

## **FeralHeart Chapter 10 - Chapter 10**

### **Chapter 10: Chapter 10**

Epione held Deimos' hand and stood up and walked out of the room, pulling her along.

Deimos shot a look at the sleeping figure of Mars and stuttered, "B-but... what about..."

"Oh? Him? Don't worry your pretty little head over him. He's a big boy, he'll be just fine... and besides, the sedative I gave him will keep him under for some time yet."

When she passed by Phobos, she grabbed her hand too and pulled her along.

The trio walked down the corridor and reached her shared bedroom with Mars' father.

Unlocking the door, Epione invited the three of them into her boudoir where she set about changing out of her sweaty clothes.

She came back in a fresh night gown carrying a plain looking iron box and a tray with some snacks and three glasses of iced lemonade. Setting down the box and the tray on the bed and sitting cross-legged beside it, she invited the two of them over to join her.

When the three of them were seated on the bed in a rough triangle, she leant in conspiratorially and asked, "Want to know how I met your father-in-law?"

Phobos and Deimos looked at each other then back at her and nodded.

"Well, since I have the lovely excuse of my son's illness to skip work and both of you have been given the day off due to the circumstances, I may as well tell you our story."

She turned to Deimos. "I think it will put you at ease."

"Just like you, ours was an arranged marriage with me being stuck into your father's room right after I cut my first scarlet dragon.

"We got along well enough and despite his stoic façade, he was a bomb in bed so, yes I quite satisfied with the oaf. That is until he started exercising his martial arts and training like crazy, neglecting me.

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"You see, with my rare mutation of light system magic that gave me healing powers, I was a bit of the spoiled clan princess and I wasn't held to the same standards as the other girls. I was more playful and didn't like training all that much.

"I knew that there was pressure on him to perform in order to maintain his position of the heir for the position of Clan Head but he was too excessive, sometimes coming back to our room too exhausted to even satisfy me sexually.

"So, we started falling out little by little. Thankfully, before things could get really messy, I turned Feral.

"I might have a gift for healing, but that only means that I know just where to cut. I was strong but he was stronger. All his training wasn't just for show. He handled me all by himself despite me slashing his stomach open."

She took a sip of the lemonade and continued with a wistful expression on her face.

"Your father-in-law has a one-track mind. He subdued me so he had to get contracted with me. Everything else came later. So, the fool wrapped me up in some blankets and carried me to the door of the clan Tamer with his intestines hanging out and with that box in his hand." She said, pointing at the plain iron box.

"Believe you me, the Tamer was utterly shocked when he opened the door in the middle of the night, just to have him collapse after pushing the box into his hand."

Her eyes glittered at the memory.

"I almost lost him that day. If I hadn't regained consciousness then and immediately started treating him, he might have died.

"Do you know what was in that box? Money. Money, he had been saving to have the Tamer tattoo the best mark on me that he could. A Tamer isn't just a notary official for marriages... he is also an artist. Each contract marking is a work of art that will follow a relationship throughout its duration. The mark designs of many kings and queens have been transcribed onto paper and sold as artwork for sky high prices. So, hiring a Tamer's best services is expensive.

"The fool had been forgoing his resources and saving the money by substituting the expensive medication with extra training. That was why he was always busy at that time. When I saw that box full of cash, my brains went blank.

"Then I had the Tamer start with the marking as I continued his treatment. I was determined that even if he were to die that night, he would die my husband. Fortunately, he lived and I could bring Mars into the world so he could meet you two lovely ladies. He still has that scar."

She turned to Deimos.

"Both father and son are thorough fools, aren't they? More concerned about the contract rather than bleeding out due to their wounds."

She reached out with her hands and held on to both Deimos and Phobos' hands.

"I'm entrusting him to you both. Keep him safe for me. Yeah?"

The both of them could only nod.

Deimos was still a bit nervous. She asked, "M-master nearly died... will he forgive me?"

"Master, huh? Of course, he will. It's his good fortune to have a cute girl like you call him that."

She smiled and clapped her hands. "Anyway... want to hear another story? This is about after I learnt that I was incapable of giving birth after I had Mars. Husband's brother was attacking him politically using the angle that Hominum were combat weak and hence not suitable to succeed him as the Clan Head.

"Imagine how happy they were when they learnt that I couldn't conceive anymore."

She smiled and ran a tongue over her canines. Deimos and Phobos shuddered. Sometimes, Epione could be really scary.

She shook her head self-depreciatingly, "I thought I was holding him back and even told him such. Your father-in-law, he isn't good with words. He just kept telling me that it wasn't my fault... so, of course I'll think it is. It got to the point that our marking started to fade.

"You know that the stronger the bond, the deeper the marking and the more you dislike the partner, the more it fades. If you absolutely hate him, it will vanish. It was my insecurity that made it fade but in my muddled state I started to think he was starting to hate me."

She sighed with a fond smile.

"Guess what he did." She opened up the box and brought out three yellowing pieces of paper.

The first piece of paper had rough line drawings of a cat in various poses.

The second piece had more detailed renditions of the same cat in various states.

The third piece had a beautiful sketch of the face of the cat in great detail.

"I loved art from a young age... so right after our engagement had been decided, he took up drawing. Whenever he got time he would practice sketching my Feral form."

It was then that Phobos and Deimos realized that the cat in the picture was Epione's Feral form.

"After eight whole years from the age of sixteen to twenty-two, he had finally perfected his craft to the point that he could show it to me.

"He planned for the last sketch to be my birthday present... but I just had to go and doubt him, didn't I? Well, after that, I showed him just how thankful I could be. In fact, I was so thankful that the people in the neighbouring rooms had difficulty sleeping that night."

She winked at the two girls and they blushed. She took another sip of the lemonade before continuing.

"According to protocol, both of you girls should be staying with your parents till you awaken."

Turning to Deimos, she said, "In your case, since your parents passed away during military service and your grandfather severed his ties to you after you were betrothed to Mars, you should be staying with us in our capacity as the parents of your spouse.

"We would have been easily able to handle you, even as a Feral... but we think that the bonds you form by going through the awakening together are priceless. Our son is already at a disadvantage in military might due to his lineage making him incapable of elemental magic and having to depend purely on martial technique. We can't have him disadvantaged by a weak bond as well. So, you can blame us for it, if it makes you feel better.

"If you are still feeling guilty, then just apologize by giving my boy the best night of his life. You both have just been contracted and whenever you have intercourse after this, Vita's Divine Will will flow into him through the contract, both freeing you of its influence and improving his physique... in this case, helping him heal.

"With the boost from that, regular healing sessions and some potions, he'll be back to his feet within a fortnight."

She stood up from the bed and shooed them away.

"Run along now dears. Dusk is almost upon us and he'll be waking soon. I'm sure you'd like to be there to greet him. I have to prepare to greet your father-in-law. He must be exhausted from dealing with the council. Your awakening and further contract has surely given those loquacious old fogies enough to talk about."

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As the two girls walked down the corridor, Phobos suddenly stopped and said, "I won't be joining you tonight... It's an important milestone for you and I'll just be in the way... So, I'll be in the cells."

Deimos nodded absentmindedly as her attention was too focused on her coming meeting with Mars to notice the oddity in Phobos' tone of speech and the content of her words.

It wasn't like they'd never had sex in pairs before.

Phobos watched her enter their room, sighed and walked away towards the cells.