

Chapter 30

"Emeriel! Amie! To the cellar now!" Slave Master Boris's voice boomed in the air.

Emeriel snatched his hands back, quickly standing up. He had never been so relieved to hear his voice before.

"We're having fun, Boris," Cypher growled.

"Not with my slaves, and not now. We're short-handed. They're needed in the cellar," Boris firmly reinstated. "Unless you gentlemen aren't ready to get your ales as you want them."

Grumbling discontentedly, they released Emeriel and Amie, and the two hurried towards the cellar.

Inside, Master Gaine sat mixing drinks, his brow furrowed. "You're late."

"They weren't. The fellows wanted a piece of them," Master Boris said before they could talk.

"Stupid old fools." Master Gaine grunted, continuing to mix ale with cider. "Emeriel get in here and help with this. Amie, go out and serve more customers."

They got to work without further delay.

"Just drop the food in and get out, Clay," The soldier ordered outside the metal gates of the forbidden chambers.

"I simply want to get a closer look at it. Besides, it is crouched lazily behind the barricade. I have always wondered what the grand king looked like up close." His friend inched closer, daring to press his face to the gate. "Creator, his beast is magnificent."

"You have only worked here for months. Take advice from soldiers who have been here before you—you do not want to be standing so close to that beast."

"Pfft. It is not as dangerous as you all make it out to be, Sage." Clay waved him off. "Wow, his talons are much more prominent than I've ever seen. Perhaps he will—"

An eerie sound rang through the air.

Sage turned around to face the chamber, a chill sliding down his body at the sight before him.

The beast stood in the center of the room, licking the blood off its hand.

Clay's lifeless body lay in one corner, while his head, torn from his neck, bled in another.

Sage stood frozen, unable to move.

The beast's yellow eyes fixed upon him, and he found the strength and bolted.

He ran through the haunting corridors of the forbidden chambers making his way towards Blackstone. Grand Lord Vladya had sternly instructed them to inform him of incidents like this.

Sage arrived at the ruler's door and announced himself.

GRAND LORD VLADYA

With his soldiers trailing behind him, Lord Vladya made his way to the southern wing. "I reckon his food is already on the floor. Have the cook serve a new meal. I want it quickly delivered in the forbidden chambers."

"As you wish, your highness." The guard bowed, then hastened away.

When Vladya reached the forbidden chambers, the meal was indeed on the floor, covered in blood. The beast was back behind its barricades, staring at him with lazy eyes.

An amateur might mistake it for nonchalance, but Lord Vladya knew better. It was deceiving its prey, silently hunting, waiting to pounce.

"Leave us," he commanded.

Bowing slightly, the soldiers departed.

"Is this one of those days you refuse to eat?" VLadya asked, eyeing the beast.

"You do remember that while the blood sustains us as Urekai, we still need food, right?" And Vladya needed him to consume those herbs.

After Daemonikai turned feral, Vladya spent a fortune on thousands of herbs.

According to the mages, some were meant to clear the mind. To soothe and calm. Reduce madness. Provide solace.

Some diminished the beast's power, giving the male form greater control.

He had thought that by administering all those herbs—all those pills, and potions—that Daemonikai's mind would miraculously return.

Grand Lord Vladya snorted.

Of course, now he finally accepted how fruitless and futile it was. But old habits die hard.

So, even after all these centuries, he still procured supplies of those herbs and made sure the beast consumed them regardless.

A soldier arrived with the tray of food.

"Place it there," Vladya pointed at a corner, his eyes not straying from the beast.

When they were alone again, Vladya bared his neck, gritting his teeth as he did so. His beast roared and raged inside him. "We do NOT submit to anyone!"

Within seconds, the beast emerged from its barricades and stood before Vladya. After sniffing him, the beast snorted and backed away.

Vladya brought in the large tray consisting of all kinds of steak and just a few vegetables.

Minutes passed while Vladya waited patiently, but the beast simply ignored the food. He tried everything he could, but the beast ended up spurning them.

An hour and four plates later, Vladya knew there was no escaping it. If he wanted the beast to eat, he needed to exhaust it.

Fighting ferals was never a wise course of action, but it was the only way. With a resigned deep breath, Vladya allowed his beast to surface.

Two Urekai alpha beasts now faced each other. Huge. Domineering. While one reeked of aggression, the other was placating.

They bumped heads together, and then the fight began. The feral fought to kill, while the other defended, actively engaging the feral.

It was brutal. Savage. Lethal.

After what felt like an eternity, the beast grew tired. Exhaustion hit Vladya as he shifted back into his human form. He had bruises, some bleeding profusely, while others were light scratches.

But Daemonikai was finally eating—the beast had no choice; it needed to replenish after exerting so much strength in the fight. It was instinct.

Vladya dressed in the spare clothes his men had prepared for him and left the forbidden chambers. With his troop of soldiers dismissed, he walked alone.

Then, he saw her. The slave princess, Aekeira.

She carried a bucket filled with water on her head. If Vladya were to guess, she was on duty to fill the large drums. He paused for a moment and observed her.

The girl was stunning—no human had the right to possess such beauty. And she wore her royalty like a cloak, even in her slave garments.

That inexplicable attraction surged through him. Alien. Overpowering.

Followed by anger, extinguishing the attraction as soon as it arose. Burning hot. Raging.

She had no right to evoke such feelings within him. No matter how transient they are, she had NO right. No human had that power.

How dare she?

For a second, he took a step forward. His hands fisted. He needed to punish her.

Humans and their audacity. How dare she arouse such emotion inside him? He practically shook with the need to make her hurt.

"You must return to Blackstone, Your Highness. You need to feed," Yaz's voice made him pause.

His head soldier stood by the wall, looking at him with concern.

"I dismissed you all, Yaz. You did not leave with the others?"

"No, my lord."

Lord Vlayda was not surprised. And Yaz was right; he did need to feed.

With a last look of pure loathing directed at the girl, he turned and walked in the opposite direction, back to Blackstone.