

Chapter 142

Emeriel stiffened. Her insides turned cold. "No."

King Daemonikai shifted, pulling her closer as he settled on his side. More aftershocks of pleasure rocked her with his movement, and she whimpered. So full.

"I almost killed you when I rose from that brief sleep," he said in that deep, soothing tone behind her. "I thought it might be possible, so I left the bed. But it obviously was of no use. If it happens again, I might actually kill you, Galilea."

I don't mind. The words caught in her throat as Emeriel's belly dropped. Oh, she had it bad. So bad that she genuinely did not care if he killed her, as long as it was him here, spending this heat with her.

"I don't want another male, Your Grace." The mere thought was like a thousand needles dancing across her skin.

"Leah..."

Emeriel, Your Grace. Her middle name had never sounded so good coming from anyone, but she wished she could hear him call her by the name she really answered to. Emeriel.

"I can't bear another's touch," she croaked. Emeriel would die first.

"Perhaps. But you can bear your betrothed's. It was wrong of me to take you from him, to challenge him for your heat," he grimaced. "No male should do that to another. He likely did not fight me because of who I am."

"You were in a rut."

"It does not make it right," he countered. "He was too, I could sense it. He would have fought me in a duel, for you."

"Really?"

"Yes, young princess," he sighed. "Males in rut are fiercely strong when protecting what's theirs. It's nature's way of ensuring even the weakest Urekai can defend their females during their most vulnerable heat, when other males come sniffing around. Herodis knew that. He did not engage out of respect for me."

You are my male. You would have killed him. Guilt nearly swallowed Emeriel.

"You need him here," King Daemonikai continued, reluctantly. "You know how I feel about your kind. I do not want to accidentally kill you."

I can't bear Lord Herod's touch. I don't want to. Please, don't make me.

"Do you hate me, Your Grace?" She needed to know. Though his answer might hurt her, she needed to know.

Silence.

Only the rhythmic beating of her heart interrupted the stillness of the air.

He does.

Her eyes burned.

They were locked together, and until his knot went down, they could not separate. Emeriel cherished being this close to him but wished she could turn to face him.

She wanted to see the face of the man who held her and take in his features. She longed to greedily drown in those fiery green eyes.

This heat was so painful and traumatic, yet a part of her was beginning to wish it would never end. If it kept this male close to her, Emeriel wished it would take as long as it wanted to break.

Her Beloved. Very close, yet so out of reach.

King Daemonikai would never know. He would never see how deep her feelings ran. He would never know the longing that had taken root in her heart since his beast cuddled her all those long nights ago. Nothing good could come of it.

He didn't even like her; his silence was proof enough. The tears welled, spilling onto the sheets.

"Do not cry," the grand king said softly. "It's for the best. Trust me, little princess, you do not want me to like you."

Oh, but I do want you to. So much, it hurts.

Emeriel was in too deep. She was so submerged in this emotional ocean that she couldn't find her bearings anymore. Another tear trailed down her cheek as she tried to quell the rising panic.

His massive knot throbbed inside her, stretching her to the limit. It was uncomfortable, yet pleasurable. Almost unbearable, but Emeriel was starting to like it too, because it was him. She felt so full of him, inside.

Maybe it was for the best if another male saw her through the rest of her heat. Perhaps if she endured this, it would help her reign in her feelings for this male who would never be hers.

"When my knot goes down, I will leave, Galilea," he sighed, his breath hot on her neck. "I should not have been here in the first place. I hope Herodis makes the rest of your heat enjoyable for you."

More tears fell, hot and silent. Her heart constricted until breathing became a struggle. Already, she could feel the next wave building, simmering just beneath the surface, waiting to sweep her under once more.

"Alright," Emeriel whispered at last.

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GRAND KING DAEMONIKAI

She was different.

Daemonikai watched Galilea in a peaceful sleep she had cried herself into. Moonlight came through the curtains, illuminating the tear streaks still damp on her flushed cheeks. What female would not want her betrothed to guide her through her first heat?

This one, however, had sobbed herself into exhaustion at the mere thought. He stroked a stray strand of hair from her beautiful face.

Heat hormones. They could be deceitful. Heightening emotions, reducing inhibitions, and increasing outspokenness. It had been ages since he had assisted a female other than his bondmate through their heat, he had nearly forgotten how each individual's experience could be different from another.

Daemonikai had helped numerous Urekai females through their first heat, even after bonding with Evie. Urekai females tend to imprint their young hearts, mistaking affection, adoration, and fondness, for love.

A few had imprinted on him, and if the fixation did not wear off by their first heat, their bodies mistook him for their male. A complex situation too, as they often could not bear another's touch but the male they imprinted on.

Typically, Daemonikai often found himself torn, hesitating as he searched for compatible males for them, but his efforts were frequently met with tearful pleas from their parents, who would come kneeling and pleading on the fortress grounds.