

Captive Slave 377

Chapter

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This century will be remembered as one that witnessed her greatest fury. Could any day go by without her seething in rage?

Mistress Sinai marched closer to the manor's crumbling corridor, where Zaiper's voice boomed like a roaring fire.

They were hiding-again-in one of the many abandoned manors scattered across the outer territories. And today, he was boiling.

"Fifty soldiers!" Zaiper roared. Glass shattered against the wall. "Fifty trained and capable soldiers!"

Sinai halted just outside the door, pressing herself flat to the wall, listening.

"I've invested centuries of gold, sweat, and planning into building you and your men, preparing you for war while the rest of the realm slept." Another crash, another shattered object. "I trained you all in silence while the world turned a blind eye. My soldiers. My effort. And what did that leave me with? A heap of corpses! All for one mission-one mission-to kill a human

female!"**wvw.nO(·)elwô(·)m.Com**

The fury in his voice climbed higher. Another explosion of sound followed... something heavier this time, splintering wood perhaps.

"HOW DOES THIS MAKE SENSE!?"

Sinai pressed her lips together tightly. He was unraveling. Completely unhinged.

"We nearly succeeded in capturing the girl," Kady, the soldier who seemed to be replacing Razarr, said. "But the Grand King arrived. And not just him—the third ruler as well. I saw it happen from a distance. Our men never stood a chance."

"Fifty trained warriors," Zaiper spat. "Armed with lethal vials capable of downing our kind. And not one of them could take out two males?" His voice dipped into a quiet, menacing snarl. "And what about you, Kady? Hiding on a hill, watching your comrades die, then scuttling back here with nothing but your useless life. No corpse. No capture. No intelligence. Nothing."

"But my lord—"

A loud slap and the sound of a body hitting the floor.

Sinai flinched. He's really lost it. What in all the hells was I thinking, coming to him for protection? This male is deranged!**lwWw.Nov(·)L@ (·)Γ(·)m.cOm**

"I have no army!" Zaiper paced hard across the creaking floorboards. "A king without a throne! Without soldiers! Useless!" He exhaled harshly. "At the very least, tell me she was damaged. That something happened to the abomination growing inside her."

"One of ours roughed her up before the Grand King arrived," Kady's voice came, low.

"Now, that's the kind of news I—" **lwWw.NoVéLwôRm.côm**

"But... the Grand King arrived before any lasting harm could be done."

Something heavy was slammed onto the floor.

"Your men are worthless. Every last one. Now they're nothing but a bunch of worthless, rotting corpses. Razarr would have succeeded. He wouldn't have failed me." Another beat. "Tell me, Kady, how is someone like him dead... and you are still alive?"

"I apologize, Your Majesty," came the emotionless reply.

Sinai narrowed her eyes at the door. Zaiper was beyond unstable. She couldn't decide if he was terrifying... or pathetic. Maybe both.

Is this the male I cast my lot with? What the hell was I thinking?

Kady spoke again. "If I may make a suggestion..."

A deep, angry breath-an effort to find calm.

"Considering how empty it is up there, you can try."

"I say we prepare for the eclipse night," Kady said. "The quarter moon is too frequent; it'll be here any night now. We do everything like we did five centuries ago-use the dark mage to glimpse the night of the eclipse, strike fast, steal the Chalice so they can't defend themselves, and then we kill everything we want. Everyone they hold dear. This time, the Grand King dies. So does Grand Lord Vladya. We finish it."

Zaiper was quiet for a moment.

"There's a problem with that plan, don't you think, Kady?" he said finally. "First, I have no army left to go to war with. Second, I've already used up my credits with the dark mage. In the past, it was easier to get favors because he owed me his life. We had a blood pact-specific terms and limited favors, all measured carefully against the cost of his magic. That balance is now paid in full." A hard exhale. "Are you aware of the price of magic for revealing significant information about the future?"

"Blood?"

"Blood," Zaiper affirmed. "The blood of a noble, to be precise."

Kady was quiet.

"If it had been in the past, when the kingdom was still oblivious to our movements, it would have been easier to snatch someone of noble birth," Zaiper continued. "But now? Everywhere is fortified. Every border locked down. We only made it to Ravenshadow last time because of help from our spy-help that's burned now. They'll have doubled their defenses. Tell me, Kady, where do you suppose I'll find a noble to bleed?"

Mistress Sinai shook her head, straightening. Without his title, his army, or his gold, he's nothing. Disorganized. Powerless. And clearly slipping.

She should've left the moment she sensed it. Not too late for that.

Sinai turned, taking a single step.

"What about the Mistress?"

Her foot came to an abrupt stop.

The soldier's voice was calm as he continued. "She's of noble birth. And frankly... she knows too much. What's to stop her from turning on you tomorrow?"

"She has her reasons not to," Zaiper said, dismissive. "Sinai and I go way back. She knows better than to cross me. She knows what I'm capable of."

A pause. "What you were capable of, my lord," Kady said coolly. "No offense, but times have changed. You're not who you once were... and no one really knows what she's capable of now."

Sinai's pulse thundered in her ears. That filthy snake.

"She knows too much," Kady went on. "This isn't personal. It's a matter of means. If we're to succeed in this fight, we have to use every tool. we've got. We need that information. And we should be willing to pay whatever it takes."

Sinai waited for Zaiper to laugh, to dismiss it.

"Mmm." Zaiper's voice lingered. Thoughtful.

He was considering it.

She turned fully now, eyes wide, staring at the closed door that had become the only barrier between her and betrayal. He was actually weighing the cost of sacrificing her.

Her hands trembled at her sides.

Yes, I knew what kind of man he was, but even devils should have rules. Even devils should have a line they don't cross.

She'd lied. Killed. Betrayed kingdoms. But even she had a code. And he'd just broken theirs.

"We do need that information,"

Zaiper said slowly. "If I can kill of the grand rulers and wipe out their bloodlines, the kingdom will cripple. It'll be the first real step toward seizing the throne by force.

Sinai stepped back. Another step. Then she turned and fled down the corridor.**(·)lwWw.NoVeLwôRm.cOm**

In her dim, drafty chamber, she tore open the chest and began to pack quickly, frantically.

What had she been thinking?

Zaiper is mad. Drunk on revenge. He doesn't even see people anymore-only pieces on a board.

Sinai swiped angrily at the tears rolling but didn't stop moving.

"You'll pay for this, Zaiper," she whispered through clenched teeth. "I swear it."

Sinai moved quickly through the woods, the dying light of evening casting shadows between the trees.

Plan A had failed spectacularly. She had placed her bet on a rotted crown and was nearly sacrificed for it. Now, it was time for Plan B.

She adjusted the weight of her pack and pressed on. "At least I have money stashed away," she said to herself. "I need to buy a horse. Tonight, if possible."

She would wait until nightfall, then

make her way to the docks and board one of the merchant vessels headed toward the Werewolf borders. It would be risky-most Urekai were already migrating home for the eclipse night, and only a fool would travel outward. But Sinai had little choice.

As a fugitive, she would take what she could get. Once she crossed into werewolf territory, she'd disappear... lay low for a century or two. She'd done it before.

I'll do it again.

She was almost out of the woods when a chill crawled up her spine, the hairs on

her arms standing up straight.

Something's watching me.

Without hesitation, she broke into a sprint. Footsteps echoing behind her. Fast.

Too fast. Gaining.

Her heart lurched.

They were right behind me.

She spun-too late.

A blunt force struck the side of her head.

Her world tilted. The trees blurred. Her knees buckled.

As she crumpled to the ground, vision darkening, the last thing she saw was

Kady's cold, merciless eyes.