

Captive Slave 346

Chapter 346

Lord Vladya and Lord Ottai exchanged glances, a silent message passing between them.

"I would rather show you," Vladya said at last, his face stoic.

He led her from his study. They crossed through the royal residence and continued onward. Deeper and deeper into the heart of Blackstone, past the familiar halls, and into the deserted corridors few dared enter.

Emeriel was beyond confused. Her dread grew. Why are we here? What does this have to do with my beloved?

They reached a massive iron door, stretching from floor to ceiling. Vladya withdrew a heavy key from his pocket, fitting it into the enormous lock. The tumblers clanked into place with a grinding groan and the door creaked open, revealing a dimly lit hall lined with thick, iron-reinforced doors.

They walked to the very end where Lord Vladya stopped. "We are here."

She glanced around. None of this made sense. "Here? What is "

Then she heard it.

A growl of agony. Weak, yet deeply familiar. Horrifyingly familiar.

"No, this can't be..." She took a step back.

Vladya slid open a small, barred viewing window in the door before them. "Look."

Blood drained from her face. She did not move.

More sounds of her Daemon's pain reached her, killing her a little more inside. Emeriel whimpered. It was as if someone had reached into her chest, grasped her heart, and ripped it right out.

"No. No..." She shook her head. "I-I don't understand. Why is he-how is this happening?!"

"Usually, the episodes break after a day," Lord Vladya said.

Her eyes watered. "He has been like this for three days?"

Lord Ottai nodded solemnly.

"But... But he... he satisfies his instincts." She blinked furiously.

"Bloodlust, not Sexlust," Lord Vladya answered evenly. "Daemonikai does not sleep with Sinai, or any other female."

"No, you don't understand," Emeriel insisted, frantic. "We had an arrangement. We agreed he would be..." She swallowed hard. "He would be... with her."

"You didn't wish for him to risk an episode or worse, lose himself to madness, so you agreed he should satisfy both needs with his bloodhost. Is that correct?" Lord Vladya said.

Emeriel nodded, shoving away her shame and despair. "So you see, he's not supposed to be here. I don't understand." She stepped back again, the walls were closing in. "None of this makes sense. Even some nights ago, he..."

"He did not do it," Vladya said flatly, holding her eyes. "He tried, but he could not bring himself to it, Emeriel. Your male has not lain with a female in months."

Once again, she could not breathe. For a split second, she thought she was having another attack. But then it released in a shuddering breath.

What did it say about her that instead of feeling horror for what he had endured, hiding such suffering from her for over four months... the first thing she felt was relief?

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What kind of terrible person was she that hope, happiness, relief-was dancing in her chest?

Her tears came harder, falling without end as she slumped against the wall. "I'm a horrible mate. This is all my fault."

"Hey." Lord Ottai moved in front of her, all of his usual levity gone. He looked every bit the Grand Lord he was. "Look at me. Never do you hear me? Never blame this on yourself."

"You don't understand," she choked. "Something is wrong with me. I'm broken, somewhere inside like a ragged doll. Since that night... I have wanted him. I want him so much... and yet I cannot-"

She could barely bring herself to say it. It hurt more than she thought it would. "... I can't bear it when he tries. It's like I shatter, every time." swnovel

Lord Ottai took her by the shoulders. "Vladya and were there that night, remember? We lived through every moment of what happened, and sometimes, I still hear your screams. His thumb brushed a tear from her cheek. "If I, who have lived through so many horrors in my long life, cannot forget... how could you?" swnovel

Emeriel lowered her gaze, sniffing quietly.

"You are not broken. There is nothing wrong with you." He waited until her eyes found his again before he went on. "You're one of the strongest beings I have ever met. Stronger than many of our females combined. You have done what others have crumbled attempting to do, walked paths others died to walk." His hands squeezed her shoulders. "You, Emeriel Galilea Evenstone, have made

impossibilities possible. How could you look upon yourself and see anything less?" swnovel

Her lips trembled. She hated how much she needed to hear those words, hated that she clung to them... yet she couldn't help herself. "You really do not think... something is wrong with me?"

"I do not. And neither does Vladya."

They glanced at the Grand Lord, who stood leaning against the wall, arms

crossed. He gave a single, decisive nod.

Lord Ottai turned back to her. "And Daemonikai?" He gave a faint huff. "Everyone sees the way he looks at you like you are the most precious thing Ukrae ever carved. That male sees you as the brightest star in a sky full of them."

Something inside her unwound.

"He does refer to me as a star," she admitted, her cheeks coloring faintly.

The fourth ruler chuckled. "I'm sure he does."

A smile tugged at her lips, and she swiped at the lingering tears. She felt... lighter.

Then her gaze slid to the iron door. She couldn't look through that small hole. Just hearing Daemonikai's pain was enough of a splinter to her heart; seeing it might shatter her completely.

"What do we do for him? It breaks my heart, seeing him suffer like this."

Lord Vladya spoke. "When do you plan to come out? Have you not eavesdropped enough?"

Emeriel startled. "Who are you talking to-?"

A figure stepped forward from behind the stone archway, looking sheepish.

Mistress Sinai.

Emeriel's jaw dropped.

"What are you doing here, snooping around?" Vladya growled, tone ice. "You truly

think we would not smell you?"