

Chapter 274

PRINCESS EMERIEL

The next three days were the best in her life. Emeriel and King Daemonikai spent nearly every moment together, and she cherished each one.

They talked about everything. Her time in the human world, her physical training, her hobbies, and childhood memories. In turn, he opened up about his own youth, even shared pieces of his late family.

Emeriel hummed softly as she put away their dinner dishes. Warm and vibrant joy bubbled within her. Even the topics that could have been awkward or painful were touched upon—if only lightly—without tension or avoidance.

She was truly, deeply happy, about the incredible progress they had made together.

Setting aside the court, their past, and their pain, they had spent these days simply being together. The peace, the quiet, and the simplicity of the surroundings were a nice change. This cottage nestled in one of the outer villages of Urai, had become a sanctuary for them, and she loved it.

Yesterday evening, Daemonikai took her for a walk, leading her along the winding paths of the village. Locals greeted their grand king with enthusiasm and kindness, extending the same warmth to her.

When they returned home, Daemonikai pulled her into his lap by the crackling fireplace, where they talked and cuddled late into the night.

She loved having his undivided attention, watching him smile, seeing him so at ease.

But a slight worry disturbed her.

King Daemonikai hadn't touched her intimately in days.

It wasn't that he didn't show affection. In fact, sometimes, he held her too close as though she were the most precious thing in the world. His hands were always greedy when it came to caressing her as they cuddled.

And occasionally, when she walked past him, he'd cup her butt or touch her breasts so unexpectedly, making her jerk. But it all ended there.

Despite the nights when his manhood poked her all through the dark hours, or the mornings when he woke with clear arousal, he hadn't tried to take her body again.

She tried not to let it trouble her, but it did.

Emeriel missed him in that way. She wanted to feel him again. She couldn't believe how often she thought about it.

It worried her, how much she longed to open her legs for him... to let him inside her body again. Such unladylike hunger.

Emeriel never imagined herself this way.

Just three years ago, the idea of sexual intimacy had filled her with dread. Her heart cut out of her chest and handed to her each time she had to save her sister from yet another aristocrat.

What she shared with her Beloved was nothing like the sickening, demeaning act those ministers had forced upon her sister, Emeriel knew that. What they had was different, it was special and oh so beautiful.

But still... she shouldn't want it this bad. She shouldn't think about it as much as she did, like some harlot in a whorehouse.

So she kept silent, suppressing her desires even as they left her in a constant state of hunger she couldn't shake.

Thankfully, though, his nightmares hadn't returned in days. There were moments when he stared off into the distance with a look of sorrow, but whenever he saw her, the look cleared, and his stance relaxed. Always fully present and attentive. As though nothing else in the world mattered but her.

Emeriel basked in it. Relished the feeling of being the center of his universe. She almost wished they could stay here forever, untouched by the outside world.

But she knew the reprieve was temporary. Duty called.

They would be leaving this haven in a few days.

After finishing in the kitchen, Emeriel went looking for him.

Their bedroom was empty, the bed undisturbed.

Stepping outside, the cool evening breeze brushed against her skin as she made her way to the archery range, one of his favorite places to spend his time, but it was silent, her Beloved nowhere in sight.

She checked the garden, spotting the gardener tending to the plants.

The gardener gave a respectful bow. "Your Highness,"

"Have you seen His Majesty?" she asked, brushing her hair away from her face as the evening breeze toyed with it.

"Yes, my princess. He went in this direction." He pointed behind him, toward the woods.

"Thank you." She gave him a slight nod. "You may return to your work."

Emeriel turned toward the dense tree line. Shadows stretched long in the fading light, birdsong greeting her as she stepped under the canopy. The wind moved through the trees, rustling the leaves, sending her long hair swirling around her shoulders, her garments flowing like water.

"My King...?"

No answer.

The deeper she ventured into the forest, the more different the atmosphere felt. The hairs on her arms stood, and she stopped.

Something was watching her.

But it wasn't fear she felt, it was something else entirely. Awareness.

My mate.

He was here. Watching her. Hunting her.

Her breath quickened, heart hammering erratically in her chest. She couldn't see him, but she felt him.

Felt the familiar intensity of that gaze like a physical touch. She was the prey, and he was the predator.

Was it because she was Syren or his Soulbond? An urge suddenly slammed into her.

Run.

And so, she bolted.

Emeriel's feet barely touched the ground as she sprinted through the woods, the trees whipping past in a blur.

The wind roared in her ears, her hair streaming behind her like a banner. She ran as though the devil himself was on her heels.

A deep growl rolled through the air, sending a thrill down her spine.

She glanced around, eyes darting between the trees, but she couldn't tell where it was coming from. She didn't stop.

The memory of the last time she'd run like this surfaced. Three years ago, when assassins had chased her with the intent of ending her life and she had outrun them all.

Does my Beloved know I'm very good at this?

Smiling defiantly, she pushed herself harder, leaning into the wind. If her male wanted a hunt, she would give him one.

She felt exhilarated, laughter bubbling up as she moved with a speed and grace that came naturally to her.

Come, My Grand King. Catch me if you can.