

Coronation on Hapes

The time had come for the ceremony. High Prince James Stratus stood in full ceremonial dress uniform, not far different from that of a Grand Admiral, though with obvious distinctions. A Hapan woman announcer was heard over the entire chamber.

**"Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome, His Royal Highness, High Prince James Stratus, of the Royal House Stratus, and Supreme Ruler of the Imperial Republic."**

The audience clapped and stood, welcoming their High Prince. It was hard to tell if their sincerity was genuine or if it was all for show. He suspected it was mostly the latter. He stood up from his high seat and moved to the center. The state dinner had just finished. Sitting next to him was the Princess Phoenix and her mother Layha. The last time that Layha and James had been together at such a public occasion and working together was the changing of the guard ceremony when she returned the Throne to James, and prior to that when he had handed her the reigns of the Imperial Republic for five years. Now she was once again yielding authority already gone to a new ruler on Hapes, and once again under the supervision of the High Prince. He turned to address the audience. It was being broadcasted throughout not just all of the Hapes Cluster, but throughout the Imperial Republic, and the galaxy beyond.

**"This is a historic event for all. The Hapes Consortium has had many profound Queen Mothers in the past, and today we will witness that calling fall on the shoulders of new and great Queen Mother. We are indeed honored today by the presence of former Queen Mother and Executor Layha Solo-Centurion, who is here to show her support of this event. We are also honored by the many esteemed diplomats, representatives, and leaders of the Hapes Consortium and the Imperial Republic. This occasion not only marks the dawn of a new ruler for Hapes, but also marks the re-establishment of a new treaty. Twenty six years ago Hapes entered into a treaty with the Imperial Republic, at the time of its establishment and inauguration. In that treaty Hapes became a member of the Imperial Republic. Over the years we have enjoyed peace and good relationships between the Imperial Republic and the Hapes Consortium. In recent years, however, those relationships have faltered and that peace shattered. Many Hapan citizens became dissatisfied with the arrangement, and decided to begin the withdrawal process. After much deliberation and diplomacy, the Imperial Republic has reached a new agreement with the government of Hapes. A treaty was signed, and the Hapes Consortium once again became a member of the Imperial Republic, this time a Class B member with the ability to maintain a desired level of Sovereignty. The Charter of the Imperial Republic clearly outlines the special status of Class B membership and the authority delegated to its members to govern themselves. While Hapes and its Queen Mother shall henceforth be under my reign, she will be independent in all other aspects including home defense, security, governance, statutes, trade, etc. The leaders of the Hapan Consortium believe this treaty to be satisfactory to their citizens and have signed in agreement. It shall also be one of the first official acts that your new Queen Mother shall take, of her own free will, of course."**

He turned to the Princess and acknowledged her. **"Princess Phoenix Solo-Katarn."**

The Royal Princess, wearing a beautiful Hapan hand-made dress, moved directly next to the Supreme Ruler and bowed. She was quite the sight. She carried the beauty that he remembered in her mother. **"Yes my Lord?"**

The High Prince was momentarily taken aback by how stunning and profound she was. She would indeed make a perfect Queen. **"Are you prepared to take on this high calling and position, and the Oath of Office as required by Hapan and Imperial Republic law?"**

She cleared her throat and remained calm and majestic. **"I am, Your Majesty."**

**"Very well. Raise your right hand."** The High Prince raised his right hand at the same time, and administered the oath. She repeated his every word.

**"I, Phoenix Solo-Katarn, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Charter of the Imperial Republic (as it pertains to the Hapes Cluster) against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, that I will protect and defend the Sovereignty of the House Stratus and the Imperial Republic. I solemnly swear to protect and defend the Hapes Cluster and all its people, serve as Queen Mother of Hapes and fulfill the obligations charged to me with this office, and those of the Imperial Republic, and promise to uphold peace and stability between Hapes and the Imperial Republic, and that I will serve Hapes with all of my will and strength until my last. I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter."**

As the Princess repeated these words, tears rolled down the eyes of many, in joy, in sadness, and of pride. The High Prince drew a ceremonial sword hanging at his waist, and the Princess bowed down on her knees. He moved the sword in ceremonial fashion on her shoulders, back, and head.

**"Princess Phoenix Solo-Katarn, having sworn and oath to me, the Imperial Republic, and the people of Hapes; I, High Prince James Stratus, by the authority invested in me by Royal Family and Throne of the Imperial Republic, I hereby pronounce you Queen Mother of Hapes, and invest in you all the authority entitled you by virtue of the office of which you now possess, and I do so in front of these many great and noble witnesses representing the Royal House Stratus, the Government and Ministry of Defense of the Imperial Republic, the Nobility and Government of Hapes, and the many witnesses of this great Hapes Consortium, the first day in the 26th Year since the formation of the Imperial Republic. "**

The audience cheered, and the High Prince placed a crown on the head of the new Queen Mother. She stood and he offered a polite bow, while others all around stood and bowed, many on their knees, at their new Queen Mother.

**"Congratulations, Your Majesty. All hail Queen Mother Phoenix! Long lived the Queen!"** The High Prince shouted and led the crowd in celebration.

The audience shouted the same, and there ceremony was complete.