

## Chapter 299

“Argh!”

Grand Lord Zaiper grabbed his most prized flower vase, hurling it across the banqueting chamber. It shattered into a thousand glittering shards.

He reached for his finest ale gallon next and hurled it, the heavy vessel smashing against the far wall, amber liquid flowing down.

The chamber was already a mess. Broken goblets, upturned chairs, and fragments of once-beautiful decorations littering the floor.

And yet the chaos did nothing to sate his master’s anger.

“That conniving little whore!” Lord Zaiper roared, sweeping his arm across the banquet table.

Goblets, charlices, and plates clattered to the floor, the noise loud echoing through the hall.

Razarr swallowed a wince, remaining motionless in the corner. He hadn’t seen his master this destructively angry in a while. Lord Zaiper would regret all of this come morning when his fury finally subsided.

“How dare she?” Zaiper spat, turning his burning gray-and-yellow eyes on Razarr, who straightened immediately. “Is she mad? Deranged?”

He raked a hand through his hair. “She was not supposed to be in court. I saw the guilt in Daemonikai’s eyes—I could have gotten him to admit it if I had pressed harder. Declared him unfit to rule. But no! She had to come along and ruin everything!”

Seizing a decorative jara from the table, Zaiper smashed it against the floor.

It was time to intervene.

“Another opportunity will present itself, my lord,” Razarr said cautiously. “Your spell is still active. His mind is still in ruins. Sooner or later, everyone will see it.”

Zaiper rounded on him. “This was the perfect opportunity!” he shouted, gesturing wildly. “The signs were unknown to him! His instincts ruled him! Now, he will recognize the symptoms. He’ll know what to look for. And Daemonikai will never let it spiral out of control again. Knowing him, he will do everything in his power to make sure he never hurts that girl—or anyone else—again!”

Zaiper stomped to the other side of the room, his boots crunching against shattered glass.

“Sinai was right. I underestimated that little human too much.” Clenching his fists so tightly, his breath coming in sharp, shallow bursts. “As young and insignificant as she seems, she has managed to defy me at every turn. That girl has done a lot of damage to my plans.”

The grand lord glared at the wreckage of the table. “I should have forgotten my hunger for power, and instead used dark magic to kill that insufferable little human when I had the chance...! She’s the same one who brought Daemonikai back from feral two years ago. Who healed his mind, and then, his soul. Maybe I should stop trying to get to him first and focus all my energy on her.”

“I do not believe that would be wise, my lord.” Razarr reminded him in a careful tone. “Any direct attack on the girl could draw suspicion. Let Mistress Sinai take the credit—and the blame—for dealing with her. You should stay focused on His Grace.”

Zaiper spun on his heel. “And how exactly am I supposed to get to 'His Grace' when that tiny little ant thwarts me at every single turn?” Punching the wall beside him, the impact cracked the stone...and his bone. Blood spilled from his fist. "And I have used up all my favors with that Dark Mage too!"

Razarr had no idea what to do.

Lord Zaiper glared at the wall, flexing his bleeding hand. Then, those fierce gaze found Razarr once more. “Come here.”

Razarr did, until he was within arm’s reach. His master grabbed him by the neck and crashed their lips together.

Not a kiss of affection, but one of fury. Brutal. Punishing.

When Lord Zaiper finally pulled away, Razarr licked his lips, tasting blood where his teeth had cut. The lord cupped his cheeks.

“Go, wait for me in my bedchambers,” he growled with anger. "I want you naked and ready for me.”

Razarr nodded wordlessly, moving to obey. This night was not one he looked forward to.

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MISTRESS SINAI

Mistress Sinai sat in her dark cell, glaring at the distant wall. Hurting beyond words after hearing the events of the court.

She had been one hundred percent certain this was it.

“Why couldn’t she just die let everything return to its rightful place?” she muttered bitterly.

The sound of boots reached her ears. Rising, she faced the bars expectantly. The soldiers appeared moments later, their stoic faces illuminated by the dim torchlight.

“His Majesty the First requests your presence,” One said.

Yes! Sinai’s heart leaped in her chest.

Another turned the key in the lock, and the gate swung open. Two soldiers stepped inside, taking her firmly by the arms.

Excitement surged. After what felt like forever in this wretched hole, she was finally going to see him.

Finally, the chance to regain her freedom, reclaim her position. Her dignity. Her power.

She didn’t resist as they led her out. Chin held high as she was taken to one of the chambers in Frostfall.

The moment Sinai stepped inside, she inhaled deeply, her senses delighting in the scent of luxurious bathing oils. Her gaze landed on the steaming bath, its water infused with fragrant leaves, waiting for her in the corner.

For the first time in ages, she breathed in air that didn’t stink. Her lips stretched into the widest smile she had worn in months.

“Your bath is ready, Mistress,” one of the Urekai maids said, bowing low. “We have been instructed to help you bathe and dress. May we assist you in removing your clothes?”

“If you need to ask, then perhaps you are unfit for your position.” Sinai snapped at her. “Do you not see how filthy I am? Get on with it, you fool.”

The maid’s eyes widened. “A-alright, Mistress. I apologize.”

The others rushed forward, and the work began. They peeled away the grime-encrusted rags she’d been wearing.

The bath itself was divine. Warm water enveloped her body, the maids scrubbing away every trace of dirt and shame clinging to her during her time in the dungeon.