

Demon Queened

Chapter 29

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Devilla

I watched as the plant grew in real time, the stalk and leaves forming quickly, followed by the rapidly budding and then blossoming flower - a multicolored thing, with white petals tinged by blue at their tips, and pink filaments and stamen protruding from its center. The combination of colors seemed oddly familiar to me, though I couldn't quite place where I'd seen it before... But then, my mind was somewhat preoccupied with the matter of Amessa's dryad powers.

Could they truly have been a gift from the heavens? Maybe. I certainly wouldn't have put it past my aunts to copy demonic abilities and pass them off as blessed ones. However, between her glowing green hair, a trait she had in common with many dryads, and the suspicious notion of 'cursed' bloodlines, I suspected there was actual monster girl blood running through her and Feyra's veins.

I wondered just how far back it went. Humans and demons had been in an extinction war for two thousand years, after all. Hardly ideal circumstances to form a romance. Add in the fact that her 'blessing' was apparently known to run through a noble family line... There was most definitely a story there, but I didn't have anywhere close to enough information to even try and piece it together. There was one kernel of info that stood out in my mind, though - when demons had children, their species would match the one who birthed them. Usually, that included both

their form and wild magic. But if the birth mother was a *human*, with no wild magic to speak of... Well, who knew what would happen?

“Impressive, right?” Amessa asked, drawing my attention back to her and her bright smile. “Toooootally worthy of staring at. And the creator of it all? Heehee, definitely worth a second look, riiiiight? And that’s when she’s clothed! Can’t you just imagine what she’d look like naked? Bet she’d be pretty hot, right?! Why don’t you give it a try?”

“Why are you like this?” Feyra complained, putting her head in her hands. To look at her, you’d think the heavens themselves had abandoned her. “For the last time, we’re *going on a quest*, okay? We don’t have time for you to fuck around.”

“Perhaps this is a thread better tugged upon our return?” I suggested, hoping to play peacekeeper between the two of them. The girl was certainly pretty enough to bed - with a prominent and what looked to be a rather full rear - but at the same time, Feyra *was* right about us being on a mission.

For some reason, however, my proposition garnered a glare from Feyra. “Is something the matter?”

“No,” she all but snarled, before turning her attention back to Amessa. “How quickly can you finish? The fucking *Heroine* is waiting for us.”

“I think you’re overestimating the speed with which Lucy will conduct her business,” I remarked, frowning a little at Feyra’s suddenly increased aggression. I didn’t understand what was going through the girl’s mind - for someone who feared me, she seemed oddly eager to pick a fight. “She’s liable to chat with anyone she has dealings with. Surely we can give your alchemist a little time to complete her potion making?”

“Well, if the Heroine’s waiting...” Amessa murmured, glancing between Feyra and the flower. “I mean, I do have a toooon of questions! Like why the heck is the Heroine waiting for *you* Feyfey? And is your hot friend seriously on a first name basis with her? Buuuuut I guess it can wait... I just need you to tell me how well my growing worked - I tried to concentrate as much magical power in the flower head as possible this time!”

Feyra glared at the flower, her pupils elongating as her eyes narrowed. “It’s fine. I think. Kinda hard to fucking tell when *someone*’s radiating so much damn magic.”

“Is that a request for me to leave?” I asked, arching an eyebrow. “Because I actually had a few questions of my own. Starting with the matter of concentrating magic power, and its effect on potion making.” Not that it was more than an idle curiosity on my part. It was just intriguing to find there might be more to potion making than I’d realized.

“Do whatever the fuck you want,” Feyra replied, shooting me another scowl before stomping towards the door. “I need a breath of fresh air.”

I stared after the girl for a moment, before turning my gaze towards Amessa. “Is she always like this?”

“Nooooo?” Amessa replied, tilting her head to the side and tapping a finger to her chin. “I mean, usually she’s only, uh... half as bitchy? Sorta looks like you stress her out, though.”

“I was afraid of that.” I sighed, shaking my head. “Considering the fact that I’m about to be embarking upon a journey with her... Well, I suppose it’s time we had a little chat.” About why, exactly, she was so scared of me - and about what, precisely, could be done about it.

Feyra

I was fucked. *Really* fucked. I mean, I talked back to the fucking Demon Queen! I *stormed out* on the Demon Queen! And why? Because she was maybe planning to cheat on the Heroine? They weren’t even officially together! And also, polyamory was a fucking thing! Though going after one girl right when you started dating another was still a little fucked up, so far as I was concerned.

Also, the embodiment of sin wanting to fuck all my... not friends... was a thing in and of itself. I mean, sure, one of them was literally the Heroine, and the other had blessed blood running through her veins, but... if eating monster material was bad for your soul - something Amessa had *already been tempted into* - then who knew what the fuck eating one *out* would do to you?

Confronting Eena wasn't going to spare them, though. If anything, it would get me and them killed. Though I guess our souls would at least be free to move onto heaven? As fucking poor a consolation as that was.

“Feyra?”

I flinched. Which probably wasn't the best fucking move, considering how displeased the speaker looked over it. Displeased and *hurt*. Or at least she was acting hurt, anyway... It *had* to be acting. In what fucking world did monsters care what people thought of them?

“We need to talk,” Eena said, after a tense moment. “About the way you've been acting towards me.”

“Yeah?” I asked, trying not to tense up even more. Running wasn't going to do me any fucking good. Not against someone strong enough to wipe out the city from where she stood. “What's there to say? You're powerful, I'm weak and terrified. I'd think you'd be used to it.” Didn't monsters and demons all cower before their mistress?

I felt a tingle, as magic washed over me. It didn't do anything *to* me, though, at least as far as I could tell. A quick toggling of my sight told me that it hadn't fucking disappeared either, though. It had, instead, formed a bubble around us. Probably some discount version of the Heroine's privacy spell.

"I've stilled the air around us," Eena explained. "So that we can talk without fear of anyone hearing us."

"Why? So you can threaten me into behaving?"

Shit. Why did I say that? What the fuck had happened to my survival instincts? Was I fucking tired of living? Except... I didn't feel afraid, as I said it. More like *resigned*.

I wasn't going to be able to keep on my toes the whole trip. I was going to slip up, and say something I shouldn't, and piss her off. And when I did, the Heroine was going to suffer alongside me. And then *humanity* was going to suffer, because there'd be no fucking Heroine... I wasn't exactly the self-sacrificing sort, but maybe it was better if it was just me who died horribly.

Though I couldn't help but notice there was an awful lack of me 'dying horribly.' Eena didn't even look mad at me. Just... frustrated?

"I don't understand why you keep assuming the worst of me," she said. "I know that I'm powerful, but surely you've come across others with enough strength to cause you harm."

“*Powerful?*” I laughed. I couldn’t help it. The sound just tore itself out of my fucking throat. “Powerful doesn’t even fucking *begin* to describe it! You make the damn *Heroine* look like a fucking *ant*. Just looking at you almost makes me lose hope for humanity! I mean, how the fuck is she supposed to even *beat* you if you can just smash her flat the moment you get tired of playing with her?!”

...Fuck. I said it. I fucking *said it*. I... shit. I... was going to die. I was going to fucking *die*. Or worse. I was going to die, or worse, and it was all because I couldn’t keep my damn mouth shut, and... Oh. I was on the ground. On my knees. When had that happened? It didn’t even fucking register. A second ago I was standing, and now I was on my knees, staring at the fucking Demon Queen as she got ready to... stare at me?

“Isn’t this the bit where you kill me?” I asked. Because fuck it. I was done. I was done pussyfooting around the most powerful being in the mortal world. I was going to fucking die, and she was going to kill me, but before that I was going to say whatever the fuck was on my mind.

Except for some reason, she still wasn’t killing me. She was just sort of... staring at me? With this... not quite sad. More... distant than that. And more familiar. She looked *resigned*. “You are really determined to see the worst in me, aren’t you?”

“Am I wrong?” I asked. “Because trust me, I’d *love* to not fucking die. But you’re too strong to be anyone but the Demon Queen. Or maybe a dragon in disguise, here to fuck around, but that probably ends about the same for me now that I’ve spilled the fucking beans, so...”

“Half wrong,” she replied. There was... something to her voice. A lightness that didn’t fit. I think she was trying to make it a joke, or something, but it mostly just sounded out of place. “I *am* the Demon Queen, yes, but... as unbelievable as this may sound to you, I have no intention of killing you.”

“Why not?” I asked. Which was a pretty fucking reasonable question, if you ask me, even if it was a bit like glaring at a gift horse’s mouth. There was no way in hell I was going to believe she’d just spare me, though. If she wasn’t going to kill me, it was for a *reason*. And she’d probably do something worse. “Don’t wanna give away your little game to the Heroine? Afraid she’ll get suspicious if I up and disappear?”

“It’s my chance at brokering peace that would disappear, actually. Alongside the trust Lucy put in me when she paired us up.”

“...Peace?”

“That’s right,” the Demon Queen - the fucking *embodiment of evil* - said, with a nod of her head. “Peace. I want Lucy’s help to end the war between our peoples... and before you ask, the look you’re giving me right now is, in fact, the

exact reason why I haven't gone to her directly. I want her to know me as a person, before she knows me to be the Demon Queen. That way she'll hopefully believe my wish to be sincere."

Once again, I couldn't fucking stop the laughter from bubbling up inside of me. This time, though, I didn't even spare a single fucking thought to stopping it. "You want to prove you're sincere by *lying to her*?"

Eena's cheeks flushed at that. But she also *smiled*, for some reason. "If it were anyone but Lucy, I'd concede the point. But Lucy... she already knows I'm keeping secrets. In fact, she explicitly granted me permission to do so, so long as I don't outright lie to her. Something that actually almost tempted me to admit the truth, strange as that might be. But I don't know enough about how she sees me. How the *world* sees me. So I need to make sure that when the truth comes out, she still sees *me*."

I was pretty damn sure I could answer both those questions. Starting with the fact that Lucy saw 'Eena' as the one who fucking killed her mom. Like hell I was going to give away information, though! If Eena didn't know *Lucy* knew, then it was better to keep it that way.

"So what? You just want me to keep quiet, and let you plot your little plot? Act like nothing's wrong?"

“I want you to give me a chance,” Eena replied, frowning. “Look, you’re going to be traveling with us, are you not?”

“...That’s the plan.” Assuming she didn’t just kill me.

“And, in your mind, I have the power to kill you instantly, yes? I’m just stringing you along for some sort of game?”

“...Pretty much...” Where the fuck was she going with this?

“Then let the game continue.”

“...Huh?”

The Demon Queen smiled. Big, and bright, and absolutely fucking terrifying. “Then let me keep playing the game, as you see it. Let me get close to Lucy. Talk with her. Convince her of my sincerity. And, while I’m at it, I’ll also try to convince *you*.”

“And why the fuck would I do that?” I demanded, narrowing my eyes at her, utterly ignoring the part of my brain screaming at me about self-preservation.

“Because, so far as you’re concerned, the alternative is me getting bored and killing you and Lucy. A misconception on your part, I assure you, but... by your own words, you have nothing to lose.”

I opened my mouth. Then I fucking shut it again, and started actually thinking with my head for what might have been the first time of the night.

Because... she was sort of ...right? I mean, as little as I enjoyed the idea of being

this fucking monster's entertainment... life gave us a chance. Playing the game gave us a chance. A chance to figure out some way out of this situation. A chance to escape...

Not much of a chance, mind you. Like, basically nil. But if I had to choose between dying now, and dooming the Heroine in the process, or *maybe* finding a way for us both to survive down the line... or to at least fucking warn her...

"Fine," I said, at last, barely believing the words coming out of my fucking mouth. "But if you're going to play the game, do it right - stop fucking flirting with girls when you're already dating the Heroine."

Was it a stupid stipulation? Probably. The Heroine was already going to get her heart broken. And I didn't really expect the Demon Queen to follow it, anyway. But if I could spare her a little bit of pain... not to mention the bit where the Heroine finding out the hard way and confronting Eena would probably end the fucking game with our deaths, anyway...

"I think that's a matter between me and Lucy," Eena replied, brushing aside my good deed. *Figures*. "Though you're right that I should talk to Lucy about it. I didn't even consider that she might want exclusivity..."

The way she looked, when she said that... the way her lips thinned, and her eyes shot down towards the ground? The way she fidgeted, nervously, as if she

were a little scared of the result. If I didn't know this was all a game to her, I might have actually thought she was taking things seriously.

As it was? There was one thing that bugged me. *When the fuck did she turn into such a good actress?*