

Chapter 285

THE LAST CHAPTER OF PART 3

GRAND LORD VLADYA

He and Grand Lord Ottai sat by the door until the early hours of dawn.

Emeriel's voice had long since failed her.

Reduced to raw, broken whispers of suffering. The girl was utterly spent.

Occasionally, a tired sob would slip from her lips, but otherwise, the air was deathly quiet, though they both knew the beast within was still active.

At one point during the night, Ottai had soaked his robes with tears.

His shoulders trembled as he listened to the horrors taking place beyond the thick wooden door.

Yet neither of them had moved, their promise holding them captive in that same position. Waiting. Hoping.

Because Vladya was fully attuned to the room beyond, he caught it first. The faint, almost undetectable sound of fangs piercing flesh.

His body snapped upright, every muscle coiled and alert.

"What's going on?" Ottai croaked, jerking awake from the shallow sleep that had finally claimed him.

"It's coming to an end," Vladya told him. "He is finally drinking from her."

Ottai's tipped ears flared, his senses sharpening as he, too, tuned in.

Vladya heard the stuttered rhythm of the beast's strokes. Low, muffled growls in the air as Daemonikai reached his peak.

But the drinking continued, dragging on as seconds turned into agonizing minutes.

Ottai rose to his feet. "We have to go in there. He will drain her completely."

But Vladya pressed a firm hand to Ottai's knee. "Not until she uses the safe word. We vowed."

"I know we did," he snapped, his teeth grinding audibly. "We have listened to her suffer through the entire night because of that damned promise! But Vlad, the girl is exhausted. What if she can't say it? What if she's too weak? Or she doesn't remember it? What if—"

"K-Keira..."

The soft, weak cry silenced them.

Vladya and Ottai sprang to their feet at the same time, rushing for the door handle, but Vladya got it first. Holding it in a death grip, he threw open the door, with a force that rattled the hinges.

The scene that greeted them was something out of a nightmare.

Daemonikai was still in his beast form, hovering over Emeriel at the far end of the room.

They were sprawled on the floor, the scent of blood and sex hanging thick in the air.

The once-immaculate bed was soaked in blood. The trails marked every corner of the room... everywhere he'd dragged her, taken her, ravaged her.

Their intrusion made the beast pause in his feeding, head whipping around, bloody fangs bared with menace.

But as the act of drinking ceased, the last of its strength abandoned him, and the beast collapsed onto the floor beside the motionless woman.

Emeriel hadn't moved, since they entered. Not a stir.

"Ukrai," Ottai cried sorrowfully, staring at her.

Vladya tried not to look.

Avoiding the broken figure curled on the floor, he stared at the beast now satisfied and slumbering peacefully.

"Now is our chance," he murmured, his voice hoarse. "We have to move him."

Dragging his eyes away from the girl, Ottai glanced at the unconscious beast. "What do we do with him?"

"He's still in beast form," Vladya replied grimly. "And we don't know when—or if—whatever's happening to him will fade. We're taking him to the Forbidden Chambers."

Ottai nodded, his face pale.

The two of them shifted into their beast forms and carried Daemon out of the blood-soaked room into the dark corridors of Blackstone.

The fortress was eerily silent. Hallways stretched ahead, empty of life. No servants moved about, no slaves loitered. Only the soldiers remained at their posts, still like statues.

As though the entire citadel was in mourning.

Maybe they were.

It was that night two years ago, all over again, when the court reached the decision to kill Feral Daemonikai.

The journey to the Forbidden Chambers of Frostfall was long. When they finally arrived, they sealed the beast inside, shutting the massive oak doors and metal gates behind them.

They dismissed the lone guard stationed there and returned to Blackstone, heading straight back to Aekeira's bedchamber where it all happened.

Emeriel still lay exactly as they had left her.

She hadn't moved from the fetal position she'd curled into, her face hidden beneath a cascade of tangled hair.

"I will take her," Vladya told Ottai who nodded, pained, remaining in the doorway.

Bending low, Vladya lifted Emeriel into his arms. She felt so light, so small, stirring his alpha instinct within him. Protect.

Too late.

Trying not to notice her bruises, he kept his gaze ahead, cradling her broken body like glass.

Vladya carried her from the chamber out to the hallway, bringing her to one of the master chambers in Blackstone.

Livia stood waiting inside with a few human slaves and Urekai maids. Her face was composed, but those swollen, red-rimmed eyes betrayed how much she had cried.

When Vladya entered, a young human girl began to sob openly at the sight of Emeriel.

"Amie, now is not the time to cry," Livia said sternly, though her own voice trembled. "Get the herb bag—quick!"

The girl scrambled to obey.

"Yella," Livia continued, "start preparing the potions."

As she issued more commands, Vladya laid the unconscious girl on the bed, while Ottai remained outside.

Finally, he allowed himself to take a good look at her.

Emeriel's knees were scabbed, dark with dried blood. One arm was swollen... bruised and mottled.

Several strands of her hair had fallen out, clinging to her sweaty bare skin. Bruises covered almost every part of her body.

Her complexion was nearly white, drained of blood. Even the bite mark on her neck was rough and open, the beast did not close the wound. It would scar—of that Vladya was certain.

Steeling himself, he elongated his fangs and leaned over her neck. Gently fitting his teeth over the bite, he pierced just enough to draw the faintest trace of her blood. The elixir in his own saliva activated, and he swiped his tongue over the wound to close it.

It was a small thing, a single wound among countless others, but it was something.

As he stepped back, Livia climbed onto the bed and parted Emeriel's thighs. Vladya looked away.

"Oh, heavens..." Livia said, a shaky whisper of horror.

Despite himself, Vladya turned his head... and stopped breathing.

The bruises on her thighs were worse. Deeper. Angrier.

Blood and semen mixed, staining her skin and the sheets beneath her.

She looked so small. So broken.

Vladya's chest felt like lead. As if a carriage had just unburdened its load on him.

How had it come to this? What could have went wrong?

How had Daemonikai and Emeriel stumbled onto this cliff?

Was it one they could ever hope to cross or was this the end of the road for both of them?

As Livia began cleaning the girl, the feeling in Vladya's chest grew. He rubbed his hand over it, trying to ease the ache... again and again.

Livia carefully wiped a cloth over Emeriel's bruised and bloodied privates, and the girl stirred for the first time, her eyelids fluttering weakly.

"St-stop... pl-please." Tears leaked from the corners of her tightly shut eyes. "Hurts..."

Vladya's eyes watered.

Turning away sharply, he walked away.

WATCH OUT FOR THE FINAL PART OF THIS SERIES.