

Chapter 284

SECOND TO LAST CHAPTER OF PART 3

In Greyrock, he stood by his window, a huge smile on his swollen face as Emeriel's tortured screams pierced the night.

He savored every pained cry.

Now this is more like it. This is how it should be.

They truly believed they could have happiness? Zaiper snorted in derision.

"I have ruined everything," he said with glee. "Daemonikai will never forgive himself for tonight. Even if she survives, I have shattered this nonsense between them once and for all."

His laugh was one of triumph.

"He is the mad king," Zaiper muttered menacingly. "He will always be the mad king."

Another chilling laugh came from him.

"Maybe this will finally open our people's eyes. If he cannot control himself—if he can hurt the woman he claimed to care for so much, the one he dared to introduce to court—then perhaps they will finally see he is a lost cause."

The idea delighted him.

Yes, let them see their glorious king for what he is. A broken, dangerous beast.

"I will have the grand throne after all. Why did I not think of this plan sooner?"

His hand brushed against his throbbing cheek, and he winced at a sharp pain from the swelling.

Fuck, his entire face hurt. It almost dulled his joy.

Almost.

How could it, when Daemonikai's woman's screams rang this high in the air. Like music to the ears.

The drumrolls of victory.

"The girl does make the most delightful sounds," Grand Lord Zaiper mused wistfully. "Pity I didn't get to taste her back when she was just a slave. She would have felt divine beneath me, taking my cock."

The thought excited him. Perhaps, one day, he may still get his chance.

Then, his smile dimmed a little. I have bedded countless women in search of an heir and got nothing. Yet, one heat with her, and Daemonikai almost becomes a father again.

Ridiculous.

Daemonikai's luck is absurd.

"Thank the gods for that blessed miscarriage sweeping the little shit away." His smile returned. "A timely miracle." The gods, after all, were on his side.

Behind him, the sound of heeled footwear clicked on the floor.

"I brought ointment for your face, My Lord." Gaille's voice broke through.

She stepped to his side, uncapped the bottle, and soaked a cotton ball with the liquid. Pressing it gently to his swollen cheek. "This will sting."

Zaiper hissed through clenched teeth, but Gaille's touch remained gentle. It was one of the reasons she was his favorite mistress. Not only was she skilled in bed, but she also had a rare, nurturing streak that he found tolerable.

The screams outside suddenly cut off, leaving a huge silence in its wake.

"Poor girl has fainted again." Gaille shook her head in pity. "She is strong, though, the princess. I never imagined a human could withstand so much. No wonder she's his soulmate. The gods do not make mistakes."

Zaiper grunted, unwilling to respond.

"I prayed for him this evening," Gaille continued idiotically, unaware of how she was ruining such a happy moment. "The shrines and prayer houses were filled to the brim. Everyone was praying for him. The people are devastated. They don't know what's happening."

"We all hope for the best," Zaiper said in his sweetest tone, filled with pity and sorrow. "It would be terrible for this night to end tragically for his human. Such a dreadful situation."

"They will overcome this," Gaille said firmly as if to convince herself as she rubbed the wet cotton ball over his swollen eye. "They have overcome so many obstacles before. Our Grand King has faced countless challenges and triumphed. I believe they will rise above this, too."

You foolish, deluded wench. I ought to throw you from this tower.

Swallowing his rage, Zapier forced himself to remain composed. Nothing could ruin this night for him. It was the start of his victory.

He could feel it, taste it, hear it in the echoes of Emeriel's screams.

The smell of victory was intoxicating.

•••••

MISTRESS SINAI

In the stillness of the night, she tilted her head, listening to the sweet melodies drifting through the air.

Now, this is what festivities sound like.

Earlier, when she'd first heard the commotion, she had been beside herself with worry, pacing the cramped space of her cell, a thousand questions swirling in her mind. What could possibly be happening out there?

But a maid had arrived with food, and Sinai had cornered the young female, forcing the trembling maid to spill every detail.

Now, she couldn't stop smiling.

Overflowing with joy, practically glowing with delight.

So this is what it means when they say the gods answer prayers after all.

Emeriel's chapter would end tonight. Not by Sinai's own hand but by the hands of her Beloved. Her fated mate.

The poetic irony of it was almost too sweet to bear.

And even if the human somehow survived, even if she clung to life by some miracle, the nauseating romance between her and Daemonikai would officially crumble to dust.

There are some wounds even a fated bond cannot repair.

As Emeriel's screams rang out in the distance, Sinai began to whistle, her steps light as she spun around the confines of her cell.

Only a week ago, Emeriel's cries had been of an entirely different sort. Wails of pleasure spilled shamelessly into the night as she lay tangled in her Daemon's arms.

Sinai did not forget how sickening it had been to listen to those revolting sounds.

But tonight, oh, tonight, it was an entirely different melody. One Sinai found far more beautiful.

She paused mid-step, closing her eyes to savor the distant, tormented sounds. A slow laugh bubbled up from her chest.

For the first time since she'd been thrown into this godforsaken pit of hell, Sinai felt truly, wholly happy.

Humming happily, she resumed her dance, spinning and twirling to the tune of her melodious screams. "Who would have thought this year's Lantern Festival would come so early?"