

## Chapter 113

"My Lord, I... I... I don't understand what you mean," Emeriel stammered.

"I believe you do, Emeriel," Lord Herod countered, his eyes filled with kindness. "A Soulbond knows. It might not be immediate, but it eventually becomes clear. You are a Syren, are you not?"

He figured it out. She sighed, resignation washing over her as she nodded slowly in admission.

Lord Herod nodded back, appearing unsurprised. "No one else could connect the dots because they remain unaware of your true gender. I wonder why it never occurred to me."

"Are you... displeased? That I kept this from you?"

"Displeased?" He shook his head. "No, little one. I understand your reasons. But this is no small secret you carry. You are brave."

Silence settled between them.

"A Soulbond is a precious gift, so rare... a true blessing," he mused. "But..."

"But fate has played a cruel trick," Emeriel finished, a bitter smile twisting her lips. "Matching a human to the one male who would rather die than claim one as his mate. Yes, I am aware of the irony."

Lord Herod remained silent for a moment, his brow furrowed in contemplation.

Then, he straightened. "You've had your heats, have you not?" he asked, his gaze sharp. "How have you managed them?"

Emeriel's cheeks flushed crimson. "The beast. He came to me several times. And a few other times, I sought him out in my delirium."

"You took a Urekai in his beast form? A feral one, no less?" Lord Herod winced, his eyes filled with pity. "You were fortunate to be in heat throughout those. It could have been far worse, even for a Syren."

"Yes," she agreed. Emeriel recalled how her poor sister had barely survived her first and only night with the beast, her body bruised and battered. "I was lucky. I was always in heat during those times."

"During all of them? How many heats have you endured?"

"Four," Emeriel admitted, her ears turning red.

"You have already experienced your first full heat, and the grand lords did not notice?" Lord Herod asked incredulously. "How is that possible?"

"No, not a full heat," Emeriel clarified. "Mini-heats."

"Four mini-heats!? Four!?"

Emeriel shifted uncomfortably. "From your reaction, I gather that's not normal?"

"It's not abnormal, per se, but it's usually two, at most three, before a full one. Vera never experienced more than two before hers."

"This means your full heat is forthcoming, Emeriel. Trust me, you do not want to be at the fortress when it hits, especially with the grand rulers unaware of your true gender."

She sighed. "Madam Livia, the head maid, said the same thing."

"There's the Lantern Festival tomorrow. Come back the day after, and I'll have my healer examine you. She might be able to predict when your next heat will occur. She's very skilled in these matters. We can discuss how to proceed from there."

"There's no beast anymore, and King Daemonikai is... impossible.," Emeriel began hesitantly, her gaze downcast. "So, I was hoping you might... t-take my next heat. Whether it's a mini or a f-full one."

The high lord shook his head without hesitation. "No, Emeriel, that is not going to happen."

"You are the only lord I trust in this kingdom. I would rather you take it than anyone else. Or multiple others," she pleaded, her voice trembling. "I have heard that during a full heat, the female doesn't care how many males mount her, as long as she is kn-knotted repeatedly."

Her face burned with embarrassment, but she pressed on. "Better you than some random soldiers in the woods."

"I would never let it come to that, Emeriel, you have my word. Never," Lord Herod declared firmly. "After my healer examines you, we will make arrangements to ensure you are in a safe and secure location for your heat. Even if I do not take it, you will be protected and allowed to choose another male to be with you."

"I don't want anyone else. If I can't have the one my soul yearns for, then it must be you." The thought of being with anyone else made her skin crawl. "No one else. I'd rather endure it alone."

"But you do not even 'want' me, do you, little one?" Lord Herod asked gently, his gaze searching her face. "You do not desire me in that way."

Emeriel couldn't deny it. But he was kind, and he was her friend. The only Urekai male she felt any semblance of comfort with.

"Full heat is not something to be taken lightly, Emeriel. It's not something you can simply endure on your own. I'm going to be blunt, so brace yourself for some unrefined language, alright?"

Emeriel nodded, her pulse quickening.

"Think about your mini-heat and multiply the feeling tenfold; that is a full heat. You need to be mounted. Your body needs to be taken hard in every orifice you possess. Vaginal, anal, womb," the high lord stated with uncharacteristic bluntness. "Your womb needs semen, and you need to take a knot multiple times to ease the worst of the heat. For three days straight. You cannot ride it out on your own; it would drive you mad if it did not kill you."

"Full heat has killed many females in the past. Your body tries to protect you from its fatality by making you so desperate for a male that you will feel like you will literally die if you do not get one. For some women, it makes them so aroused that even their rear is loose and dripping, prepared to take a male."

"What!?" Emeriel squeaked, her face as red as a ripe summer apple, her ears burning. The thought of something that large in her... anal region terrified her. Heavens, what had she gotten herself into?

The high lord gave a firm nod. "For some, not all. Do not worry; you will be so out of it you will be begging for it. Full heat prepares your body to take the level of marathon sex it will take to sate you. You might drift in and out of consciousness and, at some point, be so tired your bones feel like water, but you will be fine. You should be more concerned with the healing stage, not the heat itself."

She looked bewildered, her eyes wide with fear and confusion.