

Hellbound Heart

Chapter 311 Inhuman

But there was something different, something terrifying about him. There was just something... something beyond his unreal good looks that made her shiver with fear just by looking at him. The air around him was shrouded with an ominous energy that was indescribable, and she felt as though she was in the presence of a force beyond human comprehension. He definitely did not come across as human.

A chill ran down Elle's spine as she gazed at the man before her. There was an otherworldly aura emanating from him, making her feel like she was in the presence of a creature not meant for this world. Every inch of him seemed to radiate a palpable sense of inhumanity, as if he were some kind of malevolent force that had taken on the outer coating of a human form. It was as though a condensed form of a wild power had been compressed and harnessed into the shell of a human. Elle could not shake the feeling that there was no trace of humanity in him, no shred of empathy or compassion. It was as if he was a being of pure darkness, with nothing to connect him to the world of the mortals.

A disapproving sound echoed from the other male, pulling Elle's attention from the man next to her.

"Did you slip and end up killing them?" the terrifying man asked, his eyes fixed on the other man across from him.

"They fainted on their own. I didn't even do anything yet," the other man teasingly defended himself from his partner's accusation. Elle's eyes widened hearing the banter between these two godlike or demonlike persons before her. She could not believe it. That voice. She has heard that voice before! I know this voice! She did not know how or why, but she just knew that she knew it!

Suddenly, Elle's mind was flooded with memories of a man sitting with her in his lap, the book of choice in her own lap while he was reading her a story when she was younger. Though she could not quite see his face, the sound of his voice was unmistakable. It was the same voice she had just heard. Could it be...?

"I'm certain you did something." The man next to Elle chuckled darkly. "You just failed to notice what it was that you had done."

With a jolt, Elle's body lurched forward and she lifted herself up, leaning on her elbow. It was as though a surge of adrenaline had shot through her veins, giving her a brief

moment of strength. But as she steadied herself, her hands trembled uncontrollably, her weakened body struggling to maintain her balance on the cold stone altar beneath her.

The man beside her made a move to help, but someone else's hand grabbed his wrist and stopped him in his tracks.

"I just told you not to touch her, Gav." The man with the familiar voice said firmly.

But the man named Gav smirked mischievously in response to his partner, an elegant brow arched up in question.

"It's instinct, Zeke." He replied with a shrug.

Elle shrank back. Her mind was screaming in disbelief after hearing that particular name.

Zeke?! Ezekiel?! The owner of this voice was Ezekiel?!

She turned her face slowly.

The man named Zeke was... Elle was speechless.

It was like looking at the painting of a god, his features perfectly chiseled and sharp. He was utterly otherworldly. It was as if he had been crafted by some divine hand, sculpted out of marble and brought to life by some dark magic. His looks were just unreal!

"P-prince Ez...Ezekiel?!" Elle stammered. She knew at that moment that this man was no other than Ezekiel, her ex-brother-in-law, so to speak. He is Sebastian's brother and Alicia's husband! He was the missing prince!

Elle was in shock, her mind reeling with the revelation that the man standing before her was the long-lost prince.

"You've grown." He replied after a few moments of silence and Elle found herself unable to speak. It was just two words but why did those words tug at something within her? In that moment, Elle's mind was flooded with flashes of memories, like a sudden storm. Memories that seemed to have been erased from her mind for so long. She remembered a man in a black suit reading her a story and then she remembered the same man wearing a surgeon's clothes. He wore a blank, unfathomable expression the entire time, but she saw her younger self smiling so happily at him.

"You're... un... uncle Zeke!" her eyes were wide circles. The man named Gav chuckled. "Did this girl just call the almighty Zeke as her uncle?"

Zeke simply glanced at the chuckling man before returning his gaze back to Elle. "Apologies, but I cannot help you to sit up. Neither of the two of us can touch you." Zeke explained.

"Why?" Elle was taken aback by her own audacity in asking a question, but she could not help it.

Despite recognizing Zeke, he seemed somewhat different from the 'him' in her memories. Elle could not help but feel confused and bewildered by the memories and the man before her who was nothing like she remembered. But despite the shock, she found herself brazenly asking him questions. His face looked different, and his demeanor was unrecognizable from what she recalled. He seemed to be no different from the man named Gav, except for the fact that every time Zeke looked at her, she could still see a glimmer of humanity in his eyes that was completely absent in Gav's.

"Here's what happens when we touch living beings from another world." Gav spoke as he touched the masked man's arm. The masked man's skin blackened and cracked, as if being consumed by an invisible fire. The pungent smell of burning flesh filled the air, and the man writhed and screamed silently in agony. Elle shuddered at the thought that Gav had nearly touched her. If Zeke had not stopped him in time...

Chapter 312 Princes

Gav withdrew his hand, and the burning stopped, leaving behind a charred and lifeless hand. Elle could not help but feel grateful that Zeke had stopped Gav from touching her. She could not have imagined the pain she would have to endure if the powerful demon had laid his hand on her.

The masked man fainted in pain again.

"Why are..." Elle swallowed as she returned her attention to Zeke. She struggled to twist herself and did her best to get up into a sitting position. "Why are you two... in here?"

Finally, Elle managed to sit. Panting, she focused her gaze onto Zeke. He was as scary as Gav, but she found that she was not as scared of Zeke. And this was something she was so relieved for. She didn't even know if she'd even have the courage to ask like this if Prince Ezekiel wasn't around.

"Could it be that... you're stuck in here? In this place?!" she exclaimed, remembering the fact that Prince Ezekiel had been missing for years. She immediately found that train of thought a little ridiculous though especially when it was beyond obvious to her how powerful these two were.

"You summoned us, young lady." Gav was the one who answered her. Prince Ezekiel had only continued to look at her, not saying anything.

"Summoned? I don't remember summoning anyone!" she exclaimed, trying to recall what had happened before she blacked out. After thinking for a while and still not able to remember anything, Elle shook her head as though trying to shake off the cobwebs in her brain.

Gav's gaze intensified, and she felt a chill run down her spine. "You don't remember?"

Elle shook her head. "No... I really don't," she said, feeling a sense of fear creeping up on her.

Gav laughed, a sinister sound that sent shivers down her spine. "Looks like we've got ourselves a little problem here, Zeke," he said.

Zeke's gaze lingered on the carvings etched into the stone walls surrounding the altar, a silent contemplation on his face. "It seems this was a ritual that had gone wrong," he finally spoke up.

Elle's memory slowly started to clear up, and she finally recalled what had happened to her. She had been brought here to break the curse on the werewolves by using her blood. But that had nothing to do with summoning demons.

"I was taken here to... um, those people..." she pointed at the unconscious creatures on the floor. "They said that they're going to use my blood to break the curse of the werewolves."

Gav smiled in wonder and disbelief. "You're saying this young lady here summoned the two of us by accident? Now that's even more amazing. I still can't believe such a being like you..." he eyed Elle in wonder.

"... Actually managed to summon not one but two of the most powerful princes of the underworld."

Elle's eyes widened. What did he say? Princes of Underworld? Zeke and this Gav were princes of Underworld?! God... she was starting to feel lightheaded from all this surreal information again. If she were not being extra careful with that Gav around, she would have been laughing hysterically right now. The heavens sure liked to give weird twists and turns in her life.

"I wonder how she managed to do that though..." Gave added, sauntering gracefully around the altar like he was trying to find a clue from something supernatural. "And to think she's still alive. It would make sense if it's just you, Zeke, that she managed to summon. But me as well?"

"I believe it's because of the demon blood she also possesses and because she's a one of a kind individual." Zeke calmly replied. "As for you, it should be because Lit... Izabelle might also be having fae blood running in her veins, just like you."

Gav stilled. Elle on the other hand gaped. This was yet another twist that she had totally not expected.

"Ah... " Gav looked like he was finally enlightened. "Now that makes sense. No wonder your blood smelt... familiar." For a moment there, Elle saw a flash in Gav's eyes. And it was something almost human. But it disappeared in an instant. Completely gone without any trace. "Now what's going to happen next?" Gav tilted his head a little as he looked at Zeke.

"The gate should open anytime soon to swallow us back. We can't stay anywhere out of the Underworld for long, even summoned, after all." Zeke explained.

What? They're going to disappear again? That soon?

Before Elle could speak to tell him more about his family - his wife and son - the earth shook.

A low rumble filled the air, growing louder and more intense by the second. The walls and ceiling of the underground chamber shook violently, sending bits of debris and dust raining down on them. Elle gripped the edge of the stone altar with both hands, knuckles having turned bone white and her heart racing a mile a minute with fear.

"What is happening?" Elle cried out, her voice barely audible over the roar of the earthquake.

As the rumbling grew louder, Elle could feel her heart jumping against her ribcage. The ground beneath them shook violently, sending bits of debris falling from the ceiling. But despite the chaos, Zeke and Gav remained calm, their attention never straying and fully affixed on the source of the disturbance.

Gav crossed his arms over his chest, leaning casually against the altar where Elle was sitting, while Zeke stood tall and composed, seemingly never even moving from his earlier spot. The two men looked as though they were waiting for some entertainment while Elle's mind raced as she tried to make sense of the situation, struggling not to panic. Who or what could be causing such a commotion?

"Now who could this another..." Gav trailed off.

Elle also caught her breath as she felt this all too familiar presence. S-seb?!

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, the shaking immediately died down. But Elle's relief was short-lived as a figure emerged from the shadows. It was Sebastian! However, his eyes were blazing with fury.

Chapter 313 Brothers

Elle's heart leapt into her throat as she laid eyes on Sebastian. She gasped, feeling as if time had stood still, for a moment. Her mind raced as she drank in the sight of the man she dearly loved, standing before her in the flesh. He was not just a figment of her overactive imagination. It felt like an eternity since they had last seen each other, even though it had only been several hours in actual fact.

But her emotions were quickly overtaken by the realization of the entire figure of Seb standing there. The darkness that surrounded him was eerily reminiscent of what she had felt around Zeke and Gav from their appearance earlier. Seb's striking grey eyes were now completely consumed by the darkness, and he looked... utterly dangerous.

The darkness around him seemed completely uncontrollable, and it was clear that Sebastian was not his normal self. Elle could not help but feel a chill run down her spine as she took in his imposing figure. She had never seen him like this before!

In that moment, she felt a deep sense of unease gripping her heart hard.

It was as if the man she loved had completely disappeared, replaced by someone or something else entirely. Something darker and more sinister that was just lurking beneath the surface. It was as if he had been possessed by something dark and evil. Right now, he was just like the two men standing next to her.

Elle could not help but wonder what had happened to Seb, and what could be done to bring him back to himself.

Despite her weakness, Elle willed herself to move. Digging her nails into her palms, she used that sharp pain to spur herself and scrambled from the top of the altar to head towards Seb, her heart pounding wildly in her chest. She had to do something to snap him out of that weird state that he was in. She could no longer stand by and watch as the man she loved was lost to this darkness.

But before she could even begin to take a step, Zeke stretched his arm wide across her path, blocking her from going towards Sebastian.

"Let me through," she pleaded wearily, her voice cracking with emotion. She was already using all of her strength to move herself and had no more to spare in trying to get past Zeke who was stopping her from moving forward.

But Zeke's gaze was cold and unwavering, and he refused to budge.

"You can't go to him," he said firmly. "He's too dangerous right now. You could get hurt."

Elle bit her lip hard. She knew that Zeke was just trying to protect her, but she could not bear the thought of standing by and doing nothing while Seb was lost to the darkness.

"I don't care if I get hurt," she retorted. "I have to help him. He needs me." She tried to struggle and get out of his blockade but it was really impossible with his immense strength and her current weakened state. In fact, even if she wasn't this weak, she was certain there's no way she could get past this man!

But she needed to find a way to snap Seb out of his trance, and she could not do it from a distance! She needed to go to him and touch him and make him hear her voice. She knew Sebastian would respond to her like she always did.

"No. Too risky. I can't risk you getting hurt when you're already this weak. You have yet to recover from what has happened to you." Ezekiel's voice still sounded calm but just utterly absolute. Something in him just compelled her to obey even against her will.

"Leave this to us, young lady." Gav piped in and took a step forward, when Zeke shot him a sharp, warning glance. "This is my brother. Don't you dare touch him even by accident."

Gav raised a brow, his reaction showing that he seemed already aware of who Sebastian was. "So this is Sebastian, huh..." he murmured, studying Seb's figure with a critical eye before cocking his head. "I thought he lost his demonic powers. Did he not?"

Elle's eyes widened at the mention of Seb's powers.

"The opening of the gate must be the reason why his powers are back again..." Zeke provided an explanation before trailing off.

Elle's heart lurched as Seb rushed towards them and attacked Zeke out of nowhere. Her eyes shut involuntarily at his sudden attack.

When she opened them again, she saw Seb and Zeke now locked in a fierce battle, both of them moving with lightning-fast speed. Their powers were so strong and fast that Elle could not even follow their movements with her eyes. Seb was attacking his brother like a mindless creature, his movements fueled by an unbridled rage that seemed to be coming from somewhere deep within him.

Zeke, on the other hand, was merely defending himself, moving with fluidity, grace and precision that Elle found utterly unbelievable. She could not help but watch on in awe as he effortlessly dodged Seb's attacks, his movements almost like a dance. As though he had been through this series of steps thousands of times before.

But Elle knew that this was no time to stand by and watch. She had to do something to stop the fighting, to snap Seb out of his trance and bring him back to himself.

She had no idea what she was going to do, but she knew that she had to do something.

Without thinking, she screamed at him, hoping that her voice would penetrate the darkness that seemed to have consumed him. And then, she moved to go to him.

Gav tried to stop her, his carefree voice now holding a tinge of warning. "Don't do what you're planning to do, unless you want to die, young lady."

The man was still nonchalantly standing there, as though he was neither enjoying or getting bored from what was happening before him.

Chapter 314 I'm Here

But Elle did not plan to listen. She was determined to reach Sebastian, to do whatever it took to bring him back to himself.

"The man's totally mindless right now, can't you see?" Gav continued. "There's nothing you can do to snap him out of it." It was obvious Gav did not believe one bit that she could do something. "You might just worsen the situation if you insist on going forward. Worse is, you could die in the blink of an eye."

But Elle refused to believe him. She knew that there had to be a way to reach out to Seb, to snap him out of his trance.

"Sebastian will never hurt me," she said firmly and with confidence, her voice unwavering. She knew that Seb was in a dangerous state, but she had faith that he would never hurt her.

But Gav merely smirked, his expression filled with disbelief. "I think you don't quite understand the situation right now, young lady," he said, his tone patronizing. "Sebastian's a half demon. And right now, he's overcome with the darkness within himself. You think a man who couldn't even recognize his own brother can recognize you through his madness?"

"Seb's not mad!" Elle felt a pang of anger at Gav's words. He was right, of course. Sebastian was clearly in a dangerous state, and she did not truly know if she could reach him.

But she refused to give up. She knew that Seb was in there somewhere, buried within the darkness that had consumed him. And she was determined to find him, to bring him back to himself.

"Maybe not," she said, her voice tinged with uncertainty. "But I have to try. I can't just stand by and watch as the man I love is lost to this darkness."

Gav shook his head. Looking at her like she was going mad too. But Elle did not care what this man thought. All she cared for right now was Sebastian.

Elle took a deep breath as she walked forward, determined to reach Seb and bring him back to himself. She was worried about the fierce fighting between the two brothers and the powerful magic that was swirling around them and she was also concerned about the state of the dungeon itself. She had a sinking feeling that it might collapse at any moment. The amount of power being exuded by the two who were fighting, and the pressure it applied on their surrounding was just too immense.

"Don't say I didn't warn you," Gav said. Despite her fears, Elle did not falter. She approached the brothers with a fierce determination, ignoring Gav's warning.

She walked ahead, struggling against the powerful movements and demonic magic that was blocking her way. She gritted her teeth, afraid that she might not be strong enough to even reach Sebastian. The pressure was so great that it was a literal force, like an invisible wall pushing against her and away from the person she wanted to reach. She was like a twig so helpless against a storm. Still, she refused to give up no matter how futile her efforts seemed.

To her surprise, however, her path seemed to be getting cleared up. She whipped around to look behind her back and saw Gav, the terrifying man whom she thought did not have an ounce of humanity in him, was using magic to carve out a path for her.

But his eyes remained cold and heartless. He even looked mad that she did not listen to him or mad at the fact that he was helping a stubborn person like her.

Somehow, she could not help but think that this man was a little adorable.

Swallowing her fear, Elle continued pressing forward, hoping against all hopes that she could reach Seb before it was too late.

As she moved closer to him, she could feel the energy crackling in the air. The darkness around Seb was almost suffocating, threatening to swallow her up.

But she refused to give up. With a fierce determination, she pushed forward, determined to reach Seb. She stretched her arms out, reaching towards him, hoping that she could grab onto him. The pressure of their powers buffeted against her, making her skin sting, turning her fair skin reddish due to the abuse.

Just as Elle was about to touch Sebastian, his power suddenly pulsed, and she braced herself for the possibility of them jumping to another spot in a blur. But thankfully, Zeke grabbed onto Seb and grounded him, holding him in place.

Elle immediately realized that Zeke was giving her a fighting chance, and she did not hesitate even for a second. With a fierce determination, she stepped forward and wrapped her weak arms around Seb's body, which felt like a burning pot of fire.

"Sebastian!" she cried out, her voice filled with emotion. But he did not respond to her calls, his body still consumed by darkness.

So she shouted his name again, tightening her grip around him, squeezing him for all she was worth.

"Seb, I'm here," she said, her voice trembling and filled with tears.

There was no response. Elle felt a surge of fear, wondering if she had been too late, if Seb was lost to the darkness forever.

"I'm here, love. Please stop fighting and look at me." She added, desperate. For a moment, Seb remained still, his body tense and unresponsive. But then, slowly, he began to relax, his breathing slowing down as he finally seemed to recognize her touch.

Elle felt a surge of relief flood through her. She had reached him, somehow. And she knew that she had to keep talking to him, to keep him grounded and connected to reality.

"Sebastian," she whispered, her voice filled with love and tenderness. Her hands also did not stay idle as she rubbed circles into his back, hoping that it would further calm him down. "It's me, your Iza. I'm here, love."

A/N: Hope you enjoyed the mass release guys. I think from here on, I'll do mass releases instead of daily updates. I found it easier for me and I feel like ideas comes out more naturally without the need to force it out everyday. Though this method isn't good for a NovelFire and this book might get buried from lack of features soon, I want to do what's easier for me. Hope you guys will understand. TYSM for staying with me until now! <3

Chapter 315 Never

This chapter is dedicated to @Kahmour. Thank you so much for the supergifts!!

As the darkness that was surrounding Sebastian's body slowly subsided, Elle's heart swelled with utter relief. She had been so afraid. Afraid that the darkness or whatever this powerful energy shrouding her beloved would consume him completely. But now, as he held her face in his hands, she could see the light returning to his eyes.

"Iza!" he exclaimed in a hoarse voice, utter shock and myriads of other emotions were whirling within the depths of his eyes. And without warning, he pulled her into a tight embrace, holding her close as if he was planning to never let go of her ever again.

"I will never... let go of you again, Iza. Never. Do you hear me?" he said, his voice trembling. "Even if you beg, I won't... I won't ever, Izabelle. I don't care if you hate me because I can't... I f**king can't bear even the thought of losing you again. Do you understand?" He sounded so emotional, so desperate that she could literally see how scared he was. There was a slight tremble in his arms that were holding her close to him, as though wanting to pull her close - so close that he could absorb her into himself.

Elle felt tears prick at the corners of her eyes as she returned the tight embrace, holding him just as tightly. She could not believe that despite the unreal and overwhelming power around him, especially when she first appeared in this place, he was actually this scared. That fact that she had caused him to be this traumatized made her heart crack a hundred times over.

"Mmm..." Elle spoke softly, her voice filled with love and tenderness. "I'm sorry for making you worry about me, Seb. I promise I won't try to go anywhere by myself again. And if I do, you'll definitely be going along with me. I promise."

Sebastian held her even tighter, his trembling finally subsiding.

For many long moments, they remained locked in each other's embrace, their bodies pressing tightly together as they held one another close, until Sebastian's eyes dropped down and saw the cuts that were running across Elle's wrists.

"Who... who dared..." he growled, his voice filled with a dangerous intensity as a heavy pressure built around them.

As Sebastian's anger flared up again, Elle knew that she had to do something to calm him down. She did not want him to lose control again, not after she had just managed to get him back to his senses not too long ago!

Without hesitation, she grabbed at his face and pulled him towards her, slanted her head and pressed her lips against his in a desperate kiss. She could feel the ferocious power coursing through his body, just barely being held back from being unleashed, but she did not back down. Instead, she pushed her tongue into his mouth, deepening the kiss and pouring all of her love and passion into it.

eaglesnovæ1,coM And to her relief, Sebastian's body began to respond and relax under her touch. His power was still pulsing from within him, but it was more controlled and directed electrical surge now rather than a wild and uncontrollable lightning strike from earlier. And then he responded to her with a wild abandon, his tongue meeting hers in a fiery dance of love and desire. Both wanting to conquer, yet wanting to give all of themselves to the other person as well.

Elle was still aware of the other men in the room who were with them and was definitely looking on at their actions, but she did not care. All that mattered to her right now was Sebastian alone.

As the two were lost in their own worlds, consumed by their passion for each other, Gav who was watching the scene with a black face nonchalantly crossed his arms over his chest.

"Now that's interesting. It seems that the little lady's really capable." Gav mumbled, looking pretty amazed and amused at the same time that she indeed had managed to pull Sebastian back to his senses like she had declared a while ago. He had thought she was talking big, but apparently, she was not.

When his gaze fell on Zeke, his brow lifted. "Hmm? You want me to heal her? Like now?" Gav muttered, not bothering to use telepathy even though Zeke was talking to him through it. "And seriously, Zeke... I didn't know you have such a gentle and loving side to you after all when all you do in the Underworld is kill and torture..." he trailed off when Zeke's gaze sharpened.

"Yeah, yeah," Gav chuckled as he raised both his hands in mock surrender.
"Demanding as always."

As Gav flicked his fingers, a bluish-dark magic traveled from his fingertips and wrapped around her wrists. It was like nothing she had ever seen before, a smoke-like substance that seemed to pulse with energy.

Feeling the magic flowing through her, Elle looked down at her wrist. The bluish-dark magic wrapped around her wrists, caressing her skin with a strange energy that she had never felt before. It was almost as if the magic had a life of its own, moving and pulsing with a gentle, soothing rhythm. It was like a warm current that soothed her pain. It was a strange sensation, both exhilarating and a little frightening.

Elle watched in amazement as the magic worked its way over her skin, mending her wounds with a speed that seemed almost miraculous. In just a few seconds, her wrists were completely healed. As the magic faded away, Elle examined her wrists, expecting to see at least some sign of the wounds that had been there just moments before. But to her surprise, there was nothing there. No scars, no marks, nothing.

Her gaze followed the magic back to Gav, and she couldn't help but feel a surge of awe at the power he possessed. He had done her a huge favor because it would be very hard for Sebastian to ignore her wounds even if she wasn't bleeding anymore.

Chapter 316 Impressive

"Thank you," Elle whispered, voice full of gratitude.

Gav merely shrugged, a smirk playing on his lips. "Don't mention it. But I really do have to admit, you're quite an impressive little thing."

But before she could even open her mouth to retort Gav's statement, Elle felt a shiver run down her spine as the air around Seb blazed dangerously once again the moment he looked at Gav.

Sebastian's body tensed up, his muscles coiling tightly like a spring at their full potential energy capacity. It was as if he had sensed the presence of someone he had never expected to see again, like a ghost from his unwelcome past had suddenly materialized right behind him.

But with so much forced willpower, he still turned around to look at the man standing behind him.

For a moment, Sebastian stood frozen, staring at Zeke with a mixture of disbelief and suspicion.

Elle could sense the tension that hung between the two brothers, the unspoken history that lay between them like a thick, heavy fog.

As Elle watched the scene unfold, her heart beat faster with every passing moment. She had seen the way Sebastian had attacked Zeke earlier, and it was clear that he had yet to recognize his own brother at the time.

He spoke in a low, almost inaudible tone, saying only the word "Brother...?" to express his disbelief.

Zeke stepped closer and wrapped his arms around Sebastian in a tight embrace. His eyes closed, perfectly shaped brows knitted with emotion. Sebastian, however, remained stiff upon contact, as though he had turned into a block of ice, his body rigid as he took in the sudden embrace. But then his body slowly relaxed into Zeke's embrace. It was clear to anyone watching that the two brothers had a deep bond that had endured through the many years of separation and turmoil. And that was already putting it lightly.

When Zeke finally pulled away, he spoke softly. "I'm sorry for the surprise," he said. He reached out and patted his younger brother's back gently. Each pat was slow and tender, filled with the care and concern that an elder had for his younger sibling.

Sebastian's emotions were still running high, however, and his hand shot out without warning and grabbed at Zeke's collar with a fierce grip. Anger filled his eyes as he hissed, "What the f**k took you so long?!"

As Elle watched the scene between the two brothers, her heart beat faster with every passing moment. She could feel the tension in the air intensifying, as if the slightest wrong move could set off a chain reaction of violence and destruction. She needed to practice caution and tread lightly right now.

"Now, now, younger brother." Gav's voice echoed. "Don't go asking that of your brother as though his life in the Underworld is easy and hunky-dory."

All eyes turned towards Gav, who had made an unsolicited yet loaded comment. But Gav remained nonchalantly half-sitting there, oozing an air of calm and ease that seemed to infuriate Sebastian even more. His dangerous gaze fell on Gav, but the man did not even flinch, let alone react to his death glare. With a smirk, Gav continued speaking, as if the situation was nothing more than a mere inconvenience. It was as if he was unfazed by the tension in the air, and Elle could not help but wonder if he was truly as cold-hearted as he appeared to be. But if he was, he would not have voluntarily gotten involved in her matters and even lent her a helping hand.

"The both of us are occupied from the fighting in there –"

"Gav," Zeke's voice cut through the tense atmosphere like a hot knife slicing through butter, calling out to Gav with a sharpness that demanded attention. Gav let out an exasperated sigh, as if he were being interrupted from his favorite pastime. However, it was clear that the man only listened to Zeke.

Silence fell once more, and Sebastian slowly turned his attention back to his long-lost brother. His grip on Zeke's collar loosened, and he took a step back, no longer meeting Zeke's eyes. There was a sense of heaviness in the air, a weight that seemed to rest on both of their shoulders.

"Tell me," Sebastian broke the silence first, "is this you finally returning? ... to us...?" His hesitance was telling of the fear within him of getting more news that would be undesirable.

"Not yet." Zeke's quiet reply made Sebastian's jaw clench so hard that his veins seemed to be able to pop any time soon.

"So, you're saying you'll be gone again?" Sebastian's brows rose, and his eyes circled round. He had not expected that Zeke would be answering him this way. In fact, he was

thinking that this brother would be able to settle down and return to his family who had been waiting for him for so, so long.

"Yes." Came the trademark short answer from Zeke.

Sebastian's laughter had died down, replaced by a quiet rage that simmered just beneath the surface. He could feel his grip on Zeke's collar tightening once again, his fingers digging into the fabric as he struggled to control his emotions.

"I hate you," he said, his voice low and dangerous. "I really hate you, Zeke."

Zeke didn't flinch, didn't even seem surprised by Sebastian's outburst. Instead, he simply looked at his younger brother as if he understood the depth of Sebastian's anger.

eaglesnovel "I hated how you've always been deciding for my life," Sebastian continued, his voice rising in volume. "Doing things for me and against my will. And then you just upped and left... leaving your wife and son behind to..."

Sebastian trailed off, unable to continue speaking. He gritted his teeth, his grip on Zeke's collar tightening even further as he struggled to keep his emotions in check.

"I know you hated for it. But I didn't want to lose you, Sebastian." Zeke replied. "And you've also already sacrificed seven hundred years of your life for me –"

"That was my choice, Zeke!"

Chapter 317 Voice

"That was my choice, Zeke!" Sebastian's voice echoed through the dungeon, loud and impassioned as he spoke. His emotions were like a raging storm, powerful and intense, surging through him with a force that he could barely contain.

For so long, he had kept his feelings bottled up inside, buried deep beneath the surface. But now, with Zeke standing before him, all of his anger and resentment had come rushing to the surface, spilling out of him in a torrent of words and emotion.

"And I didn't do it for you! You never needed to feel guilty about it!" His voice cracked as he spoke. He felt like he was on the verge of exploding, like he was standing on the edge of a cliff and one wrong move would send him tumbling over the edge.

And yet, even as he spoke, he felt a strange sense of release, like he was finally purging all of the toxic emotions that had been poisoning him for so long. It was a cathartic experience for him.

"I don't care if your reason is because you no longer want to live back then." Zeke's voice cut through the tension in the room like a knife, sharp and pointed as he spoke. His words were like a cold, hard truth'

And yet, even as his tone turned sharp, his voice remained calm, almost detached. It was as if he had already made peace with everything that had happened between them, and he was simply stating the facts as they were.

"The fact that I was able to continue living in this world because of you...that fact would never change," he said, his words echoing through the room. "Your reason for doing it never mattered to me. And I am your older brother, Sebastian. I will do everything for you, whether you allow me to or not. I've sworn that to our sisters whom I've failed to save."

As he spoke, something dark crossed Zeke's eyes. For all his calm and detachment, it was clear that he was still carrying a heavy burden, a weight that he had been carrying for centuries.

Silence reigned between them for a while.

And when Sebastian's shoulders shook with emotions, Zeke's hand reached out and gently guided him to rest his head on his shoulder. The contrast between Sebastian's vulnerability and Zeke's stoicism was almost palpable. It was as if they were two halves of the same whole, complete only in each other's presence. Elle felt a lump in her throat as she realized the depth of their bond, a bond forged through blood, sweat, and tears. She wondered what it must have been like for them, growing up together, surrounded by darkness and cruelty. How many battles had they fought side by side? How many scars did they carry due to those battles? Were those scars physical and emotional? Do they still carry these scars up to this day? The answer was honestly obvious to her even though she didn't know much about their story.

She smiled as she thought about Sebastian's vehement claims of hating Zeke, even though it was clear that he did not. And then there was Zeke, this unfathomable older brother, with his unreadable expression that seemed to hide a thousand emotions. Yes, these two brothers indeed had a unique love language that was beyond what most people could understand.

Soon, Sebastian pulled away.

"I still hate you and your non-consensual ways." Sebastian muttered when Gav decided to pipe in.

"Oh, come on, Younger Bro. Stop being difficult and just admit how much you love your elder brother."

"Who the f**k is this guy? Zeke?" Sebastian pointed rudely at Gav who was smugly smirking.

"He's the future king of the Underworld." Zeke answered in a way as though he was simply stating that today was Monday.

Elle's mouth hung open while Sebastian paused for a long while, lost for words. His face was an alternating canvas of shock and disgruntlement. Shock that such an annoying person was actually the future king of the Underworld, and disgruntlement that such an extremely annoying person like him was actually the future king of the Underworld!

Gav, on the other hand, tilted his head a little, finding the alternating expression of Sebastian's face rather interesting. "Nope. That we're actually not certain about." He said nonchalantly but Elle and Sebastian would never doubt a thing that Zeke said.

"See? Don't you know that even in the Underworld, Zeke's words are absolute? And yet he keeps insisting I'll be king instead of him –" Gav teased.

"That's enough, Gav. Don't bring Underworld's matters here. They have no business knowing it."

"As you wish, Your Liege." Gav sounded like that annoying teaser but Zeke was not bothered. At all. He did not even bat an eye or gave any reaction. Gav's words seemed to simply bounce off of Zeke's stoic expression like water off a rock.

Elle could not help but wonder if Zeke was simply like this even from before. He seemed to be an enigma, an unreadable book that held secrets that even the most skilled reader could not decipher. Was he truly like this all the time? Even as she sifted through her memories of him, she could not quite recall a single instance where his expression had betrayed any hint of what he might be feeling on the inside. Despite all the chaos that had ensued since a while ago, he remained as calm and collected as a relaxing day out at the beach. Almost as if he were a part of the very walls - non-living, silent and non-reacting - that surrounded them. It was as if he was a machine, programmed to carry out some specific tasks without any hint of feeling. Elle could not help but come to the conclusion that perhaps, Zeke was not capable of showing emotions through his face –

"Dad?"

A familiar voice suddenly echoed in the Underground cemetery, causing Elle's eyes to widen in shock. First, from the realization of who had just arrived, and second, for the expression that finally showed on Zeke's face - that face that was known to never show any emotion.

A/N: Thank you for your patience guys. I will be giving mass releases weekly except for the first week of the month. My release this week is only 3 chaps but the upcoming two mass releases for the remaining weeks of this month will be more than five chapters each.

Chapter 318 Dad?

Alex had lost Azy right after they both materialized at the front of a cave. The boy's demonic magic had suddenly pulsed so strongly that Alex could only let go of his hand. He had considered wrapping his arms around the boy and keeping him there forcefully. No matter how strong Azy was, there was never a time Alex even thought that he would find trouble holding the boy down. Because the problem with Azy was that though his magic was extremely powerful, his body was still as frail and only just as good as a half vampire boy's body. Well, it was understandable since he did not have any training on how to control his magic to protect himself. He had never learnt how to use and balance his power at all due to his situation.

That was why in the end, Alex could not bring himself to even use as much physical force to restrain him! The boy's wrist could literally break if he was not careful! What more to wrap him in a tight hold within his arms. Though he knew Azy would eventually heal, there was really no guarantee on how it could affect him physically or emotionally. He could not risk aggravating a boy whose extent of power was still very much unknown and uncontrollable. Azy was as volatile as a nuclear reactor that might have its core melt at the drop of a hat.

So that was why he was now racing after the boy inside a cave, going in further as fast as he could. This was the only thing he could do other than forcefully restraining the young boy. Thankfully for Alex, the remnants of Azy's power were strong enough for him to even see miasma-like darkness trailing after him. Even though the boy himself was no longer visible, at least his trail would lead the way for Alex to track him down.

Alex did not have the inhuman sense of smell all vampires had, but he knew that he must be getting close to reaching Azy, judging from the thickness of the smoke-like magic in the boy's trails. Letting out a heavy sigh, Alex hoped that Azy would stay still for a while so he could catch up. But following that thought...

An earthquake's movement shook the cave, causing Alex's eyes to widen a little.

He had a sudden bad feeling. In fact, he could not believe the amount of power emanating from within this cave. Where would such immense power be pouring out from? It was something...

As if a realization had dawned on him, Alex's already damned fast pace sped up even faster. His heartbeat was racing hard within him as his mind processed a certain idea or possibility that had appeared in his mind. Could it be...?

This power... he could never mistake it! Even as his mind whirled with so many thoughts, his movement was not slowed from the distraction. In fact, his pace quickened even more.

Thrill and excitement surged deep within Alex as the corner of his lips tugged up. "You better not disappoint me..." he smirked as his dark eyes gleamed brightly in the dim lighting of the cave. "Because if you do, I swear I'm going to beat your ass up, Zeke!" And a bright laughter burst out from Alex as his eyes twinkled in anticipation of what would greet him in a few moments.

With his heart pounding in his chest, Alex finally caught up to Azy. The boy stood motionless, his small frame barely visible in the dim light of the ancient door made of steel. And then, as Alex drew closer, he saw the dark wisps of smoke that swirled around the child like malevolent tentacles.

Careful not to startle Azy, Alex forced himself to slow down, taking each step with deliberate care. He paused right behind the boy, his eyes fixed on the ancient door of steel that stood before them, its surface marked with strange, otherworldly runes.

Alex froze in place too as he looked ahead and saw the very man he was expecting to see at this moment.

His smirk widened and he was about to call out the damned guy out of excitement when something unexpected happened.

Azy spoke.

He said the word "Dad?!"

The boy used to speak when he was much younger until he was five. But after that one day five years ago, he suddenly lost his speech and never spoke even a single word since.

Stunned, Alex glanced down at the boy and then he looked back at Zeke. How come Azy's speech was back? Was it because his father was now back?

Zeke actually had his back facing them, so Alex or Azy were yet to see his face. Nevertheless, the both of them did not need to see Zeke's face to know it was indeed him.

Everything in the entire cavern in that moment seemed to halt to a standstill. Alex could see the unusual tense set of Zeke's back the instant he heard Azy's voice. Yes, it was

unusual for anyone to be able to see even the slightest tenseness in Zeke's shoulders. Simply because the man was known to never get tensed in any situation at all.

But here he was. Looking like he could not even make himself turn around.

When Zeke left, Alicia was only just pregnant with Azy. So the two had never met. Alex's smirk turned into a smile as he realized that this was going to be the very first time the father and son would meet.

The questions that had been swirling in his mind - How had Zeke returned? Would he stay with them now? - all faded away in the face of the moment unfolding before him, forgotten. His excitement to jump on the man and pester and interrogate and nag him was also shoved back because right now, at this moment, all Alex wanted to do was give the father and son the space they so needed and deserve.

Chapter 319 Honored

Alex could not help but feel bad for Zeke as he looked at him. Being a father himself, he had enjoyed all the moments he had spent with his children since the moment his wife was pregnant, until they were born and also while they grew up. Alex cherished all those precious moments of fathering his children not only because he loved his kids but also because those moments were truly a bliss. The happiness of just holding his kids, playing with them and talking to them were indescribable... Those were moments that were just simply irreplaceable and precious.

Zeke had missed all those moments. He was gone even before Alicia's baby bump became visible. Now Azy was already ten. So many years had already gone by and Zeke would never experience those incredible things anymore. He could never hold Azy as a baby anymore. Some things once lost, were gone forever and never to be regained.

That thought alone made Alex feel really bad for Zeke and for Azy as well. If only there was a way to make Zeke stay even for a short time back then.

"You are... my dad... right?" Azy's voice echoed again. He spoke slowly, as it had been a long time since he had last spoken. Though his mind remembered the words and how to pronounce them, the muscles in his throat and his vocal cords lacked usage and needed time to adjust.

And very slowly, Zeke finally turned to look at him. At his son.

Alex could see the flood of what could only be emotions in Zeke's slightly widened eyes despite the lack of expression on his face.

He just stood there, looking at the boy. Never before had he seen Zeke looking like this. Looking like he did not know what to do, what to say, what to think, or what to feel.

Someone had finally broken through Zeke's ever so calm and collected image and Alex could not help but wish he had brought his phone with him so he could snap this scene for future teasing purposes. Too bad though, because he did not have any gadget on him right this moment!

"Don't just stand there, Zeke." Alex finally shattered the silence when Zeke still did not make any moves nor did he say a word.

Zeke's eyes flew towards Alex and when their eyes met, Alex smirked at him, his eyes glinting with both gladness and mischief as he spoke with Zeke through telepathy for the first time in a long time. "I know you're dumbstruck for meeting your son for the first time. But don't go behaving like an uncool and dumbfounded fool now right in front of your boy on your very first meeting, dumbo." Alex said.

He had felt the need to intervene a little so he spoke but of course, he could not help but take the opportunity to tease the man at the same time. This was a very rare situation, a once in a lifetime event even! So Alex would never miss the chance of teasing him even in this situation.

Zeke blinked and then all too quickly, he snapped out of his trance and a ghost of a smile crossed his face. A face, Alex noticed, that had somehow changed into something that was far more bad news than before.

Zeke's reply came with a hint of sarcasm, "I'm glad you're here to remind me of my lack of coolness, Alex. I was afraid I might accidentally impress my son with my intelligence and wit instead."

"Oh, don't mention it, Zeke. I'm just here to help the helpless, like always. I'm always happy to help out a friend in need, especially when it comes to avoiding potential embarrassments in front of their offspring," Alex replied with a grin. "But hey, if you do end up making a fool of yourself, just remember that I'll be there to document the moment for posterity."

"How thoughtful of you, Alex. Well, I guess I should be honored to have my embarrassing moments immortalized by such a talented documentarian." He paused for a moment before adding, "Though I highly doubt that'll happen, I'll try to make it a memorable one for you, my dear friend." The corner of his lips tugged a little bit higher before Zeke finally returned his gaze to Azy, cutting off his friendly banter with Alexander.

Trying to keep his chuckle quiet, Alex watched Zeke finally move from his spot and approached Azy. His movements, Alex noticed, seemed to have changed as well. Zeke's every move was always as graceful as a panther but something changed. The

air around him rippled so smoothly like he was levitating along with the calm powerful dark magic clinging so silently around him.

As Zeke and Azy stood facing each other, the contrast between their powers was palpable. Azy's energy crackled like lightning - fierce and wild, like a young dragon out for his first kill - while Zeke's aura was serene and calm, just like being in the eye of a hurricane. It was as if they were two opposing forces, each fighting for dominance within the same space. Their forms created a certain wistful feeling to those who were spectating from the side. One tall and powerful figure standing opposite another shorter, slender but no less powerful figure in terms of the aura surrounding him.

And as Zeke stepped forward, the dark magic surrounding them collided, creating an explosion of power. For a moment, it seemed as though Azy's storm would overpower Zeke's calm, pushing him back and shattering his resolve. But then something incredible happened. With one graceful movement, Zeke fell to one knee and reached out to touch Azy's shoulder. In that instant, the storm subsided, as if the raging winds and driving rain had been swallowed up by the calm at the center of the storm. It was a moment of perfect balance, a rare instance of two opposing forces finding harmony within each other's presence.

"Yes, I'm your dad." Zeke finally replied.

Chapter 320 Outburst

Everyone's eyes were fixed on Zeke and his son. No one moved or made a sound, hoping not to be the one who would distract either party from their long overdue reunion of father and son.

Sebastian, who had somehow immediately calmed down the instant he heard Azy's voice, just stared unblinkingly at his brother as he approached his son.

His complete attention was now focused on nothing else but them. Everything else had now been momentarily forgotten. As if his outburst with Zeke just now had never happened.

Hearing Azy's voice was like a thunderstruck to him, like a bucket of ice suddenly being poured over his head. That was the one thing he had not expected to happen. Though a very welcomed and happy occasion, Sebastian was nonetheless still taken aback at it happening without warning.

The boy, this nephew of his, was finally speaking again! He had blamed himself for what happened to Azy five years ago. Because no matter what anyone said, he knew the

reason why Azy had stopped talking was completely his fault. There was no one else to blame but himself. He should have taken the extra precaution to have checked and ensured that Azy was no longer in the castle before he decided to start the ritual.

The reason he had avoided the boy all these while since then was because he could not help but want to hit and beat himself up every time he saw Azy all quiet, and unable to utter a single word. Seeing such a cheerful young boy suddenly stop talking and becoming solemn, serious and more mature than his age just broke his heart each time he saw Azy.

So, hearing him say something now, gave him a wave of strong relief and gladness. Could this be because the gate of the Underworld was opened again? Azy lost his voice when they managed to open the gate back then after all. Or perhaps, he got his voice back simply because of his desperation to call out for his father whom he had never met before?

As Zeke crouched down before Azy, Sebastian noticed how Zeke's fingers were slightly trembling as he reached out to touch his son for the first time.

Though Sebastian could not see his brother's expression, which he knew was most likely to be unchanged except for the look in his eyes, that little shaking of his hand was enough for Sebastian to tell how emotional Zeke was at the moment.

Zeke never trembles nor shakes in front of anyone else since that fateful day when they were all thrown into that hell of a prison. It was like Zeke had lost the ability to be shaken by anything else. So, seeing him like this now caused Sebastian to not even be able to imagine just how hard it must have been for Zeke all these years.

As Zeke spoke and told Azy that he was his father as he touched him, the boy's lips began to purse. His large grey eyes quickly watered up. But even as his lips began to tremble, Azy was trying so hard to hold back from crying.

Azy was so much like his father. There was almost no difference at all between the two. Azy was that child who never cried even when he got hurt. Though Alicia had always been encouraging him, telling him that it was okay even if he cried if things just got too much to handle, Azy kept telling everyone that he was alright. It all got worse when Alicia started to grow weaker.

He had found out from Alex that the boy had never shed any tears ever since. Even when he was suffering the pain from one of those episodes he was going through, Azy only screamed. Again, not a single tear came out from him.

Yet here he was now, looking absolutely at the edge of bursting into tears as he looked on at his father with a mixture of longing and embarrassment.

"If you want to cry, don't hold back... son." Zeke uttered. His voice, at that very moment, was the gentlest whisper he had ever heard from him. "Real men do cry, after all."

The boy threw his body towards his father and hugged him as he burst into tears. All his bravado and front of being a solemn and mature child crumbled in the presence and warmth of his very own father. Zeke immediately wrapped his arms around his son and held him tight. His head dropping so low his face could not be seen.

Azy's cries were muffled as he buried his face against his father's clothes, his narrow shoulders shaking with the shudders of his sobs that he was trying to hold back but unfortunately, not so effective. The sound of his cries were so heart-breaking that it made Elle's tears just track silently down her face even as she smiled with so much happiness and gladness that the father and son were finally reunited.

The sight of them in a tight embrace was simply... heartwarming and heart-aching at the same time.

...

Meanwhile, Gav was simply watching. Looking as though he was nothing but a handsome and imposing character who did not belong to the scene at all. Well, that was how he appeared to be at one glance. But if one would look deep into his grey eyes, something was swirling in those depths as well. Something even he himself could not seem to understand as he stared at the father and son having their reunion right before him.

He was undoubtedly impressed. Very much surprised even, seeing Zeke behaving so uncharacteristically like this. That this man the Underworld sees as the lord of slaughter was actually hiding something soft and mushy like this.

Then a thought came to him. That he had finally got a hold of Zeke's weakness. A weakness he never expected of this powerful man. A weakness he never thought actually existed.

If anyone in the Underworld were to ever find out about this... Zeke, the feared prince of hell who does not have any weakness, will certainly be put into serious trouble.