

Chosen Mate of the Beastmen Empire by Lewis Reed

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After that impulsive move, Nyx felt a twinge of regret. Judging by Kian's reaction, he might as well have turned into a statue. Or maybe he was burning up—his neck was redder than ever.

She'd meant to take things slow, case him into it. Going straight for the strong stuff had backfired like this. Their planned night of sharing a bed naturally fell apart.

Kian silently lay down on the floor, turning his back to her, not daring to glance her way. The fleeting glimpse he'd caught replayed endlessly in his mind. His spine stiffened, sleep nowhere in sight.

Nyx didn't dare push him further. She put her clothes back on properly and stayed quiet for the night. It wasn't until dawn started breaking that she turned back into her beast form. Acting like nothing had happened, she hopped onto Kian from above.

Hearing the movement, Kian instinctively reached out to catch her without a second thought. But once he realized what he'd done, a clear wave of panic and fluster washed over him—like he was holding a hot potato.

He couldn't look straight at the little rabbit anymore. The moment he thought about who she really was and how her belly was now pressed against his palm, a rush of heat surged through him.

He'd been ignoring that fact all along. The little rabbit was Nyx, and Nyx was the little rabbit. Everything he'd touched, the way he'd shamelessly rubbed his nose and checks against her—all of it was her.

Those over-the-top memories came flooding back, and Kian could barely breathe. Nyx could feel the hands holding her trembling slightly.

She nibbled on her paw, debating for a while before deciding not to turn back into her human form. She stayed as a bunny, clinging to Kian.

If she turned human again, she wouldn't have an excuse to act clingy. With how old-fashioned and proper Kian was right now, he'd probably avoid her like the plague.

But he couldn't bring himself to push away a little rabbit. No matter how embarrassed he felt, he'd keep holding her—he wouldn't let go and drop her.

In the little kitchen, Ernest had been waiting for ages.

The thought of learning new recipes and earning spirit stones back at the canteen had him so excited he couldn't sleep. He'd tossed and turned all night, sporting huge dark circles under his eyes. Even channeling spiritual energy to cultivate for a bit didn't make them go away.

Herb Peak might not stand out in the sect, but it had plenty of disciples—tens of thousands of them.

Most of them were outer sect disciples, lacking a Foundation Establishment, unable to practice inedia, and unwilling to spend money on fasting pills. If they didn't want to shell out, they had to rely on the kitchen to get by.

As a former servant who had worked in the kitchen, nobody knew better than Ernest how many people frequented the place. The spiritual meals hadn't even been put up for sale yet, but he could already imagine the scene of selling hundreds or thousands of portions every day.

Add to that the steep prices, even if he only split a tenth of the profits with the other cooks, he could earn in a single day what used to take him years to make in spirit stones.

No one could turn down so much cash. Ernest, for one, admitted he couldn't be that lofty.

He bowed respectfully to the little rabbit, sneaking a glance upward, but he couldn't quite read Nyx's emotions from that fluffy round face.

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Her fiancé, though, had some pretty heavy dark circles under his eyes—probably too excited to sleep. Kian caught Ernest's inexplicable "I get it" look, and his face darkened even more.

He was quieter than usual, clearly not himself, and even when they reached Pill Cauldron Peak, he still hadn't snapped out of it.

Magnus could tell something was off with just one glance. He circled Kian for a while, shaking his head with a hiss. "Didn't I tell you guys to take it easy? Don't overdo it!"

'How'd he end up with such heavy dark circles? Has he not slept all night?' he thought.

"You don't look like you've got the energy to spar with the puppet today, huh?" he teased while deliberately sending the puppet charging aggressively toward Kian, hoping to force the kid into a flustered surrender.

Nyx's eyes sharpened instantly. She raised one stubby hind leg, ready to flying—kick the puppet. Before she could act, a large hand suddenly grabbed her and stuffed her into a robe.

Kian held the little rabbit protectively in his robe with one hand while drawing his longsword with the other. Expressionless, his sword qi pierced straight through the puppet in one strike.

Magnus said, "Not bad." His tone was dry as he clapped a few times, unable to hold back a sigh, "It's really hard to see you make a fool of yourself. You're always so unflappable."

Even with those agonizing medicinal baths, this kid could endure it without a peep—Magnus couldn't imagine what it'd take to see him show weakness.

Kian's calm facade cracked a bit at the jab. He stumbled slightly. He'd already made a fool of himself in front of the one person he most wanted to impress. Last night, he'd had nothing to do with "unflappable"—completely unable to control himself.

Nyx had stayed in her beast form all day today, probably because he'd scared her last night.

"You don't need to bring me meals every day, Nyx," he said, head slightly lowered, his voice heavy, "You've got your own things to do. Don't waste your time on me."

Nyx caught the hint of avoidance in his tone and poked her head out of his robe with a "whoosh." Before she could argue back, Magnus jumped in, looking like he was facing a crisis. "What do you mean?"

'If she doesn't bring food, what am I supposed to eat?' he thought.

He stared straight at Nyx, "Little rabbit, what've you got to be busy with?" A new disciple like her shouldn't have many tasks. to do.

"Not much, really," Nyx said, pulling her head back in, "Just that yesterday Master said he wants to use the veggies I grow for the kitchen."

Sure, she'd taken over the canteen, but all she had to do was farm and occasionally give Ernest some pointers—same as before, really.

"The kitchen?" Magnus's focus shifted immediately, "Which kitchen? The whole Celestial's kitchens?"

Nyx shook her head, unimpressed. "Of course it's just Herb Peak's kitchen." The Celestial was massive—she couldn't supply it all by herself.

Magnus looked deeply disappointed. He'd thought he might get to eat that stuff at Pill Cauldron Peak's kitchen from now

on.

Nyx read his expression and peeked out, noticing that the bamboo she'd casually planted yesterday had already been stripped of its shoots. It was obvious who'd done it. She hadn't expected Magnus to be this greedy.

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"Don't worry, I'll bring you guys meals every day," Nyx promised, hoping he'd treat Kian a bit better for the sake of food.

The moment the little rabbit left, Magnus started pointing at Kian. "Until your spiritual root's fully fixed, you're not allowed to part ways with her!"

He was only sticking around at Pill Cauldron Peak to make those medicinal baths for this kid—otherwise, he'd have moved to Herb Peak for a while by now.

Since he couldn't eat at the canteen whenever he wanted, he had to rely on Nyx's deliveries to make up for it.

Kian frowned, "We won't part ways."

Avoiding Nyx right now was just because it didn't feel right. Once his spiritual root was fixed and he'd avenged his blood feud, he'd bond with Nyx as partners and swear an oath to the Heavenly Law. She was so good—he couldn't bear to let her down.

But Magnus shook his head with a scoff. "Whether you part ways or not isn't up to your words alone.

Fixing a spiritual root could take years. Young people's feelings were often fleeting, and the demon clan acted on instinct even more so. He doubted the little rabbit would stay with him for long.

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