

Chapter 333

GRAND KING DAEMONIKAI

The healer stepped back, wiping her hands on a cloth. "It is confirmed, Your Grace. Your female is with child."

Daemonikai heard the words. He even processed them, understood what they meant. And yet... "What?"

The healer smiled. "Congratulations."

That doesn't seem right. "No one gets pregnant from a mini-heat."

"Your female just did."

"But, she does not have the scent of—"

"Your Highness," she called, patiently. "She truly is pregnant."

Pregnant.

Was this real?

After years of longing, of praying to gods who had turned deaf to his pleas, who had taken from him instead of giving... Could this truly be happening?

"A-are you sure?" His knees felt weak, and he gripped the edge of the wooden table.

"I am certain," she reassured him. "She is four to five weeks along."

Daemonikai's eyes shifted to Emeriel's sleeping form, his heart drumming. She lay beneath the covers, her face serene, her breathing soft.

"Your Highness," The healer's voice held an emotional tremor. "I cannot believe this happened for you so quickly."

"Congratulations, Your Grace," Faiwick, the Royal Healer, said from the doorway, where Daemonikai had chased him earlier.

The examination had required intimate checks, and the moment Faiwick had attempted to touch Emeriel, Daemonikai's instincts had flared. He had seized the healer by the throat and hurled him across the room.

"Do not touch my woman! Mine!" he had snarled.

Faiwick, gasping from the impact, had raised his hands in surrender. "Yours! I only wish to check for—"

"Mine!" Daemonikai had raged.

Which, of course, had left the Head Royal Healer with no choice but to flee the bedroom, leaving his second, a female, to finish the examination.

They had put Emeriel to sleep for the procedure, though she had stirred at times. That alone had been enough to keep Daemonikai tense, prowling, restless, his protective instincts all over the place.

For hours, he had paced the chamber, fighting the growing worry chewing him up inside, wondering what was wrong with her, terrified of what it could mean.

Now, he had his answer.

Still, it felt like an illusion, as if his yearning soul was conjuring a dream too sweet to be real.

He was trying to control his happiness. The hope growing in him.

"I need you to say it again, healer." My voice is fucking shaking.

"You are going to be a father again."

"Vladya! Emeriel is with child!" He called out, chest heaving with laughter. Pure joy!

The doors burst open, and Vladya was suddenly there. Hot on his heels was Aekeira, who had spent the night so restless.

The open door.

Daemonikai ran through it, onto the balcony, where he threw his head back and roared.

It rose through the celebration, through the chattering of people and music.

The next roar was a thunderous declaration, louder and fiercer. A call to celebrate. A proclamation of triumph.

Inside him, the elation and joy was too enormous to suppress. Even after the third roar, it was not enough.

So, he whirled around and ran. His feet pounded against stone as he moved through the corridor, past the intersection, down the spiraling stairs, and out into the open yard.

Then he was shifting into his beast form, the wind whipping around him as he circled around the citadel three times. Exulting in the release, the power in every sinew. The sharp spines of his tail beat the air, then scraped the ground. Fire that could not be held in burned his chest. She is carrying my child. My. Child.

At last, he skidded to a stop in the heart of the courtyard, lifted his head to the sky and roared again.

The people fell to their knees around him.

Transforming back into his male form, Daemonikai collapsed on the ground. Then he began to laugh. Deep, unbridled, chest heaving laughter.

He stared skyward, watching the stretch of stars. Tears blurred his vision. Still, he laughed.

"How does it feel?"

Daemonikai did not turn. Vladya settled himself on the ground beside him.

"Indescribable." He was still grinning. "I am going to be your father again, Vladya."

"I know how you feel. It is mesmerizing, is it not? I know the depth of your joy. Congratulations, Ancient One."

"I had no trouble persuading you to accept your own impending fatherhood, yet now I find myself gripped by fear." He sprang upright, smile dimming a bit. "I dread moving from here. I fear that if I breathe wrongly, this dream will shatter."

"It is no dream," Vladya nudged him. "It is as real as the blood in our veins, my friend. Both our females conceived in their last heat. Aekeira from her first full heat, Emeriel from a mini-heat."

"Miraculous, isn't it?"

"Wondrous. Tremendous. Phenomenal. I have a lot of words for it really. But what matters most is: you and I—" Vladya smirked "—we are to be fathers."

"We are," Daemonikai nudged him back. "We did it. We fucking did it, Vladya."

"Fuck yeah, we did." Vladya's voice dropped low. "I went straight for the womb."

"That night? Same here. Pounded the hell out of it. It was a damn battle—and I won."

"Hell yeah, we did." The two males slapped hands hard. "Showed Mother Nature who's fucking boss. Now we've got fruits buried in there, already starting to grow."

"And it's going to grow strong. We'll make damn sure of it." Daemonikai sprang to his feet, energy renewed. "Come, we need to return. I must hear all the healers have to say. I couldn't hold back—I had to release it."

Vladya chuckled as he rose. "The people will be waiting to hear the news that stirred such roars of joy."

"As they should," Daemonikai replied. "I will make an official announcement soon."

"Alright, let's do it," Vladya agreed.

"Yeah?"

"Fuck yeah. Let's shout it across the citadel— let the whole damn world know what rare gems our females are."

Daemonikai grinned. "Deal."