

Chapter 9

THE GRAND HIGH COURT OF RAVENSHADOW FORTRESS, URAI.

GRAND LORD VLADYA

The court had large walls, decorated with fancy paintings, fine carpets, needlework, and detailed fabric designs.

Two raised platforms stood out.

The first held three big chairs with fancy gold designs. Behind it, a second platform rose even higher, holding a bigger and more decorated throne.

Sitting on the three big chairs were Grand Lord Ottai, Grand Lord Vladya, and Grand Lord Zaiper. The single throne behind them, which belonged to Grand King Daemonikai, was empty.

"From the screams that echoed last night, I take it you went ahead with the plan, Lord Vladya," Zaiper said calmly, his manhood forced into the mouth of the slave girl kneeling before him.

"You are correct, Lord Zaiper," Vladya answered simply.

"We agreed the plan was not wise, did we not?" Zaiper expressed, his grip tightening on the slave's hair as he pushed her head down. "It's time to accept that King Daemonikai is long gone. There's no need to keep the beast alive anymore. No shapeshifter of any species—Urekai, Werewolf, Dragon—can return from a wild state. It's just not possible."

"We all know that, Lord Zaiper," Ottai said, rolling his eyes. "We don't hope for his recovery. But, while King Daemonikai may be gone, his beast is still here—very much alive and causing destruction, like any other feral. The difference is that ordinary ferals can be easily killed, but he cannot. We have tried before, or have you forgotten, Lord Zaiper?"

A flicker of discomfort crossed Zaiper's face, though he tried to hide it. His grip on the human slave's hair tightened, making her face turn red. He pressed her face forcefully onto his dick, holding her there even as she gagged and choked.

Vladya almost snorted at Zaiper's weak attempt to hide his unease. Zaiper had nearly lost his life in his past attempt to kill the beast.

"Our best chance to destroy the beast is on the next Eclipse Moon night," Ottai said. "It's been over five hundred years since the last one, so it should happen soon. Until then, we have to wait and make sure the beast does not escape and cause more destruction in search of sustenance."

"What happened two months ago might have been a one-time thing," Zaiper argued.

"Thirty Urekai were drained of blood, and ten of our females died after being mounted by the beast, not to mention the many humans in between," Ottai countered, leaning back in his chair, watching Zaiper closely. "In twenty-four hours, we lost forty of our people, all because we ignored the fact that even a wild beast still follows basic needs—blood and sex. It's our nature, and even a wild Urekai beast acts on instinct. We cannot risk more lives when there's an easy solution."

"What really bothers you about our solution, Lord Zaiper?" Vladya asked. "You don't care for humans. The way your slaves often end up dead, one might think you hate them even more than Lord Ottai and I do. So, why do you object? Surely you do not want the beast to escape again and kill more people?"

A heavy silence followed.

Vladya already knew the reason for Zaiper's objection. The second ruler wanted to take the grand king's throne for himself and hated that Daemonikai's beast still lived.

As long as the beast was alive, the grand king's throne would stay empty. Zaiper didn't care about their people. His only goal was to take full power and rule everyone.

This was one of the reasons Vladya and Ottai had always refused Zaiper's idea of teaming up to kill the beast over the centuries.

While they might succeed if they joined forces, Vladya and Ottai always rejected the idea whenever Zaiper secretly brought it up. And Zaiper hated them both for it.

"I just don't think it's needed, Lord Vladya," Zaiper finally said. His face twisted with pleasure as he reached his peak, and the slave swallowed as expected. Zaiper fixed his clothes and dismissed her. "You know how much I care for our people."

Vladya held back from rolling his eyes.

"Well, that would mean more dead slaves," Zaiper said. "We would need to send a new one into the forbidden chambers every time. After all, it's impossible for the beast to let them live after mounting them for sex."

He paused, a smirk on his face. "The princess's screams were pure music to my ears all night. It was almost a shame when she died—the music stopped too soon."

PRINCE EMERIEL

The sweet songs of birds filled Emeriel's ears, pulling him out of his sleep. He blinked, trying to block out the bright sunlight shining through his eyelids, but the light wouldn't go away. Finally, Emeriel's eyes opened, greeted by the beauty of the morning.

Rubbing his eyes, his mind cleared, and the memories of the night before rushed back to him.

Emeriel sat up quickly. He looked down at himself. He was still naked under the blanket.

Moving his leg sent a sharp pain through his body. There were bruises on his arms, and his private areas hurt.

Something very strange had happened the night before.

Emeriel was surprised he was even alive, considering the great pain he had felt.

He needed to talk to Aekeira, to get her advice...

Aekeira!

Emeriel jumped out of bed with a cry, ignoring the pain in his body. I have to find her!

He grabbed his chest-binds and quickly tied them around himself. That's when he remembered something else.

Two people had discovered his secret the night before.

Panic filled him, but Emeriel forced himself to stay calm.

He could worry about that later. For now, Aekeira needed him.

Dressed, Emeriel rushed out the door. But finding his way turned out to be much harder than he expected.

He got lost many times, taking so many wrong turns he wondered if he was just walking in circles.

Just when he was about to give up, he noticed a familiar painting. I saw this last night.

Feeling hopeful, he kept going. Curious eyes of human slaves and Urekai maids followed him as he passed.

Emeriel pretended he was running an errand, acting like he had a purpose. They mustn't suspect he was heading to the forbidden chambers.

But as he turned another corner, he came face-to-face with a group of Urekai soldiers.

He froze.

There were so many, far more than he expected. But it made sense, considering whose beast was locked in those chambers.

This was going to be harder than he thought.

Emeriel knew some fighting skills, but he doubted they would work against even one Urekai soldier, let alone so many.

The soldiers gave him a stern look.

"You have gone too far, new slave. Go back at once," one of them said in a deep voice.

"No, you don't understand. I have to find my sister. She's in the forbidden chambers," Emeriel said in a pleading tone.

The guards stiffened and exchanged looks.

Without a word, two of them stepped forward, grabbing Emeriel by the arms and pulling him away.

"No! Let me go, right now!" He fought with all his strength, but it was as useless as trying to kick solid rocks.

They dragged him out of the building and into the courtyard, where the busy movements of others surrounded them. Then they pushed him roughly, and Emeriel fell to the ground like a sack of potatoes.

One guard leaned down, his voice full of threat. "If we catch you near the fourth wing again, we'll cut your head off," he growled.

With that, they walked away.

Tears filled Emeriel's eyes as he lay there, helpless.