

## Captive Slave 364

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### Chapter 364

#### PRINCESS EMERIEL

Emeriel wouldn't go so far as to say she was avoiding her beloved. But if one were to put it that way... well, there was little she could do to deny it.

She was beyond mortified. Embarrassed didn't begin to cover it. Chagrined... that, and so much more.

The things she had said. The things she had done in the early morning hours.

As soon as she'd woken that afternoon, the memories had been merciless, striking her and bludgeoning her. She had wanted nothing more than for the ground to open and swallow her whole.

But, of course, the ground had done no such thing, because her luck was dreadful.

So she had done the next best thing. She had quickly freshened up and all but fled to the plantations, spending the remainder of the day there. She kept herself busy inspecting crops, checking for pests, issuing instructions to the workers. But her mind...

Her mind was on her highly unladylike behavior. On the whorish things she had said. Words that belonged in the shadowed corners of a brothel, not from a princess's lips.

When it came time to rest, she sat beneath the shaded expanse of an old tree, one hand resting over her belly as she watched the workers in the distance.

"My princess," one of the young girls approached, offering a respectful bow. "Will you be meeting the court scribe today?"

She was supposed to. She helped her grand king with paperwork, easing his burdens in whatever small way she could, but today... Emeriel shook her head and the girl left. Not today.

She would not be collecting parchments. Not if it risked running into him.

"Sometimes in the dark of night when he is away, I part my thighs, and I touch myself. I pretend it's him."

She winced, squeezing her eyes shut. Oh, by the stars...

But in the midst of her mortification came a memory that warmed her heart despite everything. The way he held her, spoke to her, looked at her.

"It doesn't matter if our bond doesn't return. We will perform a bonding ritual. I would rather have you as my bondmate, go through the rites and vows, than not to have you at

all."wWw.π©veLwör©.cOm

Her chest filled with something tender, and she blinked hard against the tears stinging her eyes. She still couldn't quite believe he'd said that.

Two years ago, their bond had felt like a cage, a trap neither of them could escape. Now, the bond was gone, yet they were desperate to reclaim it, willing to undergo ancient rites to forge a non-natural bond just for a chance to belong to one another.wWw.ñOVIElwoRMl.cOm

The irony. Oh, the gods must be laughing. They must be having such fun with us.

"Haven't we suffered enough?" Emeriel whispered, staring out across the endless rows of crops.

"Could you not take pity on us?"

With a tired sigh, she let her eyes fall closed. Just for a moment.

But the moment stretched, and soon she had wandered into sleep under the quiet rustle of leaves and the distant hum of workers.

It was late evening by the time she returned to the fortress, exhausted, her back aching. Ugh. She could use sleep again. But when wasn't she sleepy these days?

She rubbed at the small of her back and looked down at her belly. "See the things you put me through."

Drawing a deeper breath, she pushed open the doors of her bedchamber, and came to a halt.WwW.NOvElwo(r)m.cOm

Five human servants stood in formation, bowing low. A tub had been drawn and stood steaming in one corner, fragrance in the air. Fresh garments were neatly arranged across her bed, pins and combs laid out in meticulous order beside them.

One of the women stepped forward with a polite smile. "His Majesty has ordered us to see to you, prepare you, and bring you to him, my lady."

Emeriel's heart did a somersault.

Bring her to him? What could be the reason? Did he need more blood?

Her cheeks lit up at the thought.

She didn't have long to ponder. The servants crowded around her as they began to undress her and prepare her. She was guided into the scented bathwater, where they bathed her with efficiency.

Emerging from the water, she was dried with soft cloths and dressed in a gown the finest blue silk. It was light as air against her skin, new and smelling faintly of something sweet and clean.

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"The Grand King bought this today for you, my lady," one of the women whispered confidentially with a secret smile.

Emeriel glowed, her cheeks hotter. She lowered herself into the chair they indicated, and they worked, weaving her hair, fixing the pins among the dark strands.

"Where are we going?" she asked as they finally led her out of the building and into the courtyard.

"It's a surprise, Princess," one of the girls said, her tone excited.

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They remained within the fortress walls, venturing to a secluded part of the vast Citadel-one Emeriel had never been to before. This wing was reserved for the royal rulers alone.

The Stonework here was older, the architecture grand and somber, as though it belonged to an even older age.

They passed beneath a covered walkway framed in dark wood, then entered what seemed like an annex Soldiers stood discreetly on the grounds, and several Urekai workers tasks. She was led through a long, quiet hall until they reached the door at its end.

moved about quietly withers

Wegai bowed low and opened the door without a word.

She was nervous. But taking a deep breath, she walked into the dark chamber.

The shadows wrapped around her like a warm cloak, but she could feel him there. Then a flicker of flame came from candles glowing to life, chasing the darkness away. And there he was.

Daemonikai lounged in a reclining chair, dressed in loose evening wear. His tunic unbuttoned, revealing the expanse of his chest and the sharp cut of his collarbone. His dark hair was loose, falling around him like a silken veil.

"Hello, radiant star," he said softly.

Emeriel glanced around the chamber arranged with a care that tugged at her heart. Candles flickered everywhere, red roses were strewn across the bed in wild, beautiful disarray, filling the air with their perfume. The ambiance was tender, romantic.

Her body lit up from within. "My king," the words were thick with her feelings.

Daemonikai unfolded from his chair and crossed to her. He circled slowly, deliberately, like a lover, like a predator, before stopping in front of her. His hands found her waist, and he drew her close.

"Tonight, in this chamber, you will feel me again," he said in a deep voice. His eyes held deep hunger and, at the same time, tenderness. "I will erase that memory from your mind, dearest, and replace it with sweeter ones that will never leave you."

Emeriel's breath shuddered, and she nodded eagerly. She wanted this so badly.

But deep inside, something coiled tight with anxiety. What if it didn't work? What if she failed again?

Daemonikai's hand tilted her chin. "For this night, I want you to clear your mind and only focus on me." His thumb caressed her jaw. "And I brought help."

Help?