

Captive Slave 372

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"I see nothing wrong with your eyes, Princess."

Emeriel stared at the eye healer, shaking her head slowly. "No, you don't understand. I see colors. And they're even more vivid now. Eyes in proper condition shouldn't see colors, Healer."

The Urekai woman packing her materials, paused. She turned to face Emeriel fully, expression unreadable. "Tell me more about these colors you see."

"There's not much to tell. I can't name the colors; they're not ones I recognize, and they're not always there. They come and go. Sometimes I see them when I'm looking at someone. I" She exhaled, frustration bleeding into her voice. "I don't know how to put it into words."

The healer folded her arms thoughtfully. "My opinion? It may be connected to your pregnancy. Everyone experiences it differently. This may be your body's unique reaction. I wouldn't worry too much."

Emeriel almost told her that Aekeira, who was also with child, hadn't mentioned any such symptoms. But then again, her belly was already larger than Aekeira's, despite them having conceived the same night. Perhaps the healer was right. No two pregnancies were ever truly the same, and symptoms vary wildly, even between sisters.

Still, doubt lingered. Could this truly be some strange symptom of pregnancy?

The question stayed with her as she stepped out of the healer's dwelling, making her way toward the main fortress. She still found herself surprised by how vast Ravenshadow truly was—new corridors and hidden lanes seemed to reveal themselves each day, each one filled with lives and lifestyles so different from what she had known.

Back in Frostfall, she approached the Royal Residence when a soldier intercepted her path with a crisp bow.

"A letter has arrived addressed to the Grand King."

"I'll take it. Thank you," Emeriel replied, accepting the parchment.

She carried it directly into Daemonikai's study, intending to leave it on his desk. But as she leaned to place it down, the parchment slipped from her fingers, unfurling as it struck the floor.

Bending to retrieve it, her eyes caught a few lines of its contents and paused. From Herodis?

Heart quickening, she stood and carefully unfolded the letter for a proper read. You were right, Your Grace. It is never too late to follow a new path, never too late to change our course.

For so long, I have denounced the name Dragaxlov, forgetting that a name itself is neither ugly nor honorable—it is the people who shape its meaning. Only they can stain it, and only they can restore its glory.*Www.noëwOrMl.ce(m)*

Dragaxlov is my birthright, my heritage, and I am ready to claim it. I will walk this new path. I, Gustazlion Herodis Duonavaar Dragaxlov, accept your benevolent offer.

I will pay a proper visit to Ravenshadow Citadel during court this evening. I am ready-eager to learn from you and the other Grand Rulers, to absorb all the teachings and partake in all the trainings. To follow in your footsteps, hoping that in time, I will prove myself worthy of the Grand Crown.

From the hands of Herodis Dragaxlov.

Emeriel sniffled, smiling as she wiped the tears gathering in her eyes. "I love this so much for you, my dear friend."*wWw.neV.eIworM.Co@*

Folding the letter with care, she placed it on the desk. She wanted to be there to welcome Herodis when he arrived, so she needed to finish all her evening errands early to make that possible.

"Oh! I need to get Amie. Let's go shop for the new garden tools while we still have the light." With that, she hurried from the study, sending word ahead for her Amie to be called.

Emeriel emerged from the Royal Residence, dressed in full formal attire—her regal silks draping elegantly, her bodyguards close behind as she made her way toward the slave quarters. The maids she'd sent to Amie had returned empty-handed. Amie wasn't in her chambers, nor was she present at any of her assigned posts.

Even the woman dispatched to question Madam Livia returned with little information. According to the head maid, she and Amie had parted ways that morning after collecting herbs together.

Concern growing, Emeriel searched through Frostfall herself, her steps quickening with every unanswered question.

"Where could she be?" she muttered, worry creasing her brow as she rounded a

corner.

A young slave girl approached hesitantly, her cheeks stained with dried tears, eyes swollen and red.

"Good day, Your Highness. I—"

Emeriel stopped, her expression softening with concern. "What is your name?"

"Beliah, Your Highness."

"What's the matter, Beliah?"

"My friend... Amie. She—" the girl sniffled, voice breaking.

"Amie?" Emeriel asked quickly. "You know where she is?"

"She told me not to tell anyone but..."

"Do you have any idea where she might be?" Emeriel's voice took on an edge.

"Tell me everything. Now."

Beliah swallowed hard. "After you gave the order placing her under your protection, everyone left her alone. But... there's a slave master. His name is Kenta. He—he says he likes her. He brings her flowers sometimes, but then he grabs her, touches her roughly, even when she says no. Amie hated it. She finally worked up the courage to reject him two nights ago."

Beliah wiped her face with both hands, choking back more tears. "A few hours ago, while we were out running errands, he sent two Urekai to come and get her."

"Why did you keep this to yourself?" Emeriel demanded furiously. "Why tell no one?"

"She begged me not to. I'm sorry, Princess. I didn't know what to do."

Emeriel turned to her guards. "Who can take me to this slavemaster's quarters?"

One stepped forward without hesitation and led her through the lower courtyards, down the narrow paths that wound toward the worker domains—the section of

Ravenshadow Emeriel preker

avoid.

The closer they got, the louder the sounds of barking orders and cracking whips. It stirred old memories—unwanted ones. Memories of three years past, when she too had walked these paths in bare feet, carrying buckets, shouted at by these same men.

Some of their faces she recognized. Slavemasters who had once ordered her about now dropped their gazes and bowed low as she passed, storming through with fire in her eyes. No one dared speak.

They reached Kenta's quarters—a modest structure of stone and old wood. One of her guards moved to knock, but Emeriel didn't wait. She shoved the door open and stepped inside.

Two Urekai males sat playing cards in the cramped sitting room. At the sound of

the door slamming, they leaped to their feet, expressions turning to scowls—until they saw who it was.*Ww(w).nOvE/VOrMl.com*

"Your Highness!" they chorused, heads lowering in a rushed bow. "Forgive us, what brings you here?"

A muffled sound came from the back room... a door behind them, barely closed. Anger steaming in her, Emeriel strode past them without a word, flinging the wooden door open.

There, on the floor, was Amie.

She was naked on her knees, hands bound behind her back. Tears streamed from

her eyes as the slavemaster forced his manhood down her throat. Choked noises filled the room.

The male jolted backward, yanking himself away in horror as he saw who stood there. "Princess Emeriel...!"*w@w.n@VleWOrMl.cômm*

"My Princess!" Amie cried, scrambling toward her. She hid behind Emeriel's back, trying to cover herself with trembling hands.

"Princess, to what do I owe—"

Emeriel slapped him, hard. His head snapped to the side, the sound heard through the walls.

"But Princess—" he began.

She struck him again, backhanded this time, snapping his head in the opposite

direction.

A low growl came from the slavemaster's throat, his eyes flaring yellow as he glared at her.

Emeriel stepped in close, face inches from his. "Do something. I dare you."