

Chapter 114

"Unfortunately, that is the not-so-pleasant stage. It follows immediately after the heat. It is your body's way of mending whatever 'damage' was inflicted during the heat. The semen is ejected, your womb contracts and ascends, and your openings close up. By the end of it, your body feels new and fresh. It is an advantage, especially to some unfortunate females who are repeatedly violated and brutalized during their heats. It is not so pleasant because the healing brings pain."

All this was terrifying to Emeriel and a cold dread settled in her stomach, twisting her insides. She wished she could return to the naivety of being only a human, where such horrors did not exist.

Lord Herod's expression softened. "Heat sex is amazing, Emeriel. It might sound frightening now since it is your first, but you will thoroughly enjoy it. It is amazing for both genders. Half the females grow addicted to the sensation."

Yeah, no, Emeriel did not think so.

The idea of becoming addicted to something so invasive and intense was unfathomable. But she kept her opinion to herself. "Did Vera enjoy it?"

"Vera was addicted." Lord Herod gazed into the distance, a fond smile touching his lips. "She craved it. She quite literally looked forward to her heats."

"Perhaps because she had the male she loved, someone she trusted with her body. She had her bondmate who loved her deeply."

Lord Herod did not deny it. He gave her another pitying look. "You will be fine, Emeriel. Full heat is purely about carnal instincts; you do not necessarily have to love the person who will tend to your heat."

"Then, be that person, My Lord. If it will not be the Grand King, or you, I don't want anyone else touching me in that way. Especially then, when I will be most vulnerable, a slave to my urges, unable to say no. Unable to make a choice."

Lord Herod took a deep breath, his expression conflicted. "Let us see the healer first. Then, we shall proceed from there, alright?"

"Okay," Emeriel whispered, her voice barely audible.

Every day, her impending full heat scared her even more than the previous day.

The terror grew, settling deeper into her bones, an all-consuming fear threatening to overwhelm her.

AEKERIA

Aekeira, along with Amie and other slaves, were nestled deep within the woods. Seated around a weathered wooden table amidst the lush greenery of the forest, engrossed in the art of lantern-making.

Their laughter and chatter filled the air as they carefully crafted lanterns from thin, flexible bamboo, skillfully bent and tied into graceful spherical shapes.

The hours melted away as they worked, but their spirits remained lifted, enthusiastic. They shared stories and dreams, envisioning themselves exploring the festival grounds and perhaps even getting to dance.

Aekeira's legs were growing numb from sitting for so long, she needed a break.

"I'll be back," she announced, rising.

Venturing deeper into the woods, she savored the refreshing air, the earthy smell of the forest, and the gentle caress of the breeze. What a beautiful day.

Lost in the tranquility, she wandered further than intended. And when she finally came to her senses, she realized she had strayed far from the others.

"Wonderful. Just wonderful, Aekeira," she muttered, shaking her head at her own absentmindedness. As she turned to retrace her steps, her eyes caught a glimpse of movement near the riverbank.

No, a figure.

And Aekeira would recognize that graceful poise anywhere. Grand Lord Vladya.

He hasn't seen me yet. I could turn back and leave. These were her first thoughts, and she was determined to follow through with them.

But her traitorous body simply came alive.

Her heart quickened its pace, a swarm of butterflies erupted in her stomach, as warmth spread through her most intimate areas.

As if her body's betrayal wasn't enough, her mind—which now happened to be her greatest enemy—flooded her with vivid memories of their last encounter. Memories she had fought tooth and nail to suppress.

The bloodfeeding.

A moan nearly escaped her lips, but Aekeira bit down hard to hold it back. Bloody heaven, but that bloodfeeding...

It was her first orgasm.

She had heard other girls whisper about carnal pleasure, but she had never believed such things. It sounded like a fanciful myth.

She would know, right? After all, she was no stranger to the act. Sex was all about pain, punishment, power, and dominance; it had nothing to do with pleasure or release. At best, it brought blissful numbness.

Aekeira never knew carnal pleasure and orgasm was real. Until she had bloodfed that Urekai male.

They hadn't shared sexual intimacy, yet Aekeira's head had spun with the onslaught of pleasure that had swarmed her.

Her treacherous body ached for more. It frightened her, this starving hunger she now harbored. And not just for any male, but specifically for that grand lord standing by the riverbank.

"Stop it," she whispered. "Time to go."

Determined to put as much distance between herself and the object of her forbidden desires as possible, she whirled around.

"Are you aware that I can smell you, Aekiera?"

She stopped dead in her tracks.

Although distant, his voice barely raised, she heard him clearly, so attuned to him. Devil's bones, this was becoming increasingly scary.

"Your Highness." She turned and greeted, dipping into a slight bow. "I apologize if I disturbed your solitude. I wandered too far."

He turned, walking towards her.

GRAND LORD VLADYA

Grand Lord Vladya sensed the girl's presence the moment she came.

Her scent invaded his senses, pulling him from the tangled web of his own thoughts. A welcomed intrusion. Being lost in his own mind spelled trouble these days.

His descent into madness was worsening. A spiral that was becoming increasingly difficult not to notice.

Vladya couldn't tell whether it was the relentless sexlust thrumming under his skin or the unquenchable bloodlust refusing to be sated.

Merrilyn had recently given birth, but complications had nearly claimed her life. For over a week, she fought fiercely to survive, teetering on the brink of death.

Thankfully, both she and her female offspring pulled through, but Merrilyn was far from recovered and unable to perform her duties as a bloodhost.

Not every Urekai had a bloodhost; only males over a thousand years old and females over five thousand. And at his age, the thirst for blood intensified to an insatiable level. He could no longer rely on multiple feeders to quench even the smallest taste. Without a bloodhost, he risked descending into feral or death.