

Chapter 39

EMERIEL

Aekeira was right.

They had to find a way to escape this wretched, hellish place.

The thought pounded relentlessly through Emeriel's head as he witnessed the lords molesting his sister. He fought back tears, his hands curling into tight fists.

Bile rose to his throat as he observed the way they manhandled Aekeira.

He had to keep his feet planted on the floor, resisting the urge to storm towards them in an attempt to save his sister. Such an act would likely result in both of them being executed.

Once again, Aekeira had risked everything, putting herself in harm's way to protect him. To keep him from harm's way.

When would Emeriel have the opportunity to repay her? To truly save her?

Why did his courageous sister always bear the burden of sacrifice while he cowered in fear like a craven?

Emeriel gripped his tunic, squeezing it tightly. "I am so sorry, Keira," he whispered, his voice trembling.

Grand Lord Ottai seemed indifferent, merely observing the entertainment with a detached amusement, his feast spread before him.

Meanwhile, Grand Lord Vladya remained engrossed in his writings, his attention solely focused on the scroll in front of him.

Unlike the other lords who indulged in food, drink, and pleasures, Vladya abstained, his expression inscrutable.

A sudden movement at the corner of Emeriel's eye caught his attention. A lord approached, undoubtedly intending to "inspect" him.

Instinctively, Emeriel took a step back. But was that too suspicious? He halted.

The lord drew nearer, locking eyes with Emeriel. Handsome and youthful, he bore the typical Urekai appearance.

Circling him like a predator, the lord stopped in front of Emeriel. He reached around to cup Emeriel's backside.

"Soft," the lord muttered, furrowing his brows. "Too soft."

Then, the lord's hand slipped beneath Emeriel's tunic, encountering the bindings that concealed his true identity. The lord froze.

Emeriel held his breath. Their eyes locked. While confusion clouded the lord's gaze, Emeriel's was filled with panic.

Gradually, understanding dawned in the lord's gaze, realizing that the person before him was not truly a man.

"Please, I beg of you, my lord, do not expose me," Emeriel blurted out, desperation tinging his words. "I implore you. Please help me."

The lord tilted his head to the side, deep in thought. His hand inside Emeriel's clothing moved further, finally discovering her banded breasts.

Surprise flickered across his features, and he fixed Emeriel with a piercing gaze.

"Please, my lord. I will do anything...please," Emeriel pleaded, his body trembling with anxiety.

A moment hung suspended between them.

Eventually, the lord withdrew his hand and took a step back. "Beyond the Moors, atop Vacant Hill, you shall find my abode overlooking the winding Serpent's Creek. Seek me out before the third night."

With those words, the lord departed, leaving Emeriel in crippling relief and a surge of apprehension.

What had he done?

GRAND LORD VLADYA

As Grand Lord Vladya composed his response to the letter from Azrael, the werewolf king, he found himself struggling to concentrate.

It was an unfamiliar experience. He had never experienced such difficulty before.

Azrael was an ally, and the content of the letter concerned a trade agreement between their realms. That alone should have demanded his undivided attention.

However, his mind wavered to concentrate. Wandering. Distracted.

"I wish to strip for you, your majesty."

Anger surged through his veins as the words echoed in his mind. The fact that such words affected him to the extent where he felt like a taut string, vibrating with suppressed rage, infuriated him greatly.

Why would the flirtatious words of a slutty human slave girl affect him so?

"Perhaps because the words were not directed at you?" a voice whispered inside him.

Grand Lord Vladya clenched his teeth. This is insane.

Wholeheartedly, he embraced his anger. For it was preferable to the arousal that simmered beneath it.

The image of the girl's naked body invaded his thoughts, vivid as daylight. She possessed an alluring beauty akin to that of a temptress.

It was no wonder she had attempted to bespell Zaiper. To enchant them with the magic that was her body's beauty.

Was it because she was a princess?

Her body was porcelain, beautifully sculpted and curvaceous. A true masterpiece, captivating every lord's attention to the point where they were unable to tear their gaze away.

They licked their lips hungrily, their minds consumed by fantasies of what they desired to do with her enticing body.

Vladya understood their struggle.

He had to clench his fists tightly to resist the temptation to grab her when she undressed. Worst of all, he had fought against his own primal instincts—his beast.

Ever since the events of five centuries ago, his beast had remained dormant in many ways. After he lost his soul, he felt a detachment from his inner animal.

Lust no longer held any sway over the beast within him. Vladya could take females to his bed whenever he pleased, but his beast remained indifferent, unconcerned.

Until tonight, when Aekeira disobeyed.

"Dear Ukrae, that feels good," Grand Lord Zaiper's pleasure-filled groans reached Vladya's ears. Followed by Aekeira's whimper.

"Vladya?" Grand Lord Ottai called, looking at him with concern.

It was then that Vladya realized he had ceased writing and had begun growling.

"Is something the matter?" Ottai inquired.

Ignoring him, Vladya resumed his writing.

"Do you know your eyes have changed?" Ottai pressed on.

If the scroll that now appeared dark-yellow instead of its original light-brown hue was any indication, then yes, Vladya was undoubtedly aware.

"Your beast is close to the surface. Is there a problem?"

"I am fine," Vladya said through gritted teeth, refusing to spare Ottai even a glance.

Internally, he battled to calm both himself and his inner beast. What in the name of Ukrae was wrong with him?

"Just so you know, work can wait," Ottai continued, undeterred. "Though I disagree with Zaiper, the ceremony is still taking place, and there is nothing left to do but enjoy the occasion. You should join in the festivities. Once this banquet is over, I'm pouncing on Rina at the first opportunity. I can hardly wait to return home."

Ottai's smile held a hint of amusement as he mentioned his bondmate. He then fixed Vladya with an expectant gaze. "You might as well have some fun too. Choose any slave you desire and let go of whatever is troubling you."

If only it were that simple. Still, Ottai had a point. Vladya might as well enjoy the banquet. Why deny himself what he desired when it was within his reach?

Thus, he rolled up the parchment, handed it to a nearby soldier, and rose from his throne. "You are indeed right, Lord Ottai."

His friend grinned. "I always am."

Vladya descended from the podium, but instead of joining the throng of slaves still on display, he made his way toward the round table.

I wish to strip for you. I wish to strip for you. Iwishtostripforyou Iwishtostripforyou Iwish—

He growled, the ugly feeling coursing through him intensifying.

The lords who had been fondling Aekeira withdrew their hands to create a space for him.

Why deny himself when the female he wanted to punish was right there within his grasp?