

Chapter 109

"Oh, yes, I apologize for the oversight," Lord Herod said, his voice smooth and apologetic. "This is Eme...Princess Galelia of Rosvalley kingdom. She is my betrothed."

Emeriel's heart skipped a beat as she struggled to conceal her surprise. Galelia was her middle name, a secret known only to Akeira and Lord Herod.

"And Leah, my dear," Lord Herod continued, turning to Emeriel with a warm smile, "you are in the presence of our first and ultimate ruler, the grand king."

"Y-Your Grace, it is an ho-honor to be graced with your presence." Emeriel swallowed nervously and executed a deep curtsy, her voice trembling slightly.

"A human," Daemonikai observed, his tone neutral. It was not a question, but a simple acknowledgment.

There was no trace of the disgust, anger, or hatred that usually accompanied such a declaration from an Urekai. Instead, his face remained impassive, his voice polite.

"Yes, your Grace," Lord Herod confirmed. "I discovered her during one of my trips to acquire more slaves. She is a Syren, and we are deeply devoted to one another."

Emeriel nearly choked on her own saliva. Lord Herod was unaware that she was a Syren. How had he known to fabricate such a convincing lie?

The grand king gave a nod. Then, he extended his hand towards Emeriel.

She placed her own in his. A soft gasp escaped her lips as their skin made contact.

He raised her hand to his lips, his eyes never leaving hers. "You have an exquisite lady here, Lord of Agriculture."

Another shiver run down Emeriel's spine as his gaze lingered on her. The intensity of his scrutiny unnerved her.

"Thank you, Your Majesty." Lord Herod bowed his head.

King Daemonikai released Emeriel's hand, his attention finally shifting back to Lord Herod. "You are aware of the lands beyond the Crystal Waters, are you not? I am considering utilizing some of them for agricultural purposes. As the Lord of Agriculture, I require your expertise and collaboration on this matter."

"It would be an honor, Your Grace," Lord Herod's voice was filled with surprise and enthusiasm.

"We shall discuss this in private." King Daemonikai raised a hand to dismiss his retinue.

His soldiers, understanding the unspoken command, dispersed, strategically positioning themselves throughout the house and its surrounding grounds.

Lord Herod turned to Emeriel. "Go and admire those lanterns we spoke of, my dear. I need a moment alone with the king."

"My study is this way, Your Grace." He gestured towards the familiar corridor.

But the grand king did not immediately follow.

Instead, his piercing gaze settled on Emeriel once more, holding her captive.

For a moment, Emeriel could not bring herself to move, unable to break free from his magnetic pull.

A swarm of butterflies had taken flight in her stomach. Fluttering with increasing force under those piercing green eyes.

Her body tingled with warmth, her face flushed with a sudden heat. She managed another curtsy, her movements stiff and awkward, before turning and forcing her feet to carry her away.

In the courtyard Emeriel's mind was far. She stood, staring blankly at the workers meticulously decorating her lantern, her thoughts consumed by King Daemonikai. Time lost to her.

The sound of the door opening drew her attention.

As if summoned by her thoughts, King Daemonikai emerged from the house. His every movement exuded an air of lethal grace and authority.

With hands clasped behind his back, the white garment draping elegantly over his powerful frame, he strode towards her, stopping a few feet away.

"Your Grace?" Emeriel's voice was a shaky whisper. Heavens, to be this close to him...

That intense gaze met hers once more. His voice a velvety rumble, he asked, "Would you take a walk with me?"

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GRAND KING DAEMONIKAI

There was something captivating about the young woman standing before him.

Grand King Daemonikai observed the princess. Her wide, startled blue eyes, the nervous fidgeting. That amongst other things piqued his interest.

She was very beautiful—both in human and Urekai standards. Her luxurious black hair, cascading down to her waist, framed a delicate face with rosy lips that she chewed anxiously. The way the velvet gown clung to her figure, revealing every subtle dip and swell, ignited a spark of... something within him.

However, it was not her beauty that had first caught his attention, it was her scent.

Princess Galilea had the most enticing scent he had encountered in a long time. A scent that drew him in. Made him crave more.

"Your Grace?" she rasped.

"I came out for some fresh air," he explained. "Your betrothed is occupied with matters inside. I was hoping you might show me around. It has been centuries since I last visited the estate."

He noticed her nervousness increase. "Do not worry, Galilea, you are not obligated to—"

"I'd like to," she cut in, her voice barely audible.

Realizing she had spoken aloud, she blushed and cleared her throat. "I would like to, Your Grace," she repeated, her voice steadier this time.

Daemonikai led the way, and she followed beside him. He was acutely aware of her presence, her captivating scent filling his senses.

She smelled of nature. Of lemongrass after a refreshing rain. Earthy, with a hint of a unique floral aroma that stirred something deep within him. It was a combination of everything he loved about the natural world.

And for some inexplicable reason, she felt... familiar.

"Have we met before?" Daemonikai asked.

Galilea stumbled, nearly losing her footing.

Daemonikai's reflexes were lightning-fast. His hands shot out, encircling her shoulder and waist, steadying her before she could fall.

For a fleeting moment, he held her close, their bodies pressed together. A jolt of lightning coursed through him, and he found himself strangely reluctant to let go.

Ukrae, she felt good in his arms.

Cradled in his embrace, the princess's expressive blue eyes met his, almost sad.

"No, Your Grace. We have not met before," she said softly, at last.

Of course, they had not. Daemonikai was certain he would remember meeting someone as captivating as this young female. And yet...

He was not a naive fool. If there was something he knew, it was that inhaling this intoxicating scent up close—a smell that stirred his body and awakened a dormant hunger within him, was a very bad idea. Yet, he could not bring himself to let her go just yet.

Even his beast stirred, a low growl rumbling deep inside him.

Since his return from the feral state, his beast had retreated into a state of hibernation. As if seeking to sleep off the centuries of madness they had endured.

Daemonikai did not mind. He had no intention of taking his beast form anytime soon.

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