

Chapter 236

Touch, his beast urged.

No, I will not.

"Wake up, darling," Daemonikai coaxed gently.

"I don't want to." she protested, a dreamy smile on her lips.

Her hands drifted over her body, cupping her breasts, she flicked her nipples. She let out a soft whine.

A bolt of desire shot straight to his dick, his arousal back with a vengeance.

"Gods of the Grail," he swore.

"I really like this dream a lot," she cried with bliss, pinching her engorged nipples.

Daemonikai closed his eyes and counted to ten. Then, counted backward from ten.

Nope, his hard-on has declared a coup, raging full mast in his pants.

His beast, too, was one hundred percent on board...all too aware of her.

Emeriel took his hand, parting her thigh, she guided it between her open legs.

"Touch me, please," she murmured, rolling her hips desperately. "I've been hungry... so starved for you."

"Darling, you don't know—"

"I need you."

Younglings crying for food, an elder falling from a horse, another bloody war with the vamps.

The images didn't work. His restraint was slipping with each passing second, her dreamlike touches tugging him further under her spell.

"Emeriel, you need to wake up," he growled.

She rose from the bed, sitting up and drew closer. "Come here," Leaning in, she kissed him.

His control snapped. He returned the kiss, unrestrained, his hand cupping her cheeks as he deepened it. Tongue sliding desperately against hers, his chest pressed against her soft bosoms.

Daemonikai kissed her with all the hunger he'd kept buried for so long. One that grew since the very moment he'd opened his eyes on his deathbed and saw her lying naked beside him. From that moment, he'd wanted to hold her down and devour her.

Climbing fully onto the bed, he moved her backward until her back pressed against the headboard. The kiss turned ravenous, wild, as he let the beast inside him out to play. Not his literal beast, of course, but the one aching and straining in his pants.

She clutched at his robes, her lips as hungry as his. Sweet, breathless little moans spilled from her, driving him absolutely crazy.

Never breaking their kiss, he reached for her garment. Need to feel more. Need to lay her down and—

She wrenched her lips away from his. "This isn't a dream?" came the wide-eyed squeak.

"You could pretend it's one." He reached for those sexy lips again.

But she drew back, horror replaced lust, and she scrambled off the bed as though the sheets had caught fire. "No," shaking her head violently, she retreated several steps before stopping. "No, we can't. We can't."

His fists clenched to keep from grabbing her from pulling her back into his arms where he knew she belonged.

Desire beat at him, hunger clawed all over him, demanding to be sated. But that panic in her eyes...

"Emeriel," he extended a hand.

She flinched. Shaking her head again, she took another step back. "No... I can't."

And then, she turned and fled. Her footsteps echoed as she disappeared through the doorway.

Daemonikai didn't follow. He couldn't.

He sat there, motionless, something heavy settling in his chest. Sadness.

This was the first time he'd ever seen true fear in her eyes, and it was because of their passion. She wanted him as much as he did her; he had seen it, felt it. But it scared the living daylight out of her.

Something was truly broken between them.

And I don't know how to fix it.

PRINCESS EMERIEL

She avoided him like the plague.

For the next two days, she kept herself far from anywhere her beloved might look for her.

That meant she hadn't been to the gardens, her Frostfall bedchambers, and even her quarters in Blackstone. Instead, she busied herself with errands. Tasks that kept her moving, distracting her.

She hunted game and delivered the meat to the homes of the sick, picked herbs, and made medicinal poultices. Trained hard on the sparring grounds, spent her nights in Aekeira's chambers in Blackstone.

Tonight, after giving her youngling friend Bekka some food, she returned to the fortress gates, exhaustion settling in her bones.

Her guards weren't with her. Their presence was good, but could also feel stifling at times. Tonight, she'd insisted they leave early.

As she passed by one of the garden pathways, she paused. Her plants needed tending, and it had bothered her all day.

"The workers are taking care of it," she muttered to herself. "Stop worrying."

But it was no use.

Besides, what else was there to do than lie in bed and torment herself with memories of his sweet kisses all night?

With a sigh, she detoured into the garden, picked up a watering can, and set to work. The world fell away, and the quiet rustle of leaves and the familiar scents soothed her.

Emeriel was so lost in her routine she sensed the disturbance too late.

A sharp whizzing sound split the air.

The watering can clattered to the ground, and with lightning-fast moves, she caught two of the incoming arrows, snatching them from the air.

But there had been three.

The third arrow struck her stomach.

Emeriel let out a choked gasp as a searing pain ripped through her. Son of a bitch.

Bringing one of the arrows to her nose, she sniffed. Poison.

Reacting quickly, she hurled the two captured arrows back towards her unseen attacker, hoping they found their mark, before turning and fleeing.

Her vision was already blurring.

Pain spread like wildfire, consuming her senses, but she fought to stay on her feet.

I can't fall here.

This secluded garden would be her grave if she gave in. Her attacker would find her, helpless, and finish the job with more poisoned arrows.

Must reach safety. Must..make...it...out...

But her body grew heavier.

Her limbs no longer felt like her own, unresponsive, her strength fading.

Is this the end?

If it was, Emeriel had one regret. Only one.

I should have stayed that night.

The memory of his touch burned in her mind, bittersweet and achingly vivid. I should have let myself feel his touch, just one last time.

Her strength gave out, and she fell to the ground. The world went black.