

## Chapter 119

### MISTRESS SINAI

The grand king's summon to feed had filled Sinai with unparalleled joy. For a fleeting moment, she had been the happiest female in Urai.

Now, the echo of that elation faded as she exited the royal residence, replaced by a bitter frustration. Her Daemon remained as distant and impersonal during bloodfeeding as he had been when his bondmate lived.

Yes, there was the natural arousal, the permission to grind against his leg for her own release, but it was cold. A mechanical act devoid of any true intimacy. He remained aloof, his pheromones held tightly in check, his arousal a flame that he refused to quench with her.

He did not allow her touch. He simply fed, then dismissed her.

Fuming and stomping down the corridor, Sinai muttered curses under her breath. A procession of royal Urekai maids emerged, each bearing platters loaded with delicacies.

Her eyes were instantly drawn to the odd figure at their center, sticking out like a drop of blood on pristine snow. Emeriel.

Sinai stopped dead in her tracks.

The slutty human prince! What in the abyss is he doing sneaking around her Daemon again?

Her blood boiled. This night, it seemed, was determined to test the limits of her patience.

"Emeriel!" Sinai hissed, her voice sharp as a dagger. "Come here this instant."

The boy hesitated, a flicker of defiance in his eyes.

Sinai was not in the mood for games. "Emeriel!" she repeated, her voice echoing through the corridor.

With a resigned sigh, the boy stopped, turning to meet her gaze. He approached with the reluctance of a prisoner dragged to their execution. "Mistress."

Sinai waved the others onward, leaving Emeriel standing before her, his plate clutched awkwardly in his hands.

"Why are you here?" Her voice dripped venom. "Only Urekai serve the grand king! Are you attempting to poison him now? Was the destruction of his family not enough for your kind!?"

The boy swallowed tightly. "I am a slave, Mistress. I do not act on my own accord. I merely follow orders. I was commanded to serve here."

Sinai scoffed, incredulous at his audacious tone. Her hand shot out, seizing his ponytail, yanking it back with brutal force.

The boy cried out in pain.

Sinai held fast, her grip tightening.

"You think that lucky escape from my punishment last time gives you the right to speak to me with such insolence?" she hissed, her fingers digging deeper into his scalp. Satisfaction surged through her as tears welled in his eyes. "Do not think I have forgotten that slap, Emeriel. You will pay for it."

"Lord Vladya will not allow—" the boy choked out, his voice strangled by pain.

"Lord Vladya, you little fool, cares nothing for you anymore. The grand king has returned." Sinai cut him off with a cruel smirk. "For some misguided reason, he thought you might be instrumental in his dear friend's return. But you cannot blame him, can you? I am starting to think he's teetering on the edge of madness, so such ridiculous notions are to be expected."

The boy met her gaze, his eyes glistening with tears, but the defiant glint remained. Even after nearly a year of slavery and servitude, he hadn't lost the air of superiority. The regal poise that clung to him like a second skin.

Sinai hated it immensely. Oh, how she loathed this boy.

"But my Daemon is back now," she purred, her voice laced with menace. "Lord Vladya does not give a damn whether you live or die. Want to bet?"

Her grip grew tighter, but the last thing Sinai wanted was to draw blood and attract Daemonikai's attention to the boy. With a final tug, she released his hair.

The boy averted his gaze, his jaw clenched.

"Now, give me that," Sinai demanded, gesturing at the covered tray. "I will deliver it myself."

Silence stretched between them, heavy with tensed hostility.

Then, in a low but resolute voice, Emeriel replied, "I'm afraid I cannot do that."

What!? The audacity of this boy! "What did you just say to me?"

"I cannot do that." the boy repeated calmly, "I was given an order—"

"Do not test me, disgusting human. Give. Me. That," she snarled, her voice barely controlled.

The echoing footsteps behind them caused Sinai to step back, straightening her posture.

"Why are you still standing there? The roasted chickens are missing from the table. Do NOT keep His Grace waiting for them," A soldier's gruff voice barked at Emeriel.

"Yes, sir," Emeriel spared Sinai a fleeting, insolent glance before stepping around her to follow the soldier.

The boldness of the boy left Sinai trembling with disbelief and rage. Her blood ran cold with fury.

Argh! I am definitely going to kill that boy. Definitely. He has been a thorn in my side for far too long!

.....

### EMERIEL

Emeriel's heart pounded like a war drum as the grand dining hall's double doors swung open, revealing a sight of wealth and power. Walls draped in rich tapestries and a long table set with gleaming silver and crystal that sparkled under the chandeliers.

The memory of the mistress's resentment and seething rage sent a shiver down her spine. Emeriel could still feel the icy daggers of that glare burrowing into her back.

Why hadn't she just handed over the feast? That would have been the easiest way to avoid trouble.

Standing up to the mistress had been foolish. It would just give the vile woman ten more reasons to drag her into the woods, end her life, and leave her body buried beneath a bed of fallen leaves, with no one the wiser.

Emeriel sighed. When it came to the mistress, she often found herself unable to restrain her emotions, her self-control frequently faltering. The woman evoked a firestorm of anger, defiance, and all the feelings she had worked hard to suppress for the sake of survival in this place.

"Human?"

The deep, familiar voice froze Emeriel mid-step, sending a different kind of shiver down her spine.

"Your Grace," she managed, barely remembering to bow.

He stilled, his silverware suspended mid-bite. His eyes found hers. "That voice..."

Hell, hell, hell. Emeriel's mind raced.

Does he recognize me?