

## Hellbound Heart #Chapter 171 -180

### Far Worse - Read Hellbound Heart Chapter 171 Far Worse

Yesterday...

"That's enough Sebastian." Alexander's no nonsense voice echoed in the living room of a luxurious mansion.

The floor of the living room was covered in blood as Sebastian tortured the body guards, forcing them to reveal where Haze and Boone were hiding.

"You're not going to torture every single one of them like this." Alexander ordered as he approached Sebastian calmly. But his aura has turned completely different now. And Sebastian knew that when this man turned serious, he would be a hell of a pain to deal with. Like now, his statement was more of an order rather than a suggestion.

Nevertheless, Sebastian did not care about anything else right now. He was only focused on one thing. And that was to dig out the information needed on those bastards. He needed to slaughter those shits or else he would never calm down.

"Leave me alone, Alexander." Sebastian growled low. His merciless gaze gleamed through his dark hair that fell over his forehead as he threw Alexander a warning glance. Though he respected Alexander, there was a limit to it. Those bastards had crossed his bottom line and he was having none of it. "This is not a matter related to vampires. This is... my personal matter. I will make sure to eradicate any evidence related to it, so get out of my way."

"No, I can't do that, Sebastian. You're not going to slaughter anymore of these men because they really don't know where Haze and Boone are hiding." Alexander approached, not minding how dangerous even the air around Sebastian was at the moment. "You need to clear your head. Not everything can be solved through killing. And you should know that."

Sebastian's jaws clenched as he growled low in irritation. He knew what Alexander said was true. Still... "Says the man who had gone on a slaughtering spree that cost so many lives because his beloved was killed." Something dark began to cloud in his eyes as a wicked smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "I'm not a fool who does not know what he's doing Alexander. Or do you think I am? I've already learned my lesson a long time ago... if you let an enemy live, you'll only live to regret it. Killing them all until no one's left is the best way to end everything." A sneer then replaced that smile as though speaking from experience.

Alexander's expression then changed to show understanding and patience as he nodded at what Sebastian said. "Like what you'd said. I am a man who committed worse things in the past. I slaughtered everyone because of vengeance. But my past is

exactly the reason why I am stopping you right now. I am not stopping you from ending anyone as long as they deserve it. But this... these men don't deserve your brutal punishment, Sebastian. They're not Boone" Alexander rationalized it out as he swept his hand in a semi-circle, gesturing at the dead bodies lying around.

"I know. I know that, Alexander." Sebastian hissed out in agitation. "But if I'm lenient, they'll never speak"

"Izabelle would never want you to do this, Sebastian." Alexander cut him off. His voice now held that tone of absolute authority he rarely ever used. His grey eyes glinted as he gave Sebastian a warning one last time.

Despite the intensity between them, what caused Sebastian's world to stop pulsing and flashing in rhythm to the pounding of his anger was the mention of Izabelle - his beloved. His face darkened as he stared down at his hands that were stained with a mix of a dark rusty red and bright scarlet red. One was the dried and oxidized blood and the other was the fresh blood - both from the torture he had inflicted on the guards.

Slowly, an ironic yet still villainous smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "Of course... of course she wouldn't want any of this filth to touch me. But I don't have a choice here, Alexander. In fact," he lifted his gaze and met Alexander's serious eyes, "in fact, I think that to me, doing this now is easier for you and everyone, Alexander. Killing everyone now is better because I'm still sane. Because once they ended up hurting my wife again... I will do far... far worse things than this. But you should already know that, right?"

"I know." Alexander replied with a long and heavy sigh. "I came to stop you because I don't want you to fall back to darkness again. If you continue doing this... I'm telling you, Sebastian, you will find yourself stuck in a deeper hole of self-hatred. Worse is... you'll start to feel unworthy to touch your wife because you'll think that your hands are just too bloody and too dirty. So, stop this now while it's not too late yet. This is not only for you or everyone else's sake, but mostly for Izabelle's sake too. Remember, if Elle's here right now... she'd be crying, begging, doing everything to stop you from doing this." Alexander then turned around and began walking away with his hands shoved inside his pockets. He had said all he needed to say. All that is needed now was for Sebastian to acknowledge the facts and take the necessary steps.

Stopping after walking a distance off, Alexander spoke without turning his head. "Once you have cleared your head, come look for me and let's discuss a better plan than what you have."

Once Alexander was gone, Sebastian just stood there, staring at the half-alive man he had recently tortured, lying on the ground. Izabelle's face and her sweet bright smile appeared in his mind. Her clear blue eyes seemed to stare deep into his soul and it made his rage and his bloodlust get cast aside, wrapped tightly and securely in a chain.

After an immeasurable amount of time, Sebastian clenched his fists so tightly they started cracking. But soon, he opened his eyes and the darkness clouding his eyes started to clear and return to their normal vivid grey again.

Glancing at Lucas, he finally left the place and went after Alexander who was already waiting for him in an empty, quiet bar that only had an old bartender manning it.

## Hellbound Heart #Chapter 172 Forceful - Read Hellbound Heart Chapter 172 Forceful

"Don't mind him. The man is trustworthy." Alexander confidently said, smiling gently at the old bartender before he poured Sebastian a glass of wine and slid it over to him.

Seeing the forced patience in the younger man's expression, Alexander did not waste any more time and started talking. He could tell that Sebastian's blood was still boiling and hot. Right now, he was simply forcing himself to listen to him. Not that this guy had ever been willing, though. He knew that the only reason he was able to tamp down on that explosive anger and impatience was all due to the mention of that little wife of his.

"The witches couldn't find them in Viscarria so that means you can now relax a bit. The man Elle saw must have used a mask. However, it's obvious now that someone had hidden them and that's why they cannot be found here in Dalenn. Also, there should be no way for both Boone and Haze to suddenly disappear so flawlessly and without any trace like that. Their disappearance alone is exactly like what happened to Elle when she disappeared from our home. So, it is already hinting very clearly of an outside involvement, don't you think so?"

"Someone..." Sebastian echoed as his grip on the wine glass tightened a little. He was just withholding squeezing a little more to avoid snapping the stem of the glass. "Tell me, Alexander..." his voice became tightly controlled as his grey eyes turned extremely dangerous. "That someone is no one else but Elijah, isn't it?" Though he was asking Alexander as a question, in his mind, he already felt that the name mentioned was glaringly obvious in their involvement in this.

Alex sighed and then gulped a mouthful of wine from his glass. "While you were searching for Izabelle, we narrowed down the mastermind to a couple of men. But to be honest, I couldn't think of anyone else who could execute such a flawless plan but Elijah. I've told you this before, but that brother of yours has that creepy type of intelligence... almost the same as Zeke's. And that is what is all the more worrying."

Sebastian's face darkened at the mention of Zeke, his older brother. Only Alexander could freely spout Ezekiel's name right before Sebastian like this.

"Their difference is that..." Alex continued, completely ignoring how Sebastian's mood worsened at the mention of his older brother's name. "Elijah's using his brain to hurt people, most especially you."

Sebastian could no longer restrain the anger surging through him and the glass in his hand shattered, but the bartender and Alexander did not even bat an eyelid. The old man just casually offered Alexander another glass, as though this occurrence was a daily occurrence for him, which Alexander again just slid onto the table before Sebastian.

"And no, Sebastian. The solution I want to tell you is definitely not to kill Elijah. You know I would never allow you to just go after him. Just not yet and you know why." Alexander was quick to mention this as he knew from the dark look on Sebastian's face, that was his intent. It did not take a genius to decipher the meaning from his face at this moment. But he could not allow Sebastian to lose control and run wild in another killing spree.

Sebastian clenched his fist, not minding as the smaller shards of broken glass pierced and embedded themselves into his palms. "Just when can I go after him then? Huh?!! Alexander? He's targeting Izabelle now!!! Are you going to tell me to wait even more?! What if the damage to her gets worse the next time around?!"

"You're right. He's targeting Izabelle because he has finally found your weakness. You quickly lose your mind when it comes to her and now, he's using that to his advantage. He's making bolder moves now, using Izabelle, to make you dance right into his orchestrated plans and then eventually fall into his trap. If you go after him... I'm telling you, Sebastian... that's the moment Elijah wins. You will be reduced to being one of the chess pieces on his board, dancing to his tune! Because that's exactly what he wants. That's what he is aiming for! You already know that!" Alexander explained rather exasperatedly, knowing that Sebastian was highly intelligent and would have known all this as well. Though having to say out what the younger man already knew was a little annoying, he still said it because he knew Sebastian needed to hear it from him directly.

"So, you're going to tell me to just sit here and not to get provoked by Elijah again. Are you, Alexander? That's the grand plan you were talking about?" Sebastian gritted his teeth. An inferno began to blaze in his eyes.

"No. I'm not going to ask you to just sit there. What I want you to do is to stay with your wife, guard her well and don't goddamned neglect her even for a moment! I'm asking you to be her very own personal bodyguard!" Alexander's voice began to sound a little louder. "That's how you can keep her safe for now. I know you're raging in anger, but if you go around killing people like this... and leaving her all alone again..." pausing, Alex sighed and lowered his voice. "I don't need to spell it all to you anymore because I know you're already blaming yourself. But I have to tell you this, Sebastian... had you listened to me and stayed with Izabelle instead of thinking that she was alright and leaving her alone - even with the bodyguards I had assigned to her - Elijah would not have

succeeded with that plan of his." Alexander said it even if it would strike Sebastian's already stinging conscience.

Sebastian's eyes dilated at Alexander's words. But Alex really did not hold back and continued. "What happened must serve a lesson to you, Sebastian. You need to pay more attention to your wife if you want to protect her. To be honest, you two are still oceans apart when it comes to understanding each other... you two aren't close enough and that's why the culprit succeeded in taking advantage of that and whisking Izabelle away from you."

A heavy silence reigned for a long while until Alex spoke again.

"So, I just want you to be patient and don't act rashly as we all figure out the best way to deal with Elijah. We're almost there. So, all you need is to hold on a little longer and don't dance to Elijah's rhythm. Go back to Izabelle. She is the one needing you the most right now. And one most important thing, Sebastian... start breaking down that damned wall between you two already. Since you already decided to have her no matter what, then be a man and bare yourself to her. You need to get over your past so you can embrace your future, that is your wife. To be specific, explain to her what your situation is like... why you don't kiss her. You don't need to go into the details. But just at least tell her something no matter how hard it is..." Another long pause. "That's the plan for now, Sebastian. So go and make sure to keep her so close to you that there is no chance for anyone to snatch her away from you and hurt her again. Go back to her now before she ends up disappearing again because you weren't there to..."

Alex trailed off because Sebastian suddenly sprung up from his seat and disappeared like the bar was on fire. Then he let out a long sigh and looked over at the old bartender, a wry smile hanging on his lips.

"Did I do a good job?" he asked and the old man smiled, giving him a wink and a thumbs up. "Well, the last line might be a little too much. But... Sebby must be dealt with using the extreme way or he'd never get it through his thick skull."

"I believe he needed that last forceful push, sir." The old man said as he poured Alex another drink, this time hard liquor. "He'd spent most of his life in a dark and beyond extreme condition so gentle ways might never work on him anymore."

"Right..." Alex's face became a little sullen as he began to remember the first time he saw Sebastian. The young man was in the deepest dungeon of the castle, chained and caged in the dark, all alone. "And that's why no matter what he does, I could never ever get mad at him..."

Back to the present...

Sebastian was beyond serious when he told Izabelle that she should blame him and be mad or mean to him. He had truly wanted her to at least throw a tantrum or lose her temper and get back at him.

But here she was, holding him like he was the one who needed her comfort and care and not the other way around.

When she pulled away, she took his hand and led him to the gazebo. And once they were in the shade, she turned around slowly and looked up at him. She shook her head slowly, finally giving him her response to his earlier words. "I would never... you came for me... saved me..." she whispered out with much difficulty.

"I was the reason you got kidnapped." Sebastian immediately retorted, telling her the truth so bluntly. He did come for her but he was late. So very late. It took him four f\*\*king days to find her. He could not even imagine how long she must have called out and shouted for help for her to hurt her throat as badly as it was. "I was the reason you got hurt, Izabelle. You are going through all of this because..." his jaws clenched as he started to struggle from talking. "...because you married a man like me." He loathed saying that last sentence. He did not want to say it, yet somehow he needed to say it.

"You're not the one who kidnapped me and..." her eyes turned glassy as she gazed up at him with a small smile, "... I was the one who came to you and married you, Sebastian. Remember? I was the one who initiated this. I suggested that we get married."

Sebastian opened his mouth to argue but he eventually closed it again before any words could come out.

"You've... also warned me... early on..." she added. Emotions began to brim heavily in her eyes. And when she was about to speak again, Sebastian pressed his thumb over her lips while pressing his forehead against her head.

Worried that she was talking too much and causing more hurt to her already damaged throat, he whispered... "Shh... you're not supposed to be talking, Izabelle."

Tilting her head further to look clearly at him, she suddenly moved her face up to his.

But Sebastian's instinctive movement was so fast that he easily managed to avoid her kiss.

The two of them stood there, frozen, as their gazes met. In that split second, Sebastian caught the tinge of something like... hurt flashing within her eyes. And it shocked him. Immensely.

This was not the first time this happened to them, but this was the only time he had noticed that look of rejection and disappointment in her eyes.

Pressing her lips together, she gave him that smile again. That one smile that he never did want to see on her face. The forced, pained smile he had never liked. Then she mouthed a 'let's go back' before she turned around fast and started to quickly walk away.

Watching her as the distance between them grew wider, Sebastian heard Alexander's voice echoing in his head. '...be a man and bare yourself to her.' That was what Alex had reminded him to do.

Then reality struck him like a lightning bolt. He remembered she had always walked away or tried to push him away whenever he stopped her from touching or kissing him. He had always thought that it was just her rejecting his advancement and resisting him.

He had never thought that she must have felt the very same thing he was feeling every time she suddenly tells him 'No' and walks away whenever he stops her from kissing or touching him. He also remembered when she asked him why he could not kiss her. That time, he thought that he must have mistaken that look in her eyes because she was drunk. But now...

He just felt extremely stupid. He could not believe how f\*\*king stupid he was to not realize this earlier. He never pegged himself to be an expert with the opposite sex, but to be this dense... even he did not expect that he was this bad. Just how and just why he seemed to turn into a brainless and bumbling idiot when it comes to...

Now it was very clear to him why Alexander kept telling him to say something to her... about his past. About these things his body just refused to do.

Clenching his fists tightly by his sides, Sebastian gnashed his teeth as he watched her about to turn the corner and would soon be out of his sight.

Disappearing from the gazebo, Sebastian appeared right behind her, grabbing her hand and pulling her into his embrace. "I'm sorry..." He whispered as he hugged her tight from behind. "There's a reason why... I hate... kissing. It's because of a... something that happened to me a long... time ago."

Sebastian had to squeeze his eyes closed just to say those words. He felt her trying to turn around in his embrace to look at him, but he did not let her. Alexander's voice echoed in his head again like a devil over his shoulder urging him to say more. But right now, saying more was impossible. Those words were already a struggle for him to say. He knew he just could not force himself to say anything anymore. He had never wanted her to even know or even have any idea of that... filth that was worse than hell itself. He would do anything else except telling her details about that. Anything... However, he would do anything even if he needed to force himself and make himself recall that filth again... if that was the only way, then he would do it to make their relationship better.

"But... I think..." he then continued, "I should start trying to get over it already... since I can see how badly my wife wants to kiss me."

Elle could only hold on to Sebastian as the man suddenly scooped her up and brought her back into their room.

She did not even have the time to process what he had just said because of all his incredibly fast movement. It was a little unfair how he was using his vampire abilities on her.

And then they were already back in their bedroom.

Elle's brain still could not help but lag a little in disbelief at this seeming display of magic or whatever this supernatural thing he was doing.

When she finally snapped out of it, she found herself already being seated on top of the table. He had wedged himself between her spread opened legs and now he was staring at her with a serious, breath-stealing gaze.

Somehow, there was something different about him right now. Something was a little unsettling about the serious gaze he was leveling at her right now. It was hard to explain, but he feels like he was about to do something that was truly a big deal to him. Something that seemed even harder than anything else he had ever done before.

When he slowly pressed his forehead against hers, Elle's breath got caught in her throat. She realized she was getting affected by this indescribable situation. She could not even tell if she was excited or worried. But what she knew was that this moment in time was going to be a significant one. She could somehow feel that it would be the turning point in their current relationship and from this point onwards, their relationship between each other would only get better or worse. But which way would it turn, that she was unsure.

But Elle tried her best to stay calm despite being very unnerved by the stiff expression that was on Sebastian's face. That expression was not very encouraging, but she told herself that it is not a good point of reference. Thus, she told herself to be patient and wait for what he was going to tell or do to her. She also just stayed still and waited patiently for what he would be doing next.

Seconds ticked by as they just held each other's gaze. And then, his gaze slowly traveled down to her lips, causing Elle's heart to experience flip flops.

Was he... was he really going to... to kiss her?

Elle could not help the surge of anticipation that came flooding over her. It was unbelievable how her heart was reacting at this moment. This felt far more nerve wracking to her than experiencing her first kiss. In fact, she felt like her first kiss was

comparatively actually not even that nerve wracking. She did feel nervous that time, but this was... this was a whole different level! Was it because she had longed for this for so long? Since he had not kissed her even during the ceremony on their wedding day? Or was it just because the man who was going to kiss her now was no other than Sebastian himself?

Her heartbeats started to sound louder in her ears. So for fear that she would distract him " as she already knew vampires had insane hearing ability " Elle secretly took a deep breath to calm down even if it was only a little.

Somehow, she managed to. But now, she started to notice that his breathing patterns had changed. She was certain, he was not breathless a while ago so he could not blame the supernatural ability he displayed a while ago. Why was he suddenly breathing harshly like he had just had an intense physical movement?

When Elle's hand slowly slipped over the side of his neck, she was shocked to find how sweaty he was. They were already in their cool room and not under the sun, so why was he sweating even harder?

All of these were just so unlike Sebastian that she started to feel worried for him. From the little she knew about vampires, they do not sweat easily as they have no need to exert themselves in physical matters, thanks to their supernatural strength. Thus, just seeing him sweat only told her that it must be something really serious that was bothering him.

Parting her lips, Elle was about to call his name again, but he stopped her before a single sound could come out.

"Shh... baby... I told you... I can't let you speak anymore or your throat will never heal." His voice sounded a little strange. He really seemed to be struggling, making her feel even more worried.

And the most unsettling thing was the fact that his fingers felt cold and clammy on her skin. No matter how hard he tried to mask it, the excessive sweating, his harsh breathing and the fact that his ever so warm hands seemed to have gone colder than ice, only told her that this was truly something extremely hard for him to do. In fact, she realized now that 'hard' might even be an understatement.

He had told her early on that he hated kissing because of something that had happened to him in the past. She did not know what that was, but his reactions were enough for her to realize that it was something not trivial at all but something worse. Something that she might never even imagine.

And to think that he has not even done it yet and he's already like this.

Elle felt her heart tighten at the realization that he was also battling his very own vicious demons right now. She just could not stand it. She did not want him to force himself like this.

Cupping his face, Elle looked at her with all the understanding she had within her. "It's okay..." she mouthed but then, he gently held her wrists.

"No, it's not... okay... I will do it." He declared firmly and then stared at her lips again. His grey eyes burned intensely... too intense it was almost... scary. It was almost like he was not only about to kiss her, but about to do something that involved his life or death.

Despite that, Elle was unable to protest. She did not want him to force himself like this, but looking at the firm light sparkling in his eyes right now, she did not have the heart to stop him either.

His cold thumb then brushed across her lips. "I'm going to... claim these beautiful lips of yours too, Iza..." he whispered and when she felt his harsh breaths brushing against her lips, Elle just slowly allowed her eyes to slide close.

The pale face of the silver-haired female invaded Sebastian's vision. He was suddenly inside that recurring nightmare – a nightmare that was worse than any hell that he could be thrown into.

She was smiling at him with those filthy eyes of hers that were filled with lust and malice. The naked female monster was licking her disgusting wet lips slowly as if she was eyeing something so delicious that she could not wait to devour.

And then there he was, robotically moving to her bed, like he was being controlled by a dirty spell. He watched himself climb into her massive bed and then he could see nothing else but filth... could hear nothing but the female monster's voice echoing in his head.

"Now come, my favorite toy prince.... That's my obedient boy... now kiss me, young lad... more, young prince... kiss me more... I want that delicious tongue of yours inside my mouth... if you stop, you know what will happen... you and your sisters will be punished... your mouth is my favorite... ah, I really love kissing..."

His vision darkened next and before long, he saw himself slumped over so pitifully in the dark corner of a prison, vomiting hard like he just wanted to throw everything out of his body. His sharp nails clawing punishingly across his chest, not caring that his claws were cutting right through his very own flesh as fresh and bright red blood seeped out. However, it seemed as though he could not feel the pain that was being inflicted on his own body.

"Sebastian!" a hoarse weak voice that did not belong to the monster suddenly echoed in his consciousness. That gentle quality with more than a hint of urgency told him that this

was reality, and coming from outside of this nightmare. It was like the voice of an angel, trying its utmost best to reach out and pull him out of this filthy darkness he was trapped in.

Who... who was it? T-that voice... Iza!

And with that, he was able to immediately wrench himself out of the slimy grasp of that nightmare. And in the next second, Sebastian found himself wrapped in her embrace. She was now standing and hugging him tightly to her bosom.

Sebastian lifted his head and looked at himself in the mirror. The reflection that greeted him was frightening. His eyes were blood red and his face was wet with sweat. F\*\*k! It seems that he had f\*\*ked up again.

Running his fingers through his very damp hair, Sebastian laughed a little sardonically when he felt her tightening her grip around him.

"Let go of me, Iza... I have to get away for a moment." He spoke. He knew what was coming next, every time this happened. He had experienced it a few times when a random brazen woman would try to trick him as they try to steal a kiss from him. He had very nearly killed the vampire as he started to see that woman as the very same monster from his nightmares. From his past.

Right now, all he wanted was to vent violently. To do something so brutal and savage until his rage and disgust and everything else the nightmare had awakened within him settles down again. He needed to leave now. Before things turn ugly when he can no longer control his suppressed violence.

He could not do anything when he is in her presence. And he could not let himself look at her face now. He was scared that he would see that monster's face overlapped on top of his Izabelle's own lovely one.

"I said let go, Izabelle." He hissed, squeezing his eyes closed as he moved and grabbed her shoulders with his trembling hands. However, he was careful on how much strength he was putting into squeezing her shoulders. With his vampiric strength, it would be too easy to be careless and crush her comparatively frail bones.

"Sebastian!!" She called out with her broken, almost soundless voice. He could feel her fingers gripping onto his shirt so desperately. "Look at me, Sebastian..."

"Stop! Don't... talk to me for now!" he should be disappearing before her already. But his worry that she would keep calling out and hurt her throat again stopped him. F\*\*k!

"Don't call for me. Stay here and don't â€“"

"Please..." she cut him off with that scratchy voice, not listening to him at all. He could feel his heart being scratched every time he heard her speak. "Don't go! Can you look at me â€œ"

"Stop."

"Sebastia â€œ"

"I said stop talking!" his eyes flew open as his hand flew to her face, forming a cup and instantly covering her lips. He did not want her to talk and distract him.

And then the world seemed to halt as he realized that he had opened his eyes and he was now looking at her. That was Iza's face he was looking at. Not that... nightmare!

Disbelief and shock rocked him because the view that welcomed him was not that unwelcome hellish face he was expecting to see... Instead, he was seeing clear blue eyes and warm red hair â€œ the face of the woman he would willingly destroy the world for.

He had been scared to death that he would see that monster's face on hers, like what had happened before with the other women. That was why he had refused to open his eyes until he could calm down. But he ended up opening his eyes without realizing it and there it was... Izabelle... his Izabelle's face still looking the same... That face which was becoming more and more precious to him was the one that welcomed him upon opening his eyes.

Utterly bewildered and relieved at the same, Sebastian slowly removed his hand from covering the lower half of her face. Gods... it did not happen... what he was fearing the most did not happen!

"S-seb..." she uttered with her broken voice and he buckled and tumbled forward against her. He cursed under his breath as he rested his head against the crook of her neck.

The gentle breeze blew to the inside of the quiet room, causing the curtains to sway and flutter gently.

On the couch, Sebastian was lying there, his head resting contentedly on Elle's lap while she was looking down at him, her palm covering his eyes. It was as though she was using her palm as an eye mask to block out the light that would otherwise disturb Sebastian from resting.

The picture of them together on the couch was so peaceful, so warm. As if they were in a moment of nothing but serene paradise, enclosed and without the presence of anyone else.

She had somehow managed to lead him to the couch and made him lie down. He did not protest nor said anything to stop her from leading him over. He simply followed along almost robotically.

He seemed so worn out that the moment he laid his head on her lap, he silently took her hand and covered his eyes with her palm. As if he wanted nothing more than to be close to her and to feel her touching him, even with the most basic of touches like covering his eyes.

They stayed like that for so long that it might have already been an hour. Elle did not move until she was certain he was finally asleep.

Ever so slowly, she took her hand off his face. His brows creased a little but when Elle lowered her palm again, though this time she had placed it on his forehead, he relaxed again. Breathing deeply and peacefully, his entire body relaxed further into the couch and Elle could feel even the muscles at the back of his neck loosening.

Elle let out a silent, almost shaky breath as she stared down at his incredibly handsome face. Her gaze traced his enviably thick dark lashes, to his brows, his perfect nose, and then his... seductive lips. At that moment, he looked so vulnerably beautiful that Elle felt as though thousands of sharp needles viciously pierced her chest.

She could never forget that tortured expression... that haunted and tormented look that kept lingering in his eyes. Never. She could not believe it. She never once thought it was this bad. She had never thought that this... that this powerful, dangerous, and beautiful man was so damaged on the inside. Looking at how he carried himself so confidently with much self-assurance outwardly, no one would think that he carried such vicious emotional and psychological scars within himself.

No matter the whole story behind all this, that look she saw in his eyes was enough to tell her that he must have gone through and endured something unspeakably depraved. Sebastian was most of the time impassive. It was rare to see him letting his emotions come to the surface, except when he was really angry, that many might even believe he was not capable of showing emotions aside from anger.

The emotions she saw were nothing but shocking and... it hurts. It hurt so badly. Because she could not even imagine what kind of damage had to be done to a man like Sebastian to be that haunted and horrified.

"I'm so... sorry..." she mouthed, fighting her tears as she caressed his handsome face as gently as she could.

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When Sebastian opened his eyes, the very first thing he saw was the face of his angel filling his entire sight. Her eyes were closed and her red hair was cascading down over his head.

He reveled at the sight and situation he found himself in for a long while. Until everything that had happened came rushing back to him.

Shock and then awe flashed across his eyes. Shock, that he was actually right here, resting his head on her lap instead of going on a berserking rampage somewhere, most probably in the dungeon. And awe of her reactions and to the fact that he even actually fell asleep and now everything already seemed back to normal. It was as though the nightmare had never happened. It was... unbelievable.

Carefully, Sebastian shifted so he could move away without waking her up. He never thought he would be the kind of man who would like the feeling of sleeping with his head on his lover's lap. He remembered she had offered it before, but he had been an a\*\*hole and rejected her good intentions. He was truly stupid to reject such bliss before.

But he was worried that she had hurt her neck or something. How long had he been sleeping? He was worried his head was too heavy for her and her legs might be numb by now.

Just as he was lifting his head off her lap, Izabelle opened her eyes. Their eyes met as he froze right in the middle of the act.

Suddenly, she placed her hand on his forehead and gently pushed his head back down, causing his eyes to slightly widen as he looked at her.

"It's not even an hour yet." She whispered and Sebastian almost relaxed against his newly found best pillow if he did not remember the issue about her throat. "Please rest a little more â€œ"

"I told you not to talk, remember?" He covered her mouth with his palm as he sprung up. "What do I have to do to make you listen to me on this? You're not going to heal at all at this rate!"

She only blinked, not repentant at all, causing him to smirk at her with mock warning. "I'm warning you Izabelle... if you talk once more, I'm going to..."

She gave him one slow blink, her long lashes fluttering innocently yet at the same time seductively at him, that it had him forgetting what he was about to say. His smile widened in disbelief as his dimple appeared. "Yes baby, I'm going to punish you if you talk once more. And no, I'm going to glue my hand over your lips like this... do you know what I'll do?" his grey eyes gleamed with something wicked and naughty. "I'm going to take your panties off you place them here... in your mouth..."

Her eyes instantly flew open so widely that he could not help but chuckle at her reaction.

However, he looked at her seriously and whispered. "I'm really going to do it so if you don't want that... then don't try me, and just listen to me. Are we clear, baby girl?"

Elle's hand was on his cheek, pinching his skin hard. She couldn't believe what he had just said. This man was truly... she couldn't even find the right word at the moment. It was truly making her speechless how fast his emotions shift like this. Or was this him just distracting her and acting like nothing had happened again? The thought that this must be the case made Elle feel her heart constrict. Because she understood it too well — this feeling of trying your best to act like everything was alright now when it wasn't.

"Hmm... so is this your habit when you get pissed or mad, hmm, Iza?" his deep voice pulled her from her thoughts. "Pinching huh... unsexy but quite adorable." He added, smirking.

Finally realizing that she was actually pinching him, Elle's eyes stretched slightly wide. Her ears turned hot as she slowly retracted her fingers off his cheek. Oh lord, she just actually pinched Sebastian Reign and it seems she's going to get away with it unscratched! He even looked like he's amused! Was it because he's now in a good mood?

"What do you want to do today?" he asked, his palm was still over her lips, securely covering her mouth to keep her from talking.

For a few stretched moments, they just stared at each other. Until Sebastian gave in first.

"Alright," he moved to stand. "Don't forget about my warning. Don't speak or else... you know what will happen next." He warned and then he finally retracted his big hand from her face.

Elle could only watch him as he sauntered towards the table, picked up a notebook and pen before returning to her.

"Use these from now on." he gave her the pen and notebook. "Now tell me what you wanted to do. I'll make sure to fulfil any request from you as long as it won't require talking exhausting you."

Quickly, Elle opened the notebook and started scribbling.

'I'd like you to tell me more about vampires.' were written at the notebook when she lifted it to him.

Sebastian already looked bored just by reading her request but he sat next to her and responded. "What do you want to know? I thought you've already learned a lot from that library." r

'The books I read are old and most of what I've read were about the history of the vampires. I want to know about the vampires in today's world.'r

His brows lifted a little upon reading her note. "Alright. Go on." r

Elle enthusiastically wrote her first question. 'Do vampires still drink human blood today?' r

He stared into her eyes quietly for a few seconds that Elle wondered if her question was something she shouldn't be asking. But she honestly thought this question shouldn't be something forbidden for her to know anymore, right? r

"Yes. But only the royals, us." he finally answered, causing Elle to quietly breath in relief. "The modern vampiric law doesn't allow any vampire to drink directly from humans though. We have human donors who donate their blood to us." r

Elle didn't looked shock. Instead, she just looked awed at knowledge she's learning. So those red wines she always seeing must be blood...r

'Why only the royals can drink blood?' r

"Because we needed to maintain our real strength. We are the rulers so we need to be in our best shape in case there's serious trouble that is needed to deal with."r

'You mean if vampire royals will stop drinking human blood, they will weaken?'r

When Sebastian simply nodded, Elle scribbled down again. This time, she took a little while as she seemed to be hesitating with her next question. r

'How about the other vampires? They don't drink blood anymore?' r

"They do. But the modern law of vampires only allows them to drink from fellow vampires, only with consent, of course. Also, from wild animals. That's why hunting is still not prohibited in this country." r

Elle's lips formed a small 'o'. The books she had read from that library were old so these modern rules are a surprising information to her. r

Resting his head on his knuckles, Sebastian stared at her with searching gaze. A small smile tugging at the corner of his lips. "Glad you're not grossed out about this topic." r

She blinked and then slowly opened her mouth. But she halted and just shook her head. r

Biting her bottom lip, she scribbled fast on the notebook. 'I'm not. I told you vampires don't scare me.' r

Sebastian's expression changed. The peaceful gleam in his eyes suddenly turned into something really serious, causing Elle to crease her brows at him. She wasn't expecting him to react that way. In fact, she was expecting him to react positively. So why? Why did it seem like he didn't like that she wasn't scared? r

"Come here." He held her wrist and guided her towards him. r

Elle could only follow along and when she stood right before him, she waited curiously only to get momentarily stunned when something in him turned almost dangerous as he looked up at her. "You should." He told her. His tone absolute. "You really should. I'll tell you why... first reason is because you're my wife." r

Not knowing what to even say, Elle just stared at him with questions in her eyes. She really thought that should be the reason why she shouldn't be afraid. Because she was the wife of the vampire's crown prince. r

"No matter how peaceful this country is in your eyes, bear in mind that there are individuals who despise me to their bones. And because you are my wife, they will go after you." Before Elle could even react from his statement, he immediately continued. "Second is because..." r

He turned her around and pulled her into his lap. His hand crept around her neck. r

When he pressed her head against him and his face nuzzled below her ear, Elle couldn't help the sharp intake of breath that escaped her. "Because you're... you don't have any idea how inviting everything about you are, Isabelle." His voice became a hot whisper. "Did you know that the first time I saw you I had wanted to... taste you? Not just your lascivious body but your blood too...?" r

Elle was not aware she was holding onto her breath until Sebastian whispered against her ear, chuckling a little. "Breathe, Iza...".

She tried to look at him but he held her in place. And then his other hand moved over her lips, causing her to close her mouth again before any words were able to escape. Lord... must he need to do it this way while telling her all those things?

He took a long, drawn out inhale against her skin as if taking in her scent. "Have I ever told you that you smell divine, Isabelle? You must know that the only reason no one jumped on you yet is solely because of my scent that's all over you... yes, Iza... since that night, you've been wearing my scent like a perfume."

Elle struggled to turn and look at him. She was starting to feel hot from all his touches, the heat of his body and his utterly seductive voice right now. But her curiosity was far stronger this time and even though she was being seduced by him, her want to know won out. She wanted to know more about what he was talking about.

"Stay still, baby. I'm not done with you yet. I need you to understand the dangers of you being so fearless towards the vampires." He continued, holding her still.

Not wanting the topic to change before she could get any more explanation, Elle struggled again within his hold, worried that she would not be able to have the chance to ask about this matter again if she just let it go this time.

However, Sebastian's arms were a steel vise she could not even shake off even for an inch. After much struggling and still being stuck, she was feeling frustrated. And so, she bit his hand. It was not hard but she made sure he would feel it.

He clicked his tongue and finally craned his head over hers and looked down at her face, not bothering to remove his hand off her mouth.

"Now what's this, hmm? Izabelle?" he drawled, looking amused at what she was doing. This man... why was it that he seemed to be enjoying this so much? She was already dying of frustration because she had wanted to speak so bad and just ask him a series of questions right now!

Creasing her brows, she let go of the finger she was biting on and huffily scribbled on her notebook. She did not bother to keep her handwriting neat. They were indeed scribbles, as long as she could get the message across. 'What do you mean that your scent is all over me? Which night are you referring to?'

He took a short pause before answering. "I'm talking about that night we first met."

Her eyes widened. She truly had not been expecting that. She had thought he might be talking about that night when they first had sex.

"Your scent is maddeningly distracting, especially when I'm close to you inside a closed up space. So I had to do something about it. If I hadn't... I might have bitten and drank from you that very same night."

Her eyes circled wide.

"Don't look at me like you doubt it. It's true. When you came to me, especially when I held you, I had to fight myself for self-control. For the first time, I felt unconfident with my self-control so I decided to do that. Which ended up as the best move I've done, in fact. I can't even imagine the danger that might have befallen you the moment other vampires come into close proximity with you." He shook his head after saying that.

'What did you do?' Elle quickly wrote another question. Now all his answers were getting her dead curious. What did he do? How could he even do something like that? She had read that vampires were not like witches who had magic.

"It's not much of a big deal, Iza. Don't worry. It's just a bite mark right here." He traced a circle at her back, just right below her shoulder blade. "I didn't draw blood as I didn't use my canines, but my teeth marks are always here. It won't heal for a long while, so my scent in there will linger. Though it's only vampires who will be able to scent it out. I've been biting you here without your notice every time I had a chance before it could begin to heal."

'But I don't remember you biting me there at all!'

"Of course, you don't. Because I made sure it's painless. It won't even sting because it's not a normal bite mark. I'll have to bite you there again soon though. Your own scent is getting stronger and would soon overpower mine because it's been a long while since the last time."

'Do vampires usually do something like this?'

"Not anymore in this era. It's an old practice. Back then, vampires did this to their human sl..." Sebastian's words suddenly trailed off but Elle already knew why. She had read that long time ago it was legal for the vampires to have their very own human slave to supply them fresh blood whenever that they wanted. It was something Elle was so glad that it was no longer being practiced and that vampires now were treating humans as their fellow living beings and not as food supply or slaves.

'Slaves?' she wrote and Sebastian could only nod.

"Yes. It's their way to put their scent on the human so everyone will know that the human already has an owner and that she's now off-limits. It's like a personal mark of possession on the human that they consider their belonging."

'Is the effects different if it's a real bite where the vampire drinks blood?'

"It's the same. But when vampires drink from a human, they need to have the wound heal as fast as possible or they'd bleed to death. So, if they want the scent to linger for a longer time, the teeth marks are much more efficient."

Elle's lips formed an 'o' as she nodded. Fascinated by every tiny piece of information she was learning about the vampires, she found herself thirsting for more.

"You must know that just with your scent alone, is enough to drive any vampire to break the law no matter the circumstances - all so that they could just taste your blood." He continued. "This is why... you need to have a healthy dose of fear for vampires too! And never let your guard down just because you think they are kind and not scary. You can't

possibly know what's the motive of others, so it's better for you to always be wary. Do you understand me, Iza?" his voice seemed to drop even deeper as he said that last line.

'But you said your scent on me is-' before Elle could even finish writing the sentence, Sebastian, who was already reading as she was writing, spoke. "My scent on you is not enough as a deterrent, if the vampire has bad self-control or does not care about the law. The male vampires who have been close to you all these times were trained. If you had come across with a rogue..." the edge of his tone hardened into a flinty quality. "Some rogues are crazy for human blood. It's like drugs to them. And yours... it's one of a kind, Izabelle."

Creasing her brows, Elle stared curiously at him. She somehow could not believe him. And she could not help but wonder if he was just exaggerating. And why was it so? There was no way her blood was that special... that one of a kind. She was just like everyone else. A human. Elle truly could not think of any reason why her blood would be that special. She thought that perhaps, this was just his way of scaring her. So, she would develop some fear and be more wary of the vampires.

Elle wanted to write the words, 'You must be the only one thinking my scent or my blood is one of a kind.' She believed that even though she was another country's royalty, there was really nothing special about her compared to other humans. But he did not give her a chance to write the words.

"So, I'm warning you once again, Izabelle. From now on, you need to be wary of any vampires, even the ones that you think are harmless. Are we clear?" he whispered firmly as his eyes shone with an intense light.

And when Elle remained docile in his arms, he suddenly latched his mouth onto the side of her throat. If his hand was not covering her mouth, Elle was sure a gasp would have escaped from her throat.

"Answer me, baby. Did you understand what I said?" he asked, and she could feel something sharp grazing her skin. She immediately knew that it was his fangs.

Her heartbeat raced like crazy but not because of fear. Instead, she felt thrill and curiosity. It was crazy but it was happening again, this feeling of wanting to experience everything that he could do to her. It was crazy because this matter should really scare her even for a bit, not excite her.

However, she immediately realized that it must be because she had just automatically believed he would never hurt her. There was one thing she had never ever doubted about Sebastian and that was the fact that he would never do anything that would risk her life. Never. It was something she could not explain but she had always felt that she could trust Sebastian with her life, maybe ever since the very moment she met him.

She heard him click his tongue and then curse under his breath when she did not even bother to nod.

He lifted her and as though she was nothing but a rag doll, he shifted her around. Now facing him while straddling him, Elle stared into his mouth. Her gaze searched for his fangs that were hidden. She could not help but be curious about it. She had always wondered if vampire fangs were as depicted in the pictures she had seen in the books.

"Did you hear me?" his eyes slightly narrowed. "Or is this you blatantly telling me you don't want to listen to my words today?"

Elle finally gave him a response by shaking her head.

His brow lifted a little before a small smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "So, this is you trying to be disobedient because you are finally deciding to get back at me?"

Elle blinked while he slowly curled his lip up between his teeth. "You really know how to rile me up, Izabelle." He uttered with a disbelieving tone when she moved, placed her notebook over his broad shoulder and wrote something.

'Can you show me your fangs?' She then lifted the notebook with the question and held it right below her chin, all the while showing him her large eyes, sparkling with excitement and hopeful anticipation.

The question made Sebastian lift a brow at her. She looked like a child, excitedly waiting to unwrap a present.

'I want to see it.' She had quickly scribbled this statement after seeing him not saying anything.

"Why?" he questioned blandly, looking as though he could not quite figure out why she would even have any interest about his fangs of all things.

'I'm just curious. Let me see, please?' Elle's large blue eyes blinked at him slowly as she showed him her written words.

Sighing, Sebastian eventually gave in, causing Elle to smile brightly.

Without any preamble, Sebastian's eyes turned red and when he bared his teeth at her, she watched his canines grow longer.

Elle's jaw dropped as she watched in fascination as it happened before her eyes. Though she was seeing it happen, it still felt somewhat unbelievable.

She lifted her hand to touch his fang but halted. Her gaze flew at him and when he looked like he was giving her the permission to go ahead and touch, Elle continued reaching out, holding her breath at the same time.

She studied it with utmost curiosity and she seemed to want to explore more. But Sebastian gripped her wrist after a while and then his eyes turned back to his usual gray hue and his canines slowly returned to normal.

"Fangs shouldn't interest you, Izabelle." He told her and she pouted before she quickly wrote something down in her notebook again.

'When was the last time you used your fangs to bite anyone?' Elle was curious about this. Since he said the law had forbidden vampires to drink directly from humans, that means they could still drink from glasses or other things now.

"I've never stopped using my fangs, Izabelle." His soft answer came.

Elle's eyes widened. Not waiting for her to write her question, Sebastian explained. "The only thing forbidden is drinking directly from humans. We can drink from our fellow vampires directly anytime as long as they are willing. So, I have always used these fangs of mine, Izabelle. Unlike most of my family, I'm not very fond of drinking from the glass." And he scrunched up his nose after saying that.

Elle had read that male vampires like to drink from females because it was tastier and vice versa. This must only mean that...

She hesitated. Something in her told her not to ask. But right now, all the restraints and fear she had always been feeling whenever she wanted to know something from him was gone. Perhaps because he was so approachable and not so brooding today. Right now, she had a feeling that no matter what she asked, it would be alright. And thus, she wrote the words anyway. 'Who are you drinking from?'

## Chapter 180 Image

"The castle's servants and nobles." He replied in an instant after reading her question.

'Just any servants?'

"Just the ones who are willing. We can't just grab them and drink from them. They need to give us permission too, as per the law. But for the nobles, it's their duty to serve us. So they come to us without excuse when we need them."

Surprised, Elle quickly scribbled the question down. What she wanted to know were the details. 'The nobles are assigned to serve you?'

"We choose them. Though most of us no longer need them as almost everyone's already married."

Elle's brows creased as she looked at him with questions in her eyes. And before she could write her next question, Sebastian continued talking. He could already read the question that was burning in her eyes. "It's because once a vampire is married, the couple will drink from their spouse's blood. And most don't find it morally acceptable for a vampire to still drink from another woman when they already have their wife and vice versa." He explained rather casually as if he was talking about something as mundane as the weather.

But to Elle, the topic quickly caused a certain unwanted disturbance within her. This meant that Sebastian too, had his own chosen noble. And since he never drank from her despite them already being married... it means he was still drinking from another female "that noble he chose to serve him. And it somehow struck her with a wrong note as she thought of it.

Elle already learned from the book that she read in Whitefalls that the vampires always drink from the opposite sex. And that information did not bother her at all when she first found out about it... until now.

The image of Sebastian drinking from another woman flashed in Elle's mind. The picture should've at least looked a little scary but the image she saw in her mind was... so intimate and... the awful feeling within her worsened.

A soft knock echoed and Sebastian's attention was pulled towards the door.

"What is it?" his voice echoed.

Elle could not quite hear nor understand the faint voice coming from outside the room but she knew Sebastian did.

"Send her away." Sebastian responded in a low tone. "Tell her to come back next week."

When he returned his attention to her, Elle quickly dropped her eyes down to her notebook. She did not want him to see her conflicted feelings at the moment that were being reflected in her eyes. Though he was being so relaxed and open with her, she was not quite sure if he would be as accepting of the feelings that were running through her right now.

"Any more questions?" he asked, looking at her lowered head.

Elle hesitated once again but after just staring at the blank paper for a few seconds, she eventually moved her hand and wrote, 'Who is it?' She decided to go ahead and be brave to ask. She might as well do it since she was already asking questions anyway.

"Who... the one I sent away?"

She was actually asking about the female noble who he chose to serve him, but she nodded anyway as she belatedly regretted asking about who it was. She was glad that he had misunderstood her question.

"It's Kana, the noble I chose to serve me. Today's her scheduled time..." he trailed off and his head snapped towards the door again.

Elle's fingers clenched around her pen upon hearing what he had said. A sharp lancing pain spear through the region of her chest. Ahh... so the one he had sent away had been the one who served him as well? So, Kana was the name of the female noble he had chosen. She had been the one he was biting and drinking from...

"Lucas. Didn't you hear what I said?" Sebastian's hardened voice made her follow his line of sight and saw Lucas standing at the threshold, holding the door slowly open. He had an apologetic look on his face as he explained further.

"Your Highness, Lady Kana said you also didn't meet with her on your last scheduled feeding time. I'm afraid I need to make sure you will not neglect yourself since I heard you haven't..." Lucas glanced at Elle for a while before he continued after clearing his throat, "had any proper meal for days."

Sebastian shut his eyes closed in exasperation, hearing what Lucas said. But he took a deep breath and ran a hand through his hair.

"Fine! Now get out, Lucas. I'll be there in a minute. Have her wait for me in the living room." He ordered with a growl. Lucas immediately nodded and once the door was closed, Sebastian then stood, scooping Elle up into his arms.

The moment he put her down on the bed, the door opened again and a white furry wolf emerged. It was Snowwhite!

"Come here." Sebastian looked at the furry white wolf as he tapped his hand on the space next to Elle.

Snow immediately obeyed and hopped into the bed, lying docilely right next to Izabelle. His furry and large body thumped heavily on the sheets.

Elle kept her gaze on Sebastian as he talked to the wolf, telling him to behave in a way like he still had a bad impression of Snow but he just did not have a choice.

When Snow just looked away as if he was so done hearing the long list of commands, Sebastian returned his attention back to Elle. The stern look that he had used on Snow had now softened into a gentle smile as he looked at her.

He tucked a stray lock of her hair to the back of her ear and said gently. "I'll be back in a while. Be good and wait for me here with the wolf, okay?"

But as he turned to leave, Elle quickly shot her hands out and grabbed his hand in a tight grip.