to help.

Meanwhile, a deep and complicated connection developed between Bridget and Rhys. Despite Rhys's initial animosity toward Eldorra—rooted in personal pain and a tragic past mission that soured him on the country—his protectiveness and affection for Bridget grew. Their mutual attraction culminated in a highly charged encounter outside Bridget's room, during which the intensity of their feelings and desires became impossible to ignore. Rhys revealed deep-seated resentment toward Eldorra tied to personal loss and a disastrous military operation, adding complexity to his character.

Rhys's struggle with his feelings for Bridget and his past experiences in Eldorra highlighted his emotional depth. Their relationship reached a turning point late one night, indicating a shift from professional boundaries to personal involvement, fraught with potential repercussions for both their futures and responsibilities.

The chapter weaves themes of duty, personal growth, and forbidden romance, depicting Bridget's evolution from a reluctant heir to a proactive figure keen on making real changes. It sets the stage for further development in Bridget's journey towards leadership and the inevitable challenges she and Rhys will face as they navigate their burgeoning relationship against the backdrop of royal expectations and personal demons.