

Chapter 215

"With everything in me. Some days, resisting was as hard as chewing rocks. I have never felt so deprived...until I wanted you but couldn't go and get you. I could only hope that one day you would return to me."

Aekeira's eyes watered. Her heart sang.

"But I'm terrified to hope." Lord Vladya admitted as he stepped closer, and inhaled her scent. "What if I let myself hope you were mine, and you turn out not to be, like the others..."

It would break him beyond repair. Aekeira knew it. She could hear it in his voice.

And it terrified her too.

Aekeira wanted to be his. Had dreamt of it for years. But dreams were one thing; reality was another. Emeriel was the Syren... and the truth was, Aekeira was not like Em.

So what if there was an obvious, irresistible attraction between them? What if his very being craved hers so deeply that his basic instincts went dormant in her absence? So what if she loved this male more than life itself, and he was now staring at her as if his entire world revolved around her? None of it mattered if they attempted the bonding ritual and it failed.

It would be over.

There was no coming back from that.

Oh yes, Aekeira was terrified too.

"I missed you terribly," Lord Vladya murmured, kissing her forehead.

"I-I..." If I go over how hard I'd missed you, I might start bawling all over again.

"It got even harder as the years passed. As my journey grew more challenging, as madness crept closer, I had regrets." He breathed in her scent, letting out a low groan. "Gods, you smell so good. I can't get enough."

"Regrets?" Aekeira whispered, barely holding herself steady.

He nodded against her. "I pushed you away so you wouldn't see me go feral. But in the end... when it came down to it... you were all I wanted to see one last time." His arms encircled her waist. "I wanted to see your beautiful face, hear your lovely voice... one last time. I regret sending you away, Aekeira."

Mist clouded Aekeira's vision again. Why couldn't this male just be hers? Why did the universe have to make everything so complicated?

Gods, could you please take away the madness?

Please give him his soul?

If only you could please make me a Syren too.

Could you please make us so compatible that if we attempt a bonding ritual, it would succeed?

Gods, if wishes were horses... would you let this beggar ride?

Tears slipped down Aekeira's cheeks, leaving a wet trail as she returned his hug.

PRINCESS EMERIEL

"I don't want him to claw at you, Emeriel," Lord Ottai cautioned, leaning casually against the wall, as he watched Emeriel spread out the grand king's feast before the table.

"I know, Lord Ottai. I do not wish for him to claw at me either." She replied softly, glancing at King Daemonikai's still form. "But you said it's been days since he had any kind of nourishment. If this continues, he will only grow weaker, and he needs his strength to return."

With a brass spoon, Emeriel scooped up a portion of porridge, and tenderly nudged the spoon towards the grand king's lips.

Though his body remained still, claws sprang out from his hands. Sharp and deadly, ready to strike.

Lord Ottai immediately straightened. "Now will be the time to stop—"

But Emeriel placed her other hand on King Daemonikai's arm. "Don't do that, beloved," her voice dropped to a soothing murmur.

She intertwined her fingers with his, her small hand dwarfed by his. Same long, sharp claws she had seen tear through enemies with ease slowly curled around her hand.

Not to harm, but to hold.

Emeriel bit back her gasp. Instead, she squeezed gently. "Eat, beloved."

King Daemonikai's mouth opened slightly.

"Ukrai's scent..." Lord Ottai's mouth hung open, staring at Emeriel as if she had grown a second head.

For the first time since entering the room, a faint smile tugged at Emeriel's lips. She scooped the porridge into King Daemonikai's mouth, and he swallowed, his throat working as he chewed.

"He can hear you," Lord Ottai's voice cracked. The fourth ruler looked close to tears. "I think he can hear you, Emeriel."

"Maybe," Emeriel was equally surprised but concealing it well. She hadn't truly believed it would work. "Maybe he does."

Lord Ottai hovered for the rest of the meal, watching her with awe and animation. He only left when an urgent message arrived, calling him away to Mablewood.

Emeriel finished feeding King Daemonikai, satisfied that he had eaten enough, before rising to take her leave.

It had been a long, draining day, and she longed for the comfort of her bed.

But as she turned a corner, a hand shot out, grabbing her hair from behind. Yanking it hard enough to make her stumble.

Emeriel jerked back to avoid having her hair torn from the roots.

"You think you can just run your mouth at me!?" hissed the familiar voice of Mistress Sinai, tightening her grip. "You think you can waltz in here, unwanted and unwelcome, moving freely as if your filthy self owns this place?"

"Mistress," Emeriel gritted out, one hand reaching up to clamp firmly around Mistress Sinai's fist, preventing her from pulling any harder and potentially scalping her. "Let go, let's discuss this like two adults."

"There is only one adult here, and it's not you. You are nothing but a mere fly. Let me remind you, that you are only as free as I allow you to be—OUCH!" The mistress screeched.

Emeriel had stomped down hard on the mistress's foot, forcing her grip to loosen.

In a smooth move, Emeriel stepped aside, maintaining her hold on Sinai's wrist, and twisted the woman's arm behind her back at an agonizing angle. In seconds, their positions were reversed and the mistress was now at Emeriel's mercy.

"And you are only as pestering as I let you be," Emeriel retorted coolly in a low voice into her ear. "Like that incessant ant crawling near the ear that just won't leave."

"Let me go, RIGHT THIS INSTANT!" Mistress Sinai raged. "How dare you—"

Raising her free hand, Emeriel flattened her palm and delivered a sharp blow to the side of Mistress Sinai's neck.

One precise hit, and the mistress crumpled at her feet like a rag doll. Unconscious, even before her body hit the ground.

Unfazed, Emeriel calmly smoothed back her hair and stared down at the limp body.

"People like you are the reason I spent fifteen hours every day on the training grounds to be better." Emeriel gave her a small kick, but the female truly was out like a light. "The only thing you have going for you is your beast form. Day and night, I trained, with every instructor known to man, masters in their field. Under the rain, under the scorching sun, for years."

Emeriel stomped on her arm, then stepped over her. Lifting the hem of her garment, she cast a final glance back. "We will meet again, Mistress."

With her chin lifted, she walked away, leaving the unconscious woman behind.