

Chapter 278

Sinai's curiosity was piqued. "Tell me."

"I'm not going to," Zaiper stated calmly. "You are behind bars, Sinai. No one knows what kind of mental torture 'your Daemon' might inflict upon you when he finally gives you the time of the day, and the secrets you might be tempted to reveal just to gain your freedom and stay in his good graces." His sharp gaze pierced hers, assessing her reaction.

Sinai shifted uncomfortably under his scrutiny. That sounded... disturbingly like something she would do.

"I would never spill our secrets," she said defensively, her voice a little too high.

"Of course you wouldn't. Because if you did, I would assassinate you in here myself," Zaiper said in the same smooth tone one might use to discuss the weather. "I would poison you with the most excruciating poison ever made, one that would guarantee a quick but incredibly painful death."

She blanched. A chill crawled down her spine.

"I only dropped by to tell you this," he continued with an easy smile. "I know you're intelligent beneath all that rage and anger, so use your brain wisely, Sinai. You are vulnerable here. There's no place to run. Don't give me a reason to kill you."

"This is completely unnecessary," she mumbled, avoiding his eyes. "W-why would I accuse you of something so absurd without any clear evidence? You could easily deny it and have me sentenced to death. I'm not stupid."

"See? Smart." Zaiper stepped back. "Now that we have established that, try to be patient. You may be suffering, but take comfort in the fact that no real punishment will come your way. After all, you are not just any bloodhost, you're his bloodhost."

He continued. "Daemonikai is strong, with more self-control than most, but no one can resist the blood of a bloodhost for long. Sooner or later, he will reach his limit. Although, with what I have in mind, he would regret not drinking from you sooner."

Her ears perked up with interest. "Please tell me this plan, I'm so curious."

"Let's just say, Emeriel will be dying in her Soulbond's hands really soon," Zaiper drawled, grinning. "This plan is foolproof. No one can interfere with it."

Sinai couldn't resist a jab. "Well, except for the Oracle."

Zaiper's face paled.

"Don't even joke about something like that!" he sneered.

Sinai shivered at the implications of her own jest and lowered her head. "I apologize, My Lord."

As he turned to leave, he glanced over his shoulder. "As for being in here, do what you always do, pretty Sinai. Beg, manipulate, grovel. In some ways, you know that male better than any of us. Appeal to his deepest senses, and you will be free in no time."

She glared after him, her anger boiling even after he'd disappeared.

"Beg, manipulate, grovel," she mocked under her breath, twisting her face in disgust. "You're not the one rotting away in here, occasionally vomiting buckets of blood just to feel normal." Turning away, she hissed. " Bastard."

PRINCESS EMERIEL

The fire in the hearth had burned low, lighting up the room with a flickering glow.

She and Daemonikai lay nestled together on the plush bed, after they bathed, and he applied ointment to her bruises. They propped up on their elbows, facing each other.

Emeriel traced a lazy pattern on his chest with her fingertip.

"You are lost in thought," Daemonikai observed. "What are you thinking about?"

"Hmm?" Emeriel blinked, meeting his gaze. "Oh, it's nothing, really. It's just... my sister," she confessed with a sigh. "I left her with quite a shock before our unexpected trip."

"Our child."

Emeriel nodded sadly.

"She will be alright. Vladya is with her. He will ensure she doesn't worry too much."

"I know. It's just... she'll blame herself for not knowing sooner. And she will be concerned about me."

He nodded understandingly. "Vladya will be worried about how I'm handling all of this, too. He knows me better than anyone."

"That's true. Lord Vladya cares for you deeply."

"He worries about me as much as I worry about him. It gladdens me that he doesn't have to be so alone anymore. He has been lonely for so long."

"Aekeira told me they are planning to bond," Emeriel confided. "I truly hope it works out for them. She will be devastated if it doesn't," she paused. " Can Lord Vladya really not get his soul back? Is there truly nothing else that can be done?"

Daemonikai's expression turned somber. "Only through dark magic. Something of equal value has to be given in return." He exhaled heavily. "The Oracle might know of another way, but she slumbers."

"You have mentioned the Oracle before. Tell me about her," Emeriel said, curiously.

"She is an Elder. One of the oldest and most powerful of our kind. Older, even, than I."

"Really?" Emeriel's eyes widened. "How old is that? You are over five thousand years old! Is she seven thousand? Nine?"

Daemonikai smiled. "The Oracle is twenty-five thousand years old, Emeriel."

Emeriel's jaw dropped.

She sat up abruptly, staring at him in disbelief. "Someone is that old?!"

He nodded, amused by her reaction. "There are very few beings that ancient. Perhaps ten in the entire world. Our Oracle has seen civilizations rise and fall, witnessed the turning of ages. She is the closest connection we have to the gods, especially to Ukrae, the god of powerful beings."

Slowly, Emeriel lay back down, her mind reeling. "You speak of her with such respect."

"As we all do," Daemonikai confirmed. "She knew my great-grandfather, and his father before him. She was even present the night I was born." His eyes on her were filled with warmth. "She is a wise and powerful being, Emeriel. A true guardian of our people."

"It's inconceivable to think..." Emeriel's voice was hushed with awe. "I mean, you're you. I used to think you were the oldest being alive."

His chuckle was a low rumble in his chest. "I'd hope not, dearest. Then I would have already gone to deep sleep."

"How does it work, this deep sleep?"

"When one reaches a certain age, the desire for slumber grows stronger. But unlike normal sleep, deep sleep doesn't last for a single night. It's longer and more magical," Daemonikai explained, his voice taking on a distant quality. "One might lay down in their coffin-bed and awake a hundred years later, or two, or even three. Elders grow weary of the world, you see. They use deep sleep to pass the time."