

Chapter 29

An hour later, the pain had somewhat subsided, thanks to whatever Madam Livia had given him. He lay on the bed, topless, while Amie hovered nearby and as Madam Livia mixed some leaves in a bowl.

"You should do your best to avoid Mistress Sinai, Emeriel," Madam Livia advised. "Do everything you can to avoid becoming her target."

"I had no idea she had arrived, Madam, I swear. I greeted her as soon as I realized, but according to her, it was already too late." Emeriel recalled the searing pain of the whip slicing into his back. As Madam Livia applied herbs to his wounds and wrapped them in cloth. "It may sound absurd, but it felt as though she specifically targeted me. I have not done anything to incur her grudge or wrath."

Madam Livia remained silent, but her mind was clearly at work.

"Here, drink this," the woman eventually said, handing Emeriel a cup filled with a bitter concoction.

His face scrunched up, and he promptly returned the empty wooden cup.

"Get some rest. I know you must be tired. I will inform your slave master that you have been relieved of your duties for the rest of the day."

Emeriel's eyes widened with surprise. "Are you allowed to do that?" he asked in disbelief. Slaves being whipped was normal. He had never expected to receive any respite from his duties.

"Do not worry about it. Simply get some rest," Madam Livia offered no further explanation.

Grateful for her kindness, Emeriel thanked her. And with a sigh of relief, he allowed his head to rest on the pillow and closed his eyes.

A thought suddenly struck him, causing his eyes to snap open. "I have been meaning to ask you for something," he hesitated, feeling his cheeks grow warm.

"Okay, what is it?"

"I need some of those pills that can prevent pregnancy." Emeriel's words rushed out in a flurry. "The beast...um... You remember what happened that night. I need to make sure I do not...um... conceive from it or anything."

His request was met with shocked silence. The bedchamber was filled with uncomfortable stillness.

Then, Madam Livia's astonishment transformed into laughter. Genuine and full-blown.

It was the first time Emeriel had ever heard the head maid laugh, and the crinkles around her eyes made her appear more beautiful and youthful.

"What's so funny?" Emeriel asked, perplexed.

"Oh, Emeriel. I apologize for the laughter," Madam Livia finally spoke, trying to compose herself. "First of all, their beast form cannot impregnate a female. You need to take a knot in order to conceive, and they can only knot in their male or hybrid forms."

"Moreover, Urekai rarely give birth." The older woman wiped the tears in her eyes. "It is rather legendary how their species has fertility issues. Couples often take an average of twenty-to-forty years or more to have children. Many of them try for children for over a hundred years."

Oh. Emeriel found the revelation...rather sad. It explained a lot.

Most of these men had lived for two thousand years, and yet they either had no children or only a few.

"So, my dear, you have absolutely nothing to worry about. Plus, you were not even in full heat, and he ejaculated outside your womb. There is zero chance of you conceiving." She paused, still amused. "However, if it makes you feel better, I will give you the pills after your first full heat sex. Is that okay?"

At this point, there was truly no need for the pills, but Emeriel nodded, nonetheless. "Thank you, Madam Livia."

A few minutes later, Emeriel was alone. And sleepy.

The conversation about that night had triggered memories that stirred within him.

The sensation of the beast's rough edges pinning him down, the cruel thrusts of his organ plundering in and out of his trembling channel as if the creature had every right to claim him. Take him. Own him.

Moisture pooled between his legs. His confined nipples stiffened, and his body warmed. Emeriel groaned, quickly squeezing his legs together.

What in the world is wrong with me? Why does my mind constantly dwell on a beast that had caused me immense pain? Why am I so aroused?

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It had been a week since Emeriel's whipping when he was reassigned to the tavern again as a cellar slave.

He had done his best to avoid that place, even suggesting alternative work assignments when given the chance, but the slave master's glare shut him up. He had no other option.

There was a weekend gathering at the tavern, and they needed extra help.

Although Emeriel was fortunate to be paired with Amie, she appeared just as dispirited as he was.

As Emeriel entered the inn with Amie trailing behind him, all eyes turned towards them. Urekai males occupied each table, some sipping ale, others engaged in card games.

Tankards of ale and goblets of wine were raised in toasts, while storytelling and minstrel music filled the air.

In the dimly lit corners, some Urekai males had their slaves pleasuring them, while they laughed boisterously amidst their conversations. The tavern was bustling tonight.

Every step drew more eyes upon them as they made their way towards the counter.

"That boy is back again," Emeriel overheard someone mutter. Then, in a louder voice, the male called out, "Come here, slaves."

Emeriel wished he could pretend not to be the one summoned. However, with all those eyes fixed on him, he couldn't afford such a mistake.

He walked towards the male and stood before the table. "Good day, sirs," he greeted everyone at the table.

The Urekai male's large hand reached for his cheek and cradled it, frowning. "For a male, you have a ridiculously soft skin."

Hands groped his buttocks, touching and squeezing as if they had every right to do so.

Emeriel swallowed his revulsion, his body tense with the effort not to react.

"Yeah, you're right, Cypher. He's pretty soft, and that skin... as pale and beautiful as alabaster," one of them cheered. "Hey, slave, get down on your knees. You're going to suck me off."

Cypher glared at the other male. "Back off, Ralph. This one is mine."

He turned back to Emeriel. "Get on your knees. I think the boys would be happy to see you suck cock. But if you're going to suck cock, it sure as hell will be mine."

"But I'm needed in the cellar. I have to go inside—"

"You don't need to do anything except what we tell you," Cypher threatened, his eyes filled with rage. "If you don't want me to cut off your tongue, you'll do as I ask. Right. Now."

Emeriel's knees hit the floor. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a man roughly groping Amie, another pair of hands on her breasts.

With trembling hands, Emeriel reached for Cypher's breeches.