

Chapter 218

No response. No movement.

"His body is burning up again. "I need to sponge him down again." She muttered, her gaze drawn to the dark veins that stood out against his pale arm.

"Perhaps this time, he will stay with us, right?"

Lord Ottai looked so hopeful that Emeriel nodded. "Yes, I hope so too."

She sat beside King Daemonikai and picked up a washcloth, dipping it in cool water. Carefully, she began to run the cloth down his scathed arm.

The room fell into a heavy silence, broken only by the soft sound of water dripping from the cloth.

Lord Ottai lingered for a while, keeping her company, before duty pulled him away, leaving Emeriel alone with the grand king.

She continued sponging his heated skin for hours, refraining from undressing him completely. Slowly, gradually, the fever began to subside, until it broke.

Exhausted, she finally allowed herself to rest. Laying her head beside his ribs, she closed her eyes, the rhythmic rise and fall of his shallow breaths lulling her into a much-needed sleep.

.....

Emeriel stayed by the grand king's side, barely leaving his chambers except for brief respites to refresh herself.

Everything she needed, from food to fresh linens, was brought directly to the royal residence.

There was no world beyond the king's chambers, her life revolved only around the still figure in the bed.

Madam Livia visited occasionally to assist Emeriel in preparing the herbal remedies. Each visit, she patiently guided Emeriel, teaching her how to concoct medicinal teas and brew potions to reduce the fever and stave off the symptoms of soul death.

Afterward, Madam Livia blended fragrant oils while Emeriel ground roots into fine powders, using their rich, earthy aroma rising for incense.

Male Urekai servants handled the king's bathing and changing of clothes, and the maids came to replace the bed linens and tidy the chamber. But for the most part, Emeriel was left alone with her unconscious king.

She would often choose books from the grand library, reading aloud to him tales of epic battles won and lost. Stories of distant lands and gods.

Along her wanderings, Emeriel had encounter rooms, sealed like tombs with heavy locks, that she realized held the memories of his late bondmate and children. Out of respect, she never ventured near them, honoring their space.

On the fifth day, after sponging his fevered skin, and applying drops of medicine into his open, unblinking eyes, Emeriel knelt by the hearth.

Clutching the worn leather-bound book of religious texts and ancient prayers, she opened it to the page where she had left off the day before, and resumed praying.

"Grant, O Great Ukrae, the restoration of health, and healing hands, both to body and soul," she read, tending to the flickering flames in the stone fireplace with her free hand. "Almighty and powerful Ukrae, who heals all and saves all, may thine blessings restore strength and life."

She lost herself in the sacred texts, time drifting away unnoticed as always.

It wasn't until Madam Livia entered to administer his night medicines that she stirred, gently closing the prayer book and rising to join her.

"Have I thanked you for returning to Urai?" Madam Livia asked later, as she prepared to depart, pausing at the threshold. "I know it couldn't have been easy, considering everything that's happened."

"You don't need to thank me," Emeriel said.

The truth was, despite her desire to leave the past behind, Aekeira had been right. She needed to know her male was hale and hearty, even if they were halfway across the world from each other.

"During his brief return, I understood why his people are so devoted to him," Madam Livia confessed, her hands resting on the doorframe. "They all hated us humans, but he was the only ruler who treated us like living beings."

The head maid's gaze drifted to the bed. "Lord Ottai ignores us at best, Lord Vladya would harm any human who got in his way, and Lord Zaiper...well, he treats us worse than dirt, killing us like vermin."

A pause. "But King Daemonikai? He sees a child fall, and he helps her up. Did you notice the kitchens started making better meals for us when he returned. He included us in festivals as attendants, not slaves. And when we were sick, he made sure the healers tended to us."

Emeriel stared, speechless.

She had been aware of some of the grand king's benevolence to the humans, but not the full extent.

Much of her time had been spent in Lord Herod's home, too preoccupied with her own struggles, worrying about her heat and hiding her secrets.

"The Urekai aren't the only ones praying for his recovery, you know." Madam Livia added. "We all are. That's why I'm convinced that assassin was sent, he didn't act on his own just because he was human."

Emeriel shifted a look to the grand king. The faint rise and fall of his chest the only sign of life. "He's showing improvement, but without the frostfever..."

"...we cannot be certain," Madam Livia finished sadly.

They both knew the importance of the frostfever. King Daemonikai had already moved to another chamber the day before, everyone in anticipation of its arrival.

It was a sign that the soul was crossing the Cold Sea, the final boundary between the living and the dead.

Emeriel had checked the legends, read every history text on it. Many souls had been lost during this crossing, swallowed whole by the merciless ice-cold waters.

But those spirits who survived the frostfever returned safely to their bodies.

The thought of it chilled Emeriel to the bone.

What if he does not survive the crossing?

What if she lost him to the icy depth of that unnatural water?

As usual, she breathed deeply and tried not to show her worry. Emeriel could only hope to be by his side when it happened.

To do all she could to guide him back to the land of the living.

.....

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

This note was meant to be included before the start of Book 3, but I forgot I was posting the particular manuscript without it. I have already edited the beginning to add this, and I'm also including it here for those who have already reached this part. So here it is:

Just as Book 1 set the stage for Book 2, Book 3 lays the foundation for Book 4, which will wrap up the entire series.

What this means is that Book 3 is not just a continuation—it is a whole new beginning. A fresh buildup. That's how this series unfolds.

At times, the pacing for book 3 may feel slow, but that's largely because it's being released chapter by chapter rather than as a complete book.

Every event happens with purpose. Nothing is without reason, and in time, all the pieces will come together before this series concludes.

On that note, keep this in mind: Although this book follows directly after Book 2, it also signifies a shift. The start of a new journey for the main characters.

So clear your mind and step into this story anew: the journey continues. But if you cannot follow the pacing, please wait until this book is marked as complete.

Sending you all my love and gratitude,

Kiss Leilani.