

Hellbound Heart

Chapter 271 Real Danger (4)

When her fingers still refused to pull the trigger, Elle began to speak to herself internally. 'Don't be afraid... you're not going to kill an innocent... this is just training... for your sake... remember why you're doing this, Elle... remember the pain and frustration of being helpless' "

The moment when she was trembling helplessly, hiding in terror in the bushes when she saw Brandon Haze in the crowd, the moment when she was kept locked in that room, the moment when she was used as bait to capture Sebastian that night... the moment when she watched Sebastian being chained behind bars... All those helpless moments that brought up the feeling of her being useless and a hindrance just flashed like a quick slideshow in her mind. And with that reminder, Elle's arms steadied and her fingers decisively pulled the trigger.

The deafening sound that she was used to did not ring out this time, but sounds of flying bats filled the silence in the clearing they were at.

She then immediately rose from her hiding spot to change to a different location, heeding Caelian's advice this time. Caelian had said that if her target was not a witch, they would fall and get wounded. Others who came along later would be able to find where she was hiding just from looking at the gunshot wound and the angle of entrance into the body. So, she must change her location as soon as possible.

There were four witches assigned to this exercise and they were not with each other. So Elle believes that the others might not be near that witch she had shot. However, she needed to be careful so she did not dare risk to go farther even though she still wanted to keep on running.

When she found another place similar to the last one that she could use to hide again, Elle did the very same thing she had done a while ago. Her trembling was gone. And she could feel her heartbeats thudding hard. Everything seemed to have happened too fast and it was... nerve wracking. But she had successfully passed the first stage. She did it!

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The hunting game lasted more than two hours in total. And Elle had completed it!

The last one nearly made her fail, though. She had ran to the last witch while changing her hiding spot but thankfully, the witch was facing the opposite direction and had not noticed her in time. It was a close call but nevertheless, she made it!

Lilith was all grins when she appeared before her. Obviously, she had already watched everything.

"I did it..." Elle said in a disbelieving voice and Lilith nodded.

"Yes, you did. And you're freaking amazing."

Before Elle even realized it, she had run over to Lilith and hugged her. "Thank you! Your advice made everything work out for me! You're freaking amazing too, Queen Lilith."

"You can just call me Lilith, Princess Elle."

"And please call me Elle too."

The duo grinned at each other with sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks before turning around and going back to where everyone was waiting for them.

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"Well then... I think it's time for the next round." Alexander stood from his chair as soon as Elle and Lilith arrived.

Even Elle was taken aback as she thought that she would be allowed to rest first or even thought the next one would only be tomorrow night. It was already past midnight.

"I know you are thinking of resting. But let's say you're being chased by your captors, Elle." Alexander continued. "The first game was you managing to escape from let's say... being caged. Then this second game would then be the chase to recapture you. If you manage to pass this, then, you would be considered to have survived."

"Well... Lady Alicia did say we're trying to make it as close to reality as possible. In reality, there would be no time for you to rest at all if you were being pursued." Lilith seconded while Abi and Alicia were busy gauging every expression Elle was making. "Can you do it?"

"Caelian and I will be the ones chasing you this time." Alexander suddenly announced and Elle swallowed.

"I can do it... I can still keep going but..." Elle hesitated. "How can I even deal with the two of you? You guys can see in the dark too and even have superior hearing. How can I even hide from you two? And you can even smell someone's scent."

"Don't falter about those matters now, Izabelle." Alexander stood from his chair. "Don't worry too much about it. As long as you don't get yourself wounded, any of us picking up your scent is not possible."

Elle's eyes widened and her forehead creased, a little confused at what Alexander just told her. "R-really? But I thought..."

"And I don't have superior hearing. So, it's Caelian you'd have to be careful with on that front."

Alicia piped in. "We'll coach you on some tricks to deal with that, Elle."

"Come over here, dear." Abi gestured to her. And when Elle was with them, Abi looked over at the two males. "Now both of you, go away and don't listen to our girly talks."

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Soon, the second game commenced after Alicia and Abi had their chat with Elle.

"We'll be giving you ten minutes to simulate your 'escape' before we come after you." Alexander instructed. "Think of us as real danger. Better yet, think of me as Elijah and Caelian here as Elijah's new sidekick."

Elle's eyes stretched a little wider but she did not react too much to that and quickly nodded. "Okay, I'm ready." She then replied and after she glanced at the three gorgeous ladies standing right there, she turned around towards the dark forest. Specifically, to the part of Black Forest that did not have those glowing tiny flowers.

Looking one last time over her shoulder, she glanced at the two men. Her eyes gleamed with something brave and fierce. And when she looked ahead of her again, she ran without turning back.

Chapter 272 Complicated (5)

"Alex..." Abigail's words trailed off as her eyes still scanned the place where she had seen Elle last. After a couple more seconds, she then sighed heavily before leaning in on her husband once Caelian followed after Elle into the forest. "You're not seriously planning on pushing Elle to the edge, are you?"

Though her words came out as a question, the look in her eyes already seemed to understand that Alexander was planning to do just that.

Alexander pulled at her, wrapping his arm around her waist before he too, sighed heavily. He then planted a gentle and doting kiss on his wife's head. "I know you're

concerned and worried about her, Abi. But this is a necessary thing that she needs to go through. We need to finally find out what she really is now. The feud between Sebastian and Elijah is getting really serious. And I'm worried that no one is able to solve and end this problem but Sebastian and Elle themselves. Elijah had made a threat that caused us not to be able to participate in their feud, at least, openly. That little punk said he's going to create unrest by starting to spread some subtle information about the vampires and witches' existence if we keep getting in his way. He is playing his cards so skillfully. You know we can only abide at least outwardly, to his rules right now for the sake of peace." Alexander explained to Abi clearly, wanting her to understand why he was pushing Elle so hard.

The tinge of annoyed and pissed off expression on Alex's face was enough for Abi to know just how much her husband was trying to calm himself. He had been like this for a long while now since they had learned of Elijah's agenda.

Alex was not a fan of this type of 'games' as he called it. Elijah was truly clever. He knew he would never stand a chance if it was a literal war so he elaborately orchestrated a plan that would effectively restrain the powerful ones by holding their whole country and in fact using the peace as a hostage.

All of them had not seen this coming. They had tried to counter this problem but it was as though Elijah had already anticipated every possible danger to his plan and already had prepared a counter for it. He was just too sneaky and used some very underhanded methods to force them into inaction.

"That little bastard is really pissing me off. He's making me feel like I'm against another Zeke and it's damned annoying because I hate playing all these mind games without any physical battles. I wished I could rush over and just use the old fashioned way of beating him with my fists to settle this mess." Alex said in a quiet voice. "He's really lucky this is not the old, ancient times, else his head would have long been separated from his body."

Shaking his head, he sighed. "This is why these modern technologies are dangerous for us..." Alex trailed off as his brow lifted a little upon seeing the way his wife was looking at him. "What's with that look, wifey?"

Abi's lips lifted a little. "I'm just glad you're still calm despite being so pissed off like this. Your tone don't even sound like something is annoying you at all." She teased her husband before poking a finger between his brows.

Alex threw his head back and sighed heavily again. His voice now turned loud. "I guess, dealing with those officials and all these modern government related stuff forced me to be like this. Dear lord... I'm really not cut out for this... I can't believe Zeke's been dealing with all these annoying matters for so long and even looked like he was enjoying it. He really better come back soon before I explode and settle things according to my way."

"Please tell your husband to hold on, Abi." Alicia piped in. "The world will burn and leave nothing but ashes if he ever ends up losing his calm and explodes."

"Don't worry, Alicia. I won't ever allow that to happen." Abi replied playfully though a serious gleam flashed across her eyes. "Right, Alex?" that two words held a wealth of meaning behind it.

"Well, I am now a peace advocate since I am now a father... So I guess, there's nothing I can do but stay calm and hold on." His mischievous grin soon faded as he looked at the dark part of the forest Elle had entered earlier. "However, it doesn't mean we're just going to sit back and do nothing. I still believe Elle will be one of the key factors if not the only key for this problem to truly and finally end. That's why we must do everything that must be done now to prepare her for any possibilities that might occur in the near future."

Abi's expression also turned serious.

Elle's situation was actually very complicated. They all knew that she was not just human. However, none of them was certain what race she could be or what could be the other part of her. They all have their own theories, but they were all just theories and speculation until now.

And one of the hardest part was actually deciding whether to tell her anything or not, and whether to force her to reveal more of herself or not. They do not know what exactly will happen, what exactly will she reveal. It was worrying. In fact, Abi was a bit scared for her dear Elle.

She had been tempted to say something to Elle for a long while now but her talk with Alicia about Elle had made her hesitate and decided to listen to Alex in the end. That was the reason she swallowed her words and had just given useful reminders to Elle before the second exercise.

"Alright. It's my turn to move out now." Alex then said.

Abi could only nod at her husband, her facial expression not hiding at all how worried she still was for Elle before she watched Alex enter the dark forest.

Chapter 273 Irony (6)

Meanwhile in the Reigns castle.

"Please go have a rest, Your Highness. It's been days since you last slept, isn't it?" Lucas told Sebastian after their late-night meeting with the prophetess.

"How's the information about this hacker guy I am looking for? Did he finally respond?" Sebastian asked. They had been discreetly looking for a hacker who is currently known to be the world's most wanted hacker. The guy was said to have retired and was no longer accepting any kind of clients.

However, Sebastian wanted him. It was funny because the best solution Sebastian had come up with to destroy Elijah's plan was to get help from a hacker. In short... they needed a human's help to overcome this problem.

Sebastian had a feeling that Elijah was a notorious hacker himself. It was certain he was not working alone, so they had been trying to search for his team and their hideout. But these people had obviously been perfectly hidden somewhere because of the help of a powerful witch backing them.

Elijah had used human technology to immobilize the powerful vampires and witches to not come attacking him at full force and to still allow him to do whatever that he wanted. They had not banked on him using methods of the humans to deal with them. However, it was a genius strategy that none of them ever expected him to pull.

The vampires and witches had never thought that there would be a day where human technology can immobilize them. Well, this only worked because everyone would rather choose peace than having a potential apocalypse triggered. But this was what Elijah had taken advantage of.

Sebastian had also found out that his brother, Ezekiel, had sent vampires he had hand-picked to other countries to learn and hone their hacking skills many years ago. There were seven of them according to Lucas. The fact that Ezekiel had made preparations for this, only made everyone realize that he had seen a possible threat regarding this matter in the future.

But when they had gone searching for these seven experts, they could not find them anywhere. They all had disappeared and left no trace nor records since the year Ezekiel left.

The only reason they could think about was that those seven might have been taken captive by Elijah. And those seven were the ones he was using right now. The very ones his brother had sent out to train to protect the country were now the ones being used by Elijah against the race and country his brother had been trying to protect. What an irony.

"The hacker with the codename 'Monster'?" Lucas answered.

"Yes."

"He didn't respond. I'm afraid the only way we can communicate with him is to meet him in person."

A long sigh escaped Sebastian. Just like Alexander, he hated this. He hated that they could not fight with brute force and were being forced to be strategists when they were the swords themselves. He had thought many times that this era really was not for him... for them.

"Then we'll go meet with him. If that's the only way, we'll do it." Sebastian hissed impatiently.

They could not find any vampire hackers that were good enough. So, their last resort was to turn to the humans. Sebastian believed that in this matter, humans were better when dealing with science and technology. He had thought that perhaps this was the humans' very own type of strength or they might even call it their magic. His brother certainly had foreseen it, so he tried to train some vampires for as early as possible as Lucas had revealed, Ezekiel had gathered these men when human's modern technology was just starting to boom.

Still, even though those vampires certainly had trained earlier and longer than any human hacker that was alive right now, based on the information Sebastian had gathered, humans still have the chance to beat them. This thing was like one of the modern wars of humans after all.

"Err... but Your Highness... are you sure you want to go meet that person all by yourself? I can go on your behalf if you want. There is no need for you to personally make that trip."

"No. We can't risk being found out. We need the witch queen to go with me to keep this a secret. So, I need you to go and fetch Queen Lilith since Zeres is nowhere to be found." Sebastian decided firmly and gave out his order. Lucas had no choice but to comply and obey his Lord.

Lucas nodded. "Please rest while waiting for me to fetch Queen Lilith over."

"I will."

When Lucas was gone, Sebastian headed back to his room. Their room. He did not like going back to their room because he had missed his Iza terribly. She really had so silently but surely integrated herself into his life.

But he needed to take at least a couple of hours nap to rest up. That was more than what he needed before they set to fly off to meet with that human hacker.

Loosening his neck tie, Sebastian pushed the door open. He began to undress before taking his shirt off. But the moment he shut the door, he became very still.

He had sensed someone's presence and smelt that intoxicating scent he had been missing so bad. But he brushed the thought off. Telling himself he was doing it again, feeling things due to his intense longing for his beloved person. And about the scent, Iza's scent had always been lingering, most especially in the bed sheets though it was growing fainter and fainter as the time passed.

However, this time, he was shocked because the scent seemed to be stronger right now. That could only happen if... Iza was right here. And what' this presence... impossible...

Sebastian whirled around and his eyes dilated at the sight of a woman lying in their bed.

"I... Iza?"

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A/N: Hi guys. Sorry but this is all I can finish today. I'm short for 4 chapters T^T. But don't worry because I will definitely release the rest tomorrow. This week has been hectic for me cause I am dealing with some in real life stuff and it needs to be done asap. Hoping for your continues understanding guys. Love ya'll. <3

Chapter 274 Task (1)

"Sebastian..." the woman called out. And her voice instantly made Sebastian shut his eyes closed tight. His jaws clenching hard.

"Sebastian..." her voice, her face... was so perfectly Izabelle.

"How... how did you get in here?" Sebastian's voice was ice cold.

He felt rather than see her climb off the bed and then approached him slowly. Her scent... the enticing and potent scent of Iza's blood that was now filling the room was like a powerful spell.

Lifting his arm to cover his nose with the back of his palm, Sebastian tried to fight the haze that seemed to be dragging him into a downward spiral.

"I'm sorry. I got wounded on my way here. But don't worry, it's just a small cut." She explained, stopping a couple of steps away from him. "I miss you, Sebastian."

Sebastian's fingers twitched and then he clenched his fist.

"I don't know how I ended up here." She continued. "I don't really remember. I was in the Black Forest and then the next thing I knew, I am already back here... look at me. Please look at me, Sebastian." Her voice, soft and alluring.

He opened his eyes, peering at her through the fringe of his dark hair. The sight that welcomed him had his eyes stretching slightly wider. Now he knew why she had kept herself covered while she was lying on the bed.

She was wearing a provocative see-through red nightgown. One that left nothing to the imagination.

"Since I am already here... I decided to surprise you." She told him innocently, blinking those large blue eyes at him. He stared at her. His gaze, boring so deeply into those eyes that he had been so badly missing for the last four days.

Slowly, she moved again. But before she could reach out and touch him, he took a large step back, not taking his hand off the lower half of his face. His eyes narrowed at her.

"I need you to leave. Now." He hissed at her.

Her eyes widened for a moment before the surprised expression was completely erased. Shaking her head, she replied to him. "Please..." her voice turned begging. "What are you... saying? Could it be that you don't believe this is me?"

Sebastian froze at her words. Those eyes, that voice...

"Sebastian..." her eyes welled. When he unconsciously removed his hand off his face, the strong, intoxicating scent of her blood was like a potent spell that seeped through him, evoking his every desire uncontrollably. Isabelle was definitely his strength... but his weakness as well.

"Sebastian... please..." she begged once again. In her mind... it seemed to be working. She could see it. Sebastian was faltering. A little more and he would give in. It seems that the potent scent of the blood was having an intense effect on him.

Days ago, Kana had met a witch who offered her a task. This. The humiliation she suffered from that party was something she could never ever forgive. So when the witch told her about this, she did not even hesitate and immediately agreed to do it.

Her task was to find proof that Sebastian and Isabelle's divorce was indeed real and not just a façade.

Right now, Kana believed it was indeed a façade. That witch was right. One look at Sebastian was enough to tell her that he really did not despise Isabelle even though he wanted her to leave.

The witch had done such an amazing job turning her into the woman she despised most in this world. She was amazed at how powerful that witch was to actually be able to do this kind of thing. And now, here she was, right before this man whom she desired more than anything in this world.

And seeing him in this state, looking intoxicated just by the scent of her blood had her feeling so elated. She had never seen him show this kind of expression to her before in all those times she had served him in the past.

Even though her blood was supposed to be the best... she knew now that her blood was nothing compared to that woman's. Because even she was badly affected by the scent. If it was not for the witch's spells on her, she might be craving for that blood right now.

Seeing Sebastian like this had made her realize why she could not stand a chance. But that realization did not kill her will. Instead, it only caused it to grow even stronger instead. The desire to be that woman she hated surged within her. Yes. She was going to take over and be Izabelle if that was what it takes for this man to look at her and go crazy for her like this.

The witch had asked her to do this in exchange for one thing. The witch had told her that she would grant anything she wished. Just one wish.

Kana did not tell her about her wish yet since the witch told her they would meet again for it once she succeeded with her task. Now Kana knew what wish she would request of her. She would ask her to grant her wish of being Izabelle forever.

Kana evilly thought that once the human Izabelle dies, Sebastian would definitely be hers.

She wanted to laugh and scream with triumph but she held back, telling herself she must finish this task first at all cost. She needed proof. She needed to make him hold her... no, that was not enough... he must have sex with her.

Her body screamed with desire and she took another step closer to him. Her confidence that this man was going to be hers tonight touched the highest sky and she lunged herself at him.

A loud thud echoed in the dark room followed by a gasp as Kana suddenly found herself slammed against the door. Her feet were dangling in the air and his hand was... strangling her neck.

Chapter 275 How Dare They (2)

Despite all the appearance, the voice and that scent... Sebastian had decided in his heart and mind that this was a trick. His Iza was currently in the Black Forest. Alexander and everyone else were there with her right now. There was no way they would have allowed her to leave or even let anyone take her! There was just no way this was his Iza!

The reason why Sebastian had been so confident that divorcing Iza would work was because Elijah knew about most of his past. It was not impossible for Elijah to believe the divorce was real if he came to the conclusion that he could no longer see Iza the same after what happened that night when Elijah kidnapped them both.

Elijah's intelligence certainly would not miss the big possibility of that fact.

Though Sebastian was unsure at first if Elijah would even bother, this move that they had taken was a sign that the plan had at least worked. They were having doubts and now they are moving to confirm it.

He was not completely certain though since this was Elijah. They might have another agenda but he did not care about trying to figure that out now. The only thing he must do now was to show them. To prove it to them that his divorce with Iza was not simply a façade and completely remove their doubt.

"Didn't I tell you that I can no longer look at you?" he said to her through gritted teeth. Tightening his fingers around her throat, lifting her up much higher so he need not see her face.

He could not hold back his anger. His blood was boiling within him right now. How dare they used his Iza's face and even voice like this... F**k... he wanted to kill everyone involved in this, right here, right now! How dare they! To use her face, voice and scent on another woman was a sacrilege in his mind. There was no forgiving such blatant disrespect of his woman!

"I can't stand seeing your face anymore. I thought I had already made that clear enough. So, stop this madness now and go back to your own country. Do you not understand?!" He snarled out viciously. The emotions rolling off him were real. The anger was real. The contempt was real as well. However, what the other person did not know was that the anger and contempt was due to the fact he knew she was not his Iza. Thus, his words were convincing and his facial expressions believable.

He suddenly let go of her and then immediately turned around. She crumpled to the floor in an undignified heap, coughing as she greedily pulled in air that was deprived from her.

"This is your last warning. If you ever show your face before me again... I'll make sure you'll regret it." He said with venom and real threat resounding in his voice.

The aura he exuded even sent shivers down Kana's entire being. The bloodlust she felt from him was so real that her instinct told her to run for her life now. He was definitely not putting up a show. He was dead serious. And if she made a wrong move, she would be the one dead!

But instead of running away, she smiled. 'So, it was real...' she thought and she laughed and laughed within herself.

Sebastian really had shunned that woman. That witch was wrong and whoever the man she was talking about was right!

When Kana had met with that witch, she had mumbled the words 'I want to prove to that animal prince that he is completely wrong. How could he even consider that the divorce being real is not impossible when it is so obvious? Idiotic! I can't believe that such an intelligent being would say such an idiotic thing!'

Whoever the animal prince she was referring to ended up being right. And Kana was so elated that she found herself feeling as though she were about to go crazy. Because this only meant one thing... that the human bitch was now out totally of the picture. It was just as she had predicted that time during the ball that was held in his castle. Sebastian hates her now! He loathes her so badly that he could not even tolerate looking at her face! She can now have Sebastian back to herself and this time, she would never let him go! Because he belonged to no one else but her! She would lay claim on him as completely hers alone!

Suddenly, Kana mumbled a chant. It was the chant the witch taught to her so she could get rid of her disguise. She was instructed to only use this chant only when she decides to leave the Reign's Castle to meet the witch again so no one could trace her.

But now, Kana thought that witch did not matter to her anymore. That wish... she did not need it anymore so there was no need for her to go back and meet with her again! She was able to take over from here and arrange her future using her own power.

Upon hearing her chant, Sebastian turned around and saw her surrounded with a reddish wisp of smoke.

He stared at her with surprise as soon as he saw her change back to her original features.

Kana smiled and kneeled before Sebastian.

"Forgive me, Your Highness!" she cried. "It's me, Kana. A witch... a witch forced me to do this. She wanted me to find out if your divorce with that human is real. She was the one who gave me all this perfect disguise."

Shaking her head as she cried pitifully, Kana reached out and put her hand on Sebastian's coat. "I never asked her for this. Please believe me, Your Highness. I was threatened! Blackmailed! I can only obey or she'd kill me."

The icy coldness in his eyes calmed a little as he looked down at her.

"Tell me, Kana... who's the f**king witch that did all these to you?"

Chapter 276 Impostor (3)

Trying his hardest to keep his cool, Sebastian squatted before Kana. However, he made sure to keep at least an arm's length away from her.

He had not expected this woman to turn on her allies and switch sides. All without a moment's hesitation. She was such a cruel and ungrateful person. But who was complaining? In fact, this was a favorable situation for him. Now he knew Elijah's backer was indeed a witch and it was a woman. Who was this female witch? She was so powerful to create such a topnotch spell that can imitate even the person's heartbeats?

In the past, witches could never do this. That was why the royal blood vampires could always find out whenever someone was in disguise through their heartbeats. This disguise was so perfect, he had to only rely on his own gut feeling and the reaction of his body to tell him that this woman was not his Izabelle. She was at most, a high level immigration goods. Impressive and high level, but an impostor nonetheless.

This was such a dangerous magic that needed to be destroyed at all costs! Sebastian vowed to himself to search for the source of it and remove it from the roots. This dangerous magic, if allowed to propagate, would only spell more trouble in future.

"Tell me, Kana... who's the f**cking witch who did this to you?" he tried his hardest to sound even a little soft. This was his chance to find out more. To dig for truly important details that might change everything. To turn the tables around and use her to his advantage.

Kana wiped at her eyes, as though brushing away tears from her current distressing situation. And she reached out to him, desperate for more attention. The little attention he gave her right now was nowhere near enough. And she was craving his attention as a plant craves the sunlight.

Sebastian fought the urge to swat her fast approaching hands. He needed to hold on. He must make her spill what she knew before getting away from her.

Kana hugged him and Sebastian's jaws clenched tightly in revulsion. What he wanted to do most was to slap those offending paws that were currently on his person and wash her disgusting scent off. But he tamped down the urge and did not move and just asked her again. "Kana... you need to tell me more details. This witch needs to be dealt with as soon as possible or she'd find someone, disguise her, and send her to me again. They might even make a replica of you next." Thankfully, his tight voice and words spoken through gritted teeth matched the content of the message he was trying to get across even though it actually was out of revulsion of Kana.

She reluctantly pulled away and looked at him. "Your Highness... before I answer your question... please tell me you're going to bring me back to your side again. I promise I will behave and serve you way better than before. I will give you my life, Your Highness, I â€" Kana's words were rushed and tumbled out one after another.

"Kana." He cut her off. "About that... we'll talk about that again at another time. For now, we need to deal with this current issue. This is a serious thing to me and you know I can't focus on you until this matter about this witch that is occupying my mind is being dealt with. You know how much I despise witches." He even slightly growled as he uttered that last line. And since it was true on the whole, the sincerity in his tone and the distaste in his face convinced Kana that he was being honest with her.

Kana seemed to be convinced by that at last.

"Promise me we'll talk about that again once you're ready, Your Highness." She demanded. She still wanted a guarantee that he would not throw her away after he got what he wanted out of her.

Sebastian paused but eventually nodded at her. "I give you my word." He said and Kana smiled triumphantly.

"Actually, I didn't see the witch's face." she began a little slowly and Sebastian barely stopped himself from snapping at her.

"You didn't see her..." he narrowed his eyes, not hiding his disappointment and suspicion of her.

"Please believe me, Your Highness. The witch was wearing a long red cloak and her large hood was constantly covering her head."

"Do you know her name?"

Kana shook her head, pursing her lips with the hopes that she might come across as pitiful. "She didn't tell me..."

Sebastian clenched his fist discreetly as he tried calming his expectant reaction to Kana's ignorance. "So you do not have anything valuable to tell me to trace her, Kana?"

Kana swallowed. "I... I'm so sorry, Your Highness."

Sebastian ignored her words and just shot out the next question. "Where did you meet her then?"

"She approached me in my room in our manor." Kana had no choice but to continue answering him. No matter her feeling a little disgruntled at how he was treating her, still, having to be able to talk to him is so much better than being ignored.

"Did she tell you to meet with her again?"

"Yes. She said she'd come to our manor again when I'm ready."

"Then you need to leave now and go back."

Her eyes circled wide and she clung to him again. "Your Highness, I â€œ"

"I am going to go hunt that witch. She needs to be dealt with immediately." And Sebastian shrugged her hands off and stormed out of the room, leaving it open.

Kana called out but Sebastian did not bother to look back at all, leaving her gritting her teeth and clenching her fists.

The next moment, Rion entered the room and grabbed her arm. His actions were not too gentle and it hurt her.

"What are you doing, Rion?"

"His Highness ordered for you to be detained."

"What?! That cannot be true!"

"Just obey, Lady Kana." Rion's flat and unimpressed voice sounded out beside her.

And Rion dragged Kana towards the underground dungeon. Upon the sight of the door leading underground, Kana threw a fit.

"Let me go! I'm not going to enter that dungeon prison!" she yelled.

But Rion did not budge and continued pulling her along with ease. Not caring that she was a noble's daughter.

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Chapter 277 Fan (4)

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Sebastian was in his secret study with Raven as they were trying to figure out how Kana even entered his room without being noticed and traced.

Their conclusion again led them to believe that it was definitely a witch's doing. And since the security in the area was not that tight anymore since Iza was no longer in there, not to mention that Raven and the others were following him around, it should not be that hard after all for a vampire with the help of a powerful witch to sneak inside the castle and even enter into the prince's chambers that easily.

"I hope you didn't allow her to make her escape too easy and obvious, Rion." Sebastian spoke up as soon as Rion appeared at the door.

"Of course, Your Highness. And I didn't even actually have the chance to feign anything at all! Because she suddenly attacked with another powerful witch weapon. I didn't see it coming and it was indeed a deadly one. So she escaped for real and it had nothing to do with me being lenient on her. But Your Highness, why did you let her escape?"

"I didn't let her escape. I, too, am only using her. Someone needs to deliver the news she found out." Sebastian replied. He was certain that Kana would now turn back and try to regain the witch's favor after his dismal treatment of her. He was almost certain that Kana would tell the truth about what she found out or even if she lied, that witch can certainly read her mind and she would die in the witch's hands.

Sebastian needed Elijah and that witch to at least come to the conclusion that the divorce was real. It was not certain if that could really stop them from bothering Iza, but at least this would give him a little peace of mind to focus on what he needed to do. The last several days were still filled with distractions and lingering fear. And he found himself unable to give his all in his preparations. Because to him, it was Iza's safety that

was still the top priority. He could not make himself completely focus on something else if there were unfinished things related to her!

But with this, it gave him at least a little relief even if it was not foolproof.

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Black Forest.

Alexander had stumbled upon Caelian who was sitting on top of a round rock. The man was smiling disbelievingly at Alexander. His blond hair gleaming due to the shine of the moonlight peeking through the dense leaves of the trees in the Black Forest.

"She managed to shoot and hit you... I hope this is for real and you weren't just allowing her to hit you just because you wanted her to pass, Caelian." Alex commented, surveying him.

The blond threw his head back and ran his fingers through his hair. "Oh, come on, Alex. Stop second guessing me already. This is for real, okay? And damn... now I know what Queen Lilith meant when she said that the princess got close to her without her realising it. She really was undetectable. It was strange... the complete lack of her presence is no joke."

Alex lifted a brow.

"It's really hard to spot her now." Caelian continued. "Back then, I managed to find her at her hiding spot during that festival because of her unique scent. Now without that, she has become untraceable. She can completely erase her presence of self."

"You mean... there really is no scent of her at all?" Alexander raised a brow, surprised at what Caelian was reporting to him.

"Yes. I could still detect her scent while I was entering the forest. But then the scent somehow faded and then disappeared without a trace." Caelian scratched his head, puzzled, not knowing how Elle managed to do that.

"And how about the sounds? Her heartbeat?"

"Ah..." Caelian smiled like he was about to say something really amazing and at the same time impossible. "Nothing..." The handsome blond shook his head in amazement and disbelief as he lifted both shoulders and picked up his hands, palms facing up as he showed how helpless he was. "I made sure to rely on my enhanced senses and believe it or not, there was nothing. Well, you just go on to see and experience it for yourself, Alex. Honestly... I never thought that I'd actually feel chills in a game... really... I have no words to say about this princess. All I know now is... whoever or whatever she is, she's bad news." Caelian chuckled lightly to himself, a lopsided smile curling his lips.

"Hmm... Now that's very interesting." Alexander's eyes gleamed in the dark. If she was indeed bad news, then that was excellent news to him. He was anticipating to see how she performed in this second part of the exercise and to experience what Caelian had described to him personally.

"Then I'm going in, Caelian. Good work." Alexander voiced his approval and clapped him on the back of his shoulder.

Caelian nodded. "I'm rooting for you, Alex." A mischievous twinkle was seen in the depths of his eyes. However, Alexander caught that subtle look even though it came and went swiftly.

Alexander smirked. "Now you're suddenly a fan of the princess?"

"Well... to be honest, I find her an amazing individual. A seemingly harmless and petite little lady being able to give me the deadly chills, deserves my adoration and respect to the highest degree." Caelian praised Elle without holding back. He really felt that she was impressive. Such a low-key person yet, holding such deadly skills that even she somehow does not know she has.

"Sebastian will kill you." Alexander's curt comment jolted Caelian out of his haze of adoration of the princess.

"It's not that type of adoration, okay?"

"Doesn't matter what type it is. Sebastian will still kill you if he hears that." Though Alexander's tone was playful and joking, Caelian was sharp enough to detect the seriousness underlying his words. And he took it to heart.

And then, Alexander was gone just like that, leaving Caelian sighing. He stared at his bloodied hand and smiled again before he stood up and left.

Chapter 278 No way

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Elle still could not quite believe that she actually managed to shoot Caelian. She was still shaking a little from that fact. The sight of him falling to the ground and his blood dripping from the gunshot wound had nearly caused her to hyperventilate in fear and panic. She knew that he would bleed if her shot was to land on him. Knowing was one thing but seeing it happen in front of her eyes was a totally different thing.

When she approached him to help him, instead of pain, she saw a big wide smile plastered on his face before showing her his quickly healing wound. After that, Elle eventually calmed down.

Caelian did not even give her a chance to pay attention to her emotions at that moment because he suddenly bombarded her with praises. It was something that really shocked and confused Elle.

She had actually thought Caelian was making it easy for her and that was why she had managed to take him down. But Caelian's reaction seemed to be genuine, and that was what confused Elle even more.

But before she could even say anything, Caelian had pushed her away to run again, telling her that Alexander would be the one coming for her next.

Elle could only nod and accept the arrangement that they had decided on. And now she was here again, hidden in a new spot that she had found.

Somehow, the experience with Caelian was almost no different from how she had dealt with the witches. He, too, did not seem to have noticed her presence at all. Which was still too good to be true for Elle. It was just a bit... unsettling and unbelievable for her. Why were these supernatural beings not able to detect her presence just because she hid and stopped moving? She was just a plain and unremarkable human if compared to them.

So, how could Caelian, a vampire, not even notice her? Her reasonable conclusion was that Caelian had held his capabilities back and that was the explanation she could think about, on why the hunt ended up being the opposite of what she had prepared for it to turn out. Not that she was complaining, but...

The temperature seemed to suddenly drop. Goosebumps rose over the exposed skin on her neck. What was the deal with the weather?

Elle unconsciously swallowed her saliva as she held her breath. Someone dangerous was coming. That was the only reason why she was having these chills, right?

Tightening her grip on her gun, Elle stayed very still. She was so still that one would even identify her as a carved statue. Somehow, she was starting to feel real fear and real danger as the surroundings became even cooler. She could not hear anything on it. There were no sounds of anyone approaching, but she could feel the coldness and heaviness in the air. Was this... Alexander's presence? How powerful does one have to be that even the surroundings are affected by it?

She had never imagined Alexander's presence to be this soul-

freezing. He had always exuded the feeling of warmth and relaxation around him! Was this really him? What if this was really the real enemy? Otherwise, she could not be feeling real danger to this extent...

Fighting her hardest to stay calm in order for her mind to work and reason things out, Elle moved her eyeballs. No one was around. At least, she could not see anyone or any signs of someone.

The leaves began to rustle. Then they swayed in the gentle breeze. The wind was suddenly so strong it was as though a storm was suddenly approaching out of nowhere. Oh lord... this was... this was not good! Whoever was here... Elle could not imagine Alexander being it!

Her mind was now in chaos, fighting whether to stay or to run. Her two minute time limit was almost up and she still could not find anyone to shoot at. At this rate, they were going to spot her presence, right? She needed to move to a different location now! But what if she got caught while doing that?

When the wind became even stronger, she then made a decision to just go. She kept her head bowed low as she walked while bending over behind the bushes. She hid behind the tree trunks and peeped behind her, around her, checking out the situation. And when there was still no one but the strong wind, Elle continued.

Once she was a little farther from her previous hiding spot, Elle picked up her pace and ran as fast as she could. Why did she feel like... the wind was chasing after her? No way, right?

She hid again. This time, she could only hide behind the tree trunks. There were no bushes thick enough for her to hide.

Trying her best to control and reduce the sounds of her pants, Elle slowly peeped behind her.

The wind had stopped. She could hear her heartbeat drumming so loudly in her ear. And no matter how she tried, there was no way she could control it.

This real danger and fear she was feeling was making it hard for her to calm down. And Elle did not even notice that she had grazed herself on the face while she was running. A small line of blood appeared on her cheek and she could not even feel the sting of the cut.

A blurry shadow moved across her, causing her to gasp and scrambled to hide again.

Her eyes were stretched wide and her mouth was turning so dry. She suddenly did not know what to do. Fear and panic were starting to overwhelm her. Lord... they were going to catch her... no!

She licked and moistened her dry lips and gritted her teeth. She must not... they can not catch her if she shot at them first!

Even with trembling arms and knees, Elle peeked out from her hiding spot again, with her gun prepared to shoot and...

BANG!

She pulled the trigger at the large and dark blur that appeared in front of her out of nowhere.

Chapter 279 Something

Even the falling leaves seemed to freeze in air for a few moments as Elle's world screeched to a halt.

But the moment she realized who was before her, everything resumed and she sucked in a breath. Alexander was smiling at her. It was a smile filled with pride and something a lot more.

"Simply incredible." He murmured and Elle realized that his hand was grabbing at the muzzle of her gun. Wait... did she manage to...

"Too bad you didn't land a perfect shot." He added before flashing her a mischievous grin. Looking at that familiar expression, Elle was so speechless that she sagged and bent over, facing the ground.

The adrenaline left her and now she felt like all the energy in her body was suddenly drained out of her. Weakness and lightheadedness then swarmed her, before she suddenly felt her eyelids become so damned heavy. That only made it more difficult for her to fight.

"Though I would like you to know..." Alexander trailed off when she went limp without warning and immediately squatted before her, hands outstretched to catch her in case she fell directly to the ground. "Izabelle?"

Quickly grabbing her shoulders and checking on her, Alex sighed and picked her unresponsive figure into his arms.

When he arrived at the meeting spot where everyone was waiting, Abi ran over to him even before he had stopped. Her expression was damned worried.

Alicia immediately checked on her and when she ruled that Elle had just passed out, they sighed out in obvious relief. Without wasting any more time, everyone had a tacit agreement and brought her back to the house and tucked her into bed.

The trio then gathered just outside Elle's room to finally listen to Alex's findings and to get a good grasp and know everything that happened during his hunt.

"Elle can literally conceal herself." Alexander stated without fanfare as he knew everyone was impatient and could not wait to know more. Leaning back against the wooden wall, he let out a long drawn out exhale. "No... to be more precise, she can make herself completely invisible. This is not a sleight of hand or some magic trick. This is as real as it gets."

Abi's eyes widened hearing the conclusion from her husband. She knew Alex would not joke or play around on matters of importance such as this. That only meant that Elle has some really impressive powers hidden within her!

"And the best part is, she doesn't even know she is or can do it." Alexander continued. "I am certain she's not even aware that she's actually invisible while she's hiding. Honestly, the reason why I managed to catch her was because she got wounded. I followed the scent of her blood and guess what I saw? Just her gun, floating in the air and aimed at me." An amazed smile tugged at the corner of Alex's lips. "When I grabbed it and touched her at the same time, she immediately became visible. It's such an interesting and amazing ability, isn't it? In the many long years I've been around, this is something I haven't seen before."

"As far as I can tell, witches don't have that type of invisibility spell too." Alicia said, her expression filled with interest now. "Considering that Elle isn't even aware of it, it means that this might not even be a spell since she didn't even need to chant any words or do anything. Somehow, it's just happening out of her control...?" Her eyes narrowed as she pondered on it a little more. "It's as if her ability is coming out when she needs it..."

"That's what I thought too." Alex nodded. "There's no better explanation about it than what you have just said. At least for now."

"So... just what is our Elle?" Abi hesitantly asked. "That's definitely magic and witches are the only ones who can wield magic aside from the halflings and me... Does this mean the theory that Elle is a witch is a fact now?"

Alicia shook her head. "No. We're not that certain yet. I don't think Elle is a witch. I've told you before, Abi... she's different. My initial theory is that she's a new hybrid that never appeared before, like a half-witch, half-vampire or maybe part of a combination of the three races... but I feel less confident about that now. I still feel like there's something completely different about Elle."

"Werewolves..." Alexander said. "Long ago, they too, existed. Everyone had believed they'd been completely annihilated and none of their kind had survived to this day. But... perhaps someone did manage to survive."

"So, Elle could be partly a werewolf...?" Abi was in disbelief, her eyes blinking as she tried to take that in.

"Of course, we're not sure about that yet, my love." Alex told her. "I had been thinking about it... somehow expecting it actually. That she'd suddenly shapeshift or something. This is why I had tried to push her quite hard. I had believed that if she's a werewolf or part werewolf, then she should be able to shapeshift. Or at the very least, she might be forced to show any signs that she was one. If that really turns out to be the case, I wanted that to happen now. While we're at least still here to help her to accept her reality and help her not to panic and get overwhelmed. It could be bad if she found out about all her abilities while she was alone or while she might be in the enemy's reach. But, that did not happen..." Alex sighed. "Maybe my theory is wrong. The ability she showed isn't something a werewolf or part werewolf possesses. I've met quite a few werewolves in the past. And I'm quite sure that none of them can make themselves invisible."

"I've been thinking that..." Alicia stared into Abi and Alex's eyes. "What if... the other part of her is a completely different race we've never known? One that we're not aware of...?"

Chapter 280 One Step At A Time

"I don't know if there were other races that had gone extinct before I was born..." Alex tilted his head. "So far, I have heard nothing about any other race aside from humans, vampires, witches and werewolves that existed in this world. However, demons aren't counted since they're not from this world..."

As Alexander trailed off, Alicia nodded subtly. "It is not impossible for another race to actually exist somewhere..." she added, acknowledging that there were surely many other things in this vast universe that they still did not have any knowledge of.

After a long silence, Abi turned around and looked at the closed door of Elle's room. The worry and concern still plastered across her face like a mother worrying about her daughter's well being.

"What could be the best step we're going to do with Elle from now on then...?" Abi asked. "I still strongly feel that we should reveal something to her now. Knowing is always better than being ignorant."

"I feel the same now." Alicia nodded. "I was against it before because I was worried that she might have a dangerous ability or identity that is not easy for her to accept. And also... like Alexander, one of my biggest theories is that she's a werewolf. Elle would have freaked out if she heard or found out that she might be a werewolf. She could also be in denial and might react negatively and think that she's a monster or something if we're not careful. But the ability she has shown us tonight is not something that will freak or disgust her... so I believe this is now our opportunity to show her a part of her new reality one step at a time."

"Our only problem now is the fact that we still don't know what to tell her if she asks what could be her other half." Alex sighed and Abi smiled helplessly.

"I think Elle's going to think she's a witch once she hears about her ability. Maybe, we can just let her go with that assumption for now since even we ourselves still don't know much about it at this moment."

"Another problem though is Sebastian... I wonder how he'd react about this. But, oh well..." Alexander shrugged. "Since they're no longer husband and wife, I have an excuse on why I didn't report about this to the man first and foremost. I guess we can have Elle be the one to break the news to him. That is if she even remembers to tell him. Let's just leave that guy in the dark as his punishment for divorcing his wife." He playfully laughed.

...

Somewhere in Queza...

Elijah was in a certain lawn playing fetch with his dogs when the dogs that were wagging their tails happily at him suddenly started barking and growling.

As if Elijah already knew who had arrived, he gently commanded the dogs to go inside the house. Impressively, the animals all obeyed and stopped their barking before running back into the house.

"I heard that you did something tonight." Elijah spoke first. His tone was low and naturally gentle.

The woman in the red cloak appeared and made an inelegant sound. "I was merely testing him. It turns out that you were right after all. So, I guess... his love for that woman isn't as deep as we thought."

An enigmatic ghost of a smile tugged at the corner of Elijah's lips before he turned around and faced the woman with a neutral expression. "I have told you before, haven't I? When we used that method of having Izabelle look like a witch queen, there's a chance that he'd hate her after that. And don't forget that this is Sebastian we're talking about."

"Well, it doesn't matter..."

Elijah lifted a brow. "You're finally giving up on the girl? Are we finally moving back to our original and more entertaining plan?"

"No." The sharp edge in the woman's voice faded whatever slight gleam in Elijah's eyes. "I told you that plan of yours is too unnecessarily risky and time consuming. I'm telling you again if you have forgotten, that is our final choice. Only if everything else fails, will we use this plan of yours."

Elijah threw the ball in his hand and then caught it. "So which plan are we going to follow next?" he asked in an almost uncaring tone. "I hope it's not something... boring."

The woman snorted. "I don't care if you find it boring or not. What matters is we achieve our goal the quickest way possible. So, here's the plan..."

...

Back in Black Forest, the soft morning sunlight filtered gently through the lacy beige curtains of Elle's room, giving a muted feel to the entire room.

A soft breeze blew from the window, making the curtains dance as though to a delicate tune.

The peace and warmth of the place screams of serenity and bliss. And Elle looked so tranquil as she slept, burrowed in her blankets, looking for all the world to be a beautiful angel in slumber.

But soon, her fingers moved.

The movements were subtle at first but then she started to clench on her blanket. The serene expression on her face quickly faded and changed into its complete opposite.

Her arms and legs began to thrash as though trying to throw off something that was holding onto her and gritted her teeth, as if something had possessed her. Her hands that were initially twisting her blanket in a death grip suddenly threw her covers as if they were burning coals. However, she did not stop all the thrashing on the bed. And even after moments passed, she still had yet to wake up.

Until she was panting so hard. Sweat covered her skin and she began to reach for her clothes and...

The sound of clothes being ripped echoed inside the quiet room and the door was swung open.

At the sound of her name being called out, her eyes flew wide open, and their colors were no longer the same.