

Chapter 336

The Oracle invaded Zaiper's chamber. Standing before him like an ancient, avenging angel, fury burning in her ancient eyes.

"This must be a dream," Zaiper was trying not to show his fear. "You should not be here."

Those scary eyes bored into him. "Why have you not confessed to your heinous crimes?"

"Surely, you didn't really believe I would do so?" His laugh was humorless as he sat up abruptly. "Daemonikai would tear my soul right out of my damn body!"

"It would be less than you deserve, you despicable creature!" she hissed. "You are a disgrace to the Dragaxlov name! Your great-grandfather would writhe in his grave!"

Zaiper glared at her, feeling like a chastised child. He hated it.

"However, if you confess to your crimes, if you come clean on your own, I may intervene to ensure your survival," she said in a steadier voice. "You will pay for your sins for centuries to come, but you will retain your life. All you have to do is stand before the nation you betrayed and bring your crimes to the light."

"I decline your offer."

"You cowardly fool."

"I know your motives. You don't want to die, do you? That's why you are pushing me to come clean on my own." He laughed maniacally. "Nice try."

"I do not engage in frivolous discourse with frightened children. The minor ritual I performed to be here in spirit is a final courtesy to your lineage. Go to court and confess."

"You cannot force me to do this!" Zaiper roared, shooting out of his bed. Now just furious. "All I ever wanted was to rule! To provide the people with the life they deserve, to conquer nations and kingdoms, to have the entire world groveling at our feet! What is wrong with that?"

The Oracle did not move nor speak.

"We are Urekai!" His chest heaved, eyes wild. "The rest of the world should tremble before us! We should unleash our beasts upon the world, dominating and destroying all who stand in our path! This is our nature, our birthright!"

He fisted his hands tightly, spitting the name like the curse it was. "But Daemonikai... he restrains us. Made us appear weak. Tamed us." His rage grew, as he advanced a step. "Just as it is for every Urekai who has gone feral, I thought his madness would be his end, so I slaughtered his family. Oh, I killed them in the most brutal ways possible, and let me tell you, old woman... I. Enjoyed. Every. Minute. Of. It."

Zaiper moved to shove her... only for his hands to ghost through her form like mist dispersing in the wind.

"Argh! Fucking old lady!" He lost his footing, struggling to steady himself.

She merely watched him with a blank face.

"Do you know what I enjoyed most?" He ran his tongue over his lips. "Watching the humans bind Kristoff to a tree as I stood before him, looking my dear brother in the eyes as I told him—The Northern Throne will never be yours, just before I beheaded him."

Pure fury contorted the Oracle's features.

Now that he had begun talking, he simply could not stop. It felt so damn good to say it out loud.

"And the look of betrayal on his face?" Zaiper cackled. "The pain in his eyes as he took his last breath? Poetic."

The Oracle's lips thinned. "You accursed monster."

"Which reminds me... where is his son?"

There was no reaction. Not that Zaiper expected one.

"You see, it never really bothered me because the boy has remained hidden for over two millennia. I'm certain he's out there somewhere, living his own pathetic little life. He would never dare set foot in this fortress and declare himself Kristoff Dragaxlov's heir," he stated, grinning widely. "But still, I would very much like to know his whereabouts."

"And you genuinely think I will tell you that?"

"No, no, of course not. I know you will not, which is a pity." Zapier clicked his tongue. "I would've enjoyed gutting him as well. Make sure no one else comes for my throne while I continue to plot my conquest of all the clans!"

"Look what hunger for power has done to you," she said in heavy disgust, shaking her head. "Greed. Unmitigated wickedness."

Zapier backed up to the edge of his bed, and sat. "You know the best part of it all? They have no idea." His body shook with laughter. "I stay in the shadows, weaving my webs, playing my games, orchestrating countless conspiracies, achieving victory upon victory, and yet... They. Have. No. Idea."

He was laughing so hard, tears slipped from his eyes. "I'm very clever, you see. I leave no trace, no trail, nothing. I make it look so natural. Take a look at Daemonikai—he mounted his female into a half-dead state, but because he's a feral survivor, he has no idea what to think. Is it a resurface? Dark magic? Or was it all that crazy maze-trap mind of his? He treads uncharted territory." Zapier wiped the tears from his face. "I thought of all those things quite carefully, deciding... it was worth using up my last favors. The perfect plan. How was the big bad beast supposed to know it was all me?" He shook his head, marveling at his own cleverness. "Even you, Old Lady, have to admit I'm a genius."

The Oracle could not look any more repulsed.

"And now, he plans to start another family." Zaiper barked another laugh. "I have no plan in mind yet, but I can tell you the end. I'll lie in wait for the pretty princess's belly to swell fully. Perhaps seven months? Eight? Then I'll capture her, plunge my hand into her pathetic human body, and rip the little one out of her."

Something dark and deadly crossed the Oracle's face.

"I may take her sister too, I don't know. It will be entertaining, do you not agree?" He tapped his finger against his knee, thinking. "Just like Evie watched me slay her son before I ended her too, I will extend the same fate to the human princesses."

The old lady finally moved, traversing the distance to stop so close he could feel the power radiating off her.