

Hellbound Heart

Chapter 321 Banter

After a long time of the father and son just embracing each other, Azy finally stopped crying. His face was still a little damp with tears and there were the occasional hiccups from the heavy sobs that had wreaked his body earlier. He was also still sniffing intermittently, but he looked so determined to stop himself now.

The boy stepped back and wiped away his tears with his sleeves. And as soon as he finally met his father's eyes, his gaze changed into one that was blazing with determination.

Suddenly, he grabbed onto Zeke's arm.

"I... Mom... you need to go see mom." He said, his eyes pleading and at the same time unwavering. It was an endearing mix of him begging yet ordering at the same time.

As Zeke's eyes dilated at the boy's words, Azy's magic began to move again, as if something had aggravated the sleeping shadows within him. "I need to bring you to her now!"

"Hold up, little one." Gav's voice echoed, causing everyone to look at him with the exception of Zeke who did not bother to turn around. His eyes were constantly fixed on his son, still drinking in his features that were so alike himself with wonderment. "Even though he's your father, you can't just take him away like that."

"And who is this... not so stranger among us here?" Alex butted in, tilting his head at Gav. "If you're planning to stop Azy from taking his dad away, I'm sorry but I guess, my only choice is to ask you to just let them be. Don't worry, I'm absolutely free to entertain you while we wait for their return."

"Hmm..." Gav eyed Alex from head to toe. "I see that this world not only has interesting individuals like Zeke and his brother, but there is someone like you too. However, I have to politely decline your interesting offer."

Alex raised a brow. "Mind telling me why is that so? Don't tell me you're afraid you won't be able to keep up." Though his voice was still as polite as ever, the taunting and teasing in his words were unmistakable.

A slow smile graced Gav's lips after hearing Alex's words.

He opened his lips to speak when Zeke suddenly rose. "You won't need to do anything with him, Alex." He quickly gave his order and then holding Azy's hand, turned around and faced the men. "Gav doesn't need any entertainment anyway."

Alex raised a brow again, but this time at Zeke. "Is it just me or are you trying to protect this pretty fella here?"

Zeke sighed and continued. "Nor does he need my protection."

"Then what do you want us to do to him?" Sebastian piped in, his voice firm and a little dangerous. "I don't care if he's the future King of Underworld, I'm not going to just stand still if he tries to stop you from seeing Alicia."

Gav chuckled. "Easy there, 'lil bro... it seems like you're literally the polar opposite of your calm brother."

"We don't have time to deal with the likes of you right now." Sebastian hissed back in retaliation, feeling aggravated. He could not help it because Zeke had already said he was still going back. They did not know if the gate would suddenly open again and swallow him back. So they truly did not have any time to waste in having all this chit chat to reason things out with this man, whoever he is! "Azy, just take your father to your mom. Go with them, Iza. I'll deal with this guy."

"Well, I don't mind joining the brawl. It's been a while since I've done any sort of warm up that's worth my while. I'm afraid my bones have already gone rusty by now." Alex also spoke, pushing himself off from the wall and tilted his head from left to right, causing cracking noises to come from his neck.

"Oh well, since it seems these two are being so welcoming of me, I guess I might as well grant them their wishes." Gav replied and he too uncrossed his arms that were over his chest and lifted his hand, running his fingers through his hair as he smiled. "I don't want to be rude when I'm the guest here after all, right boys?"

As the atmosphere suddenly began to tense up once again, Zeke shut his eyes closed for a moment and when he opened them, his calm voice came out in a menacing and no-nonsense tone. "Stop it, every one of you. And don't make me repeat myself again."

"They're the ones who keep asking for it, not me." Gav whirled around and shot a pitiful look at Zeke, indicating that he was being wronged here.

"Enough playing around. You're going to come with me, Gav." Zeke turned to Alex and Sebastian and added, "So there is no need for you two to watch over or entertain anyone."

"Now this is indeed a better choice," Alex commented before chuckling, his mischievous nature finding the entire scenario earlier highly amusing. "But are you sure it's okay for

him to hang around us outside? Even I could tell that he's hiding something incredibly dangerous."

"I'm not purposely trying to hide anything. But I'm impressed with your observation." A lopsided grin flashed across Gav's face, appreciation for Alex's insight glinting in his eyes.

"Don't butt in, kid. I am not sure what kind of creature you are, but I am certain I should be thousands of years older than you."

"Thousands... that's impressive. It seems you've lived long enough to still be here." Gav could not help but quip at Alex's comment.

eaglesnovel Alex smirked. "And I'm certain I'm still going to outlive you."

"Let's go." Zeke's voice echoed and it was then that Alex and Gav realized that Sebastian and Izabelle were already right next to Azy and Zeke. "You two can banter here then. Since the both of you seem to love taking jabs at each other. I will leave you to enjoy yourselves right here." Zeke added as he looked at Alex and Gav over his shoulder before the four of them disappeared in the next breath, leaving Alex and Gav looking on at the now empty spot.

Chapter 322 I'm Sorry

Zeke, Azy, Sebastian and Elle materialized right in front of the Black Forest.

The feeling of teleportation was such an indescribable experience for Elle. It was something she could not even begin to describe. Having moved from one place to another place just in the blink of an eye, within a single breath was just amazing! It was simply... magic!

"Let's hurry... please." Azy's voice echoed. The look of impatience and desperateness were still etched on his face as he stared at his father. Elle and Sebastian wanted to think that this was just Azy being too excited but the boy had been acting like there was a grave emergency which made them have the uneasy feeling that something might be wrong. That Alicia was... did something happen to her?

Elle snapped her head to look at Sebastian with a worried expression but Seb seemed to be as clueless as she was.

Zeke's sudden surge of motion sent ripples through the air, like a stone being cast into a tranquil pond. Though he uttered not a single word, his very essence spoke volumes -

something within him had shifted, deep and profound, since their entry into the fabled Black Forest. Even the creatures of the woods seemed to sense the transformation, as birds darted away frantically from their perches in the trees.

The father and son had fallen into a companionable quiet, the sort of hush that settled between two people who knew each other well and for a long time. It was a silence that felt almost tangible, a palpable presence that seemed to envelop them like a familiar embrace. There was no need for words, no awkwardness in the lack of conversation between the two. They simply existed together in that moment, each lost in their own thoughts but still deeply connected. It was as if the very essence of silence had become a part of them, woven into the fabric of their relationship until it was as natural as breathing.

Once they reached the house, they all halted in their steps.

Sebastian slowly put Elle down before they both watched over the father and son, standing there in front of the door.

Azy's hand was trembling a little as he reached out for the door handle.

Seeing the boy's predicament, Zeke reached out and placed his large palm over his son's. Azy looked up at the comforting and stable presence beside him and he began to bite down on his lower lip so hard to stop them from trembling. His large expressive eyes shone with unshed tears as he valiantly held them back.

Zeke crouched before Azy, bringing himself to eye level with his son.

However, before Zeke could speak, Azy burst out once again. "I'm sorry... dad." He said in a broken voice, his head down as all the tears he had been holding back could no longer be held back and they fell to the ground in large, heavy droplets. "I couldn't protect mom. I've... made her... suffer... so much instead."

Zeke froze for a moment before he pulled him close and held him in his embrace.

"No." he spoke after another pause. "You didn't do anything wrong. You have nothing to apologize for, son."

Cupping his son's face with his large hands, he made Azy look up at him. "It's not your fault, do you understand?" Zeke reiterated with a gentle but firm tone, making it clear to Azy that he should not be blaming himself.

Azy wiped his tears again but he did not nod nor say 'yes' to his father. Instead, he grabbed Zeke's hand and finally pushed the door open.

He led his father inside and Sebastian and Elle followed after them, maintaining a distance from the father and son.

When they reached Alicia's room, Azy let go of his father's hand. The boy wiped his tears again and took a few deep calming breaths. It was obvious he was trying to look as presentable or as fine as he could before entering the room of his mother. It broke the hearts of the other adults looking on to see how grown up and thoughtful a young boy of Azy's age had to behave in this situation. Yet it also filled them with pride on seeing how well he was trying to handle it on his own. He had grown up so well despite the pain and suffering he had to endure in the few years of his young life.

And then he pushed the door slightly open.

Azy was so careful and quiet as he gently pushed the door a little wider. And just as he was about to step inside, Abi appeared.

Her eyes immediately widened at the sight of Zeke. She had felt someone powerful coming their way since a long while ago, and she had really thought this could only be Zeke, judging from the dark power emanating in the air. She had initially thought it might be Azy or Sebastian, but the kind of calm in the air was something Abi could only associate with Zeke.

Still, it shocked her to see the man now standing before her in the flesh. Seeing is truly believing.

Abi did not speak and simply stepped aside, making way for them to enter after giving Zeke a look of understanding.

Azy looked over his shoulder and gazed up at his father. The boy was giving way to him, wanting his father to be the first person to see his mother.

But Zeke did not move.

He only stood rooted to the spot, his gaze fixed at the open door as if transfixed by some unseen force beyond. His body tensed, his muscles coiled tight like a wound up spring as he stared at the tranquil scene before him - the billowing white curtains being teased by the gentle wind coming in from the opened windows and the slightly swaying branches outside. His face was an enigma, betraying nothing of the emotions that churned within him. But his fingers twitched with a restless energy, clenching and unclenching as if in search of something to hold onto. After what felt like an eternity, he finally took a hesitant step forward, his movements slow and deliberate as he crossed the threshold into the room.

A/N: thanks for the patience guys. 1 more chapter will be out in 2 hours.

Chapter 323 Alicia

Special shoutout to @MonsterUnderTheBed and @Lilli_Fiona! Thank you so very much for the supergifts!

Zeke froze once again upon seeing her. His Alicia.

She was on the bed, sleeping so peacefully. So still and calm. If he had not identified the very light up and down movements of her chest, it would seem as though she was already...

With a slow and deliberate movement, he began to approach her. Each step was measured, his gaze never leaving her face as if he were afraid that if he looked away, she might disappear from his sight completely.

Once he stood by the bedside, he stared down at her. Her once-silvery hair was now stark white, and even her thick lashes had lost all their color. Her lips, once rosy and full, were now pale and wan. He swallowed hard, his throat tight with emotion as he sat down slowly beside her, never taking his eyes off her face. He reached out a trembling hand and gently brushed a lock of hair away from her face, his fingertips lingering against her skin. The touch was gentle, almost reverent, as if he were afraid that any extra force he exerted might break and shatter her to pieces.

And then he simply sat there, his eyes fixed on hers until he took Alicia's slim and pale hand in his own. With all the care and gentleness in the world, he brought her hand to his lips and pressed a soft kiss against her skin.

And then he dropped his head and buried his face in her hand. His large hands cupped behind hers, supporting her hand and the weight of his own head.

The sight of him just sitting there without saying a word made everyone watching feel a painful tug in their hearts. They all know how strong and powerful a being like Zeke was. But now watching this great and mighty man bent over in quietness and subdued by the frail looking woman on the bed, caused an upheaval in the emotions of those onlookers. Abi quietly stepped out while Sebastian also moved aside and leaned against the wall instead. They just could not continue looking on without being more affected by the scene.

Elle bit her lower lip to stop it from trembling. Because for some reason, the sight of Ezekiel doing that instead of waking Alicia up sent a devastating message to them all. That Alicia was indeed in grave danger right now and that... Zeke was not trying to wake her up because he knew she was never waking up again.

Elle tried to shake that thought and feeling so hard. Refusing to accept it. That it would not come to be a fact. Because Alicia was alive!

After what felt like an eternity, Azy walked towards his parents.

The boy had a look of something impossibly fierce and strong emotion in his gaze as he stood before his father.

"I..." he started, pulling Zeke's attention to him. "I believe I am not only sucking Mom's power but her life essence too. Every time I... every time my power bursts out of control, she weakens. And this time, I feel so powerful, too powerful that I could barely contain that power in me without your help. In return, mom turned out this way."

The boy's eyes watered even as he tried his hardest to stay calm. "I'm afraid... dad... that the next time that this happens... she'll... she will..." Azy's voice broke and he could not continue.

Zeke's hand landed on the boy's head.

"I will never let that happen, Azriel." Zeke said. "Never."

The boy's eyes slowly widened. Hope gleamed in his large eyes as he looked up at his father. He allowed that expectation to flare within his chest.

"You mean... there's a way to stop this from continuing... You can help mom return to her usual self, too, right, dad?"

Zeke nodded at his son and then turned to look at his wife. "Though, you might not like... the method."

Azy straightened. "I don't care about the method, dad. I trust you. And as long as mom is able to be saved, I am fine with anything. Even if the only way is for me to go with you and leave mom and never to see her again, I'll do it! I will do anything for her!"

Zeke was surprised at his son's declaration. A small smile tugged at the corner of his lips.

"You're indeed my one and only son." He uttered, looking proud. "But I'm not going to let you come with me. That's something I would never allow to happen, Azy. And I am sure your mother would agree with me on that." As he said that, his thumb rubbed a few soothing circles into Alicia's hand that was still grasped in his own.

Azy looked at his father with questions brimming from his eyes but he knew better than to ask anymore. Zeke turned his gaze back to Alicia once again.

When Azy too stared at his mother and saw the changes in her, he clenched his fists as his jaws tightened. His mother seemed to have deteriorated more in such a very short time.

As if Zeke understood what the boy was feeling just by one look at him, he spoke up. "Don't worry, she'll be fine."

Azy nodded this time, looking at his father like he was the only one he could put all his trust on. He had no other belief right now than his father. Growing up, his mother, aunt Abi, uncle Alex, and many others have continuously regaled him with the tales of how mighty and awesome his father is. So now, he would place all his trust and hopes in this man who he called 'dad'.

At that moment, a sudden commotion from outside the house made Azy look out the window. Zeke simply glanced when Azy rushed towards the window.

"I'll go take a look, dad. Please stay with mom." The boy said and before Zeke could speak, he disappeared before him.

Zeke could not help the smile that tugged across his lips.

When his gaze fell back to Alicia, that proud smile slowly faded.

"You've raised him so well..." he said, his voice trailing off as he reached out to pick up strands of Alicia's long hair. He brought them to his lips, pressing a gentle kiss against the silky strands. "As expected of you..." he added, his voice catching a little as he spoke her name. "Alicia."

A/N: Next mass update is next week Sunday gmt+8 timezone. Thanks again for all your patience guys! Love ya'll.

Chapter 324 Version

Since the very moment Zeke heard his son's voice calling him 'dad', he had been overcome by emotions. Emotions he did not know he actually had within him. He had always known he was generally a person who would hardly be affected by emotions, no matter how strong. And the only time he was completely moved was when it had anything to do with his other half, his beloved, Alicia. But only now he realized just how a simple action of having his own flesh and blood call him 'dad' could evoke such strong feelings within him.

The situation in the Underworld had worsened to a degree that Zeke no longer had the time to even think about the family he had been fighting for. He had not had the time to feel or to think or even remember. Though he was honestly thankful, he had been a little scared. Scared that he would go numb and would no longer feel anything once he returned to his family.

Having no time at all to think about his loved ones was a huge help for him to focus on nothing but his goal. It had also helped him not to drown from any downside of missing his beloved too much. But he had felt a little uneasy at the same time, that he would actually forget how to feel emotions and act like a human again once he got back to his family.

But thank goodness... Apparently he was worried for nothing. Because it took just one word for his seemingly lost and numb emotions to rise back to life. 'Dad'... that word had echoed again and again in his head. That young and innocent voice seemed to have breathed life to the barren desert of his inner person. It was like that arid land that was his frozen emotions, had thawed and been watered by the refreshing and life-giving shower that was his son's pure and sincere love for him as son to father.

And when he turned and saw him, his son, the miniature version of himself, he could do nothing but stand there and stare at him. Until now, he was still amazed at how similar Azriel was to him. As much as his mind knew that the boy was his and that genetics would have contributed to having similar traits passed on to him. But still, knowing and actually seeing it in the flesh were two different things.

He remembered that Alicia had told him their son looks exactly like him. What she said was true, but Zeke could also see some subtle features of his beloved wife in their son, which is not surprising at all. After all, Azy had half of his chromosomes contributed by his mother.

His heartbeats had been so loud within him as he approached the boy. And when he held him for the first time, everything within him trembled.

It had honestly worried him at first. That moment when he finally met his son. He had not been there when he was born and when he grew up. They never saw each other even once. However, it did not stop him from feeling as though a piece of puzzle that he never knew was missing in the first place, finally clicked into place as he held the boy within his embrace. It was like a piece of himself was being returned to where it belonged and that completeness was so wholesome and fulfilling.

Zeke had wondered how his son would react once they finally met face to face. He had thought about how he, himself, would react.

There was one time, years ago where he had simulated all possible scenarios of their first meeting. He had thought of what he would first say to him, that he should show him a gentle fatherly smile first and foremost.

But none of those happened as what he had envisioned within his mind. He was dumbstruck that Alex had to intervene to wake him up from his trance. This had never happened to him.

He was not even sure what kind of face he had made when their gazes first met. He really hoped he did not wear his completely emotionless face at that moment. That was so uncool of him if it had been the case. Never had he ever been fazed by whatever the situation that he was being thrown in in the past, but just one encounter with his young son, was enough to throw him off his game.

And to top it off... his son cried.

The pain he felt was so sharp and deep. One unlike that he had never experienced in the many hundreds of years that he had been alive. Yet all he could do was to hold him. He did not know what else he could do but to only hold him tighter.

When his son had begged him to go see his mother while trying his best to calm down, Zeke felt his heart stop beating.

The desperate look in his son's eyes immediately gripped his entire being with fear. But thankfully, he managed to calm himself.

But now that he was here, looking down at her like this, Zeke's body began to tremble hard as he sat there, holding onto her hand.

It was happening again. This all too familiar state she was in. He had sworn years ago that he would never let Alicia waste away like what had happened to her before she died the first time around. Even though he knew back then that it was not her end even if she died, watching her wasting away, weakening day by day, was still a torture to him. He had just stood there watching, torturing himself even more by letting another man take care of her.

Now it was happening again, and it was worse this time. Because he was not even there anymore to even watch over her from a distance.

He had not anticipated this. And that Alicia would weaken to this degree.

Chapter 325 I'm Here

Zeke had worried about this when she was accidentally sent to the Underworld. But Zeke was certain that Alicia would be fine. But what he never anticipated was the fact that Azy's demonic magic had awakened so early and that his power was now too strong for a young and untrained body of a child to handle. And that inadvertently affected Alicia negatively.

Zeke himself had awakened his demonic power when he was around seventeen. He was already a skilled trained fighter then. To think that his son had awakened his power at the age of five was just...

His jaws clenched as his body finally stopped trembling.

He stared down at his wife and reached out to touch her pale face with still shaky fingers.

"You did something, didn't you Alicia?" he asked in a whisper, even though his eyes were saying that he was already certain she did. "You've been using your body to receive all the physical blows that our son's body is supposed to suffer."

Zeke felt a painful lump growing in his throat as he realized Alicia had been suffering for five years. Holding on for her life for five years until there was almost nothing left in her but the faint beating of her heart and her shallow breaths.

He ran his free hand through his thick dark hair and clenched so hard. Even as some of the roots of his hair got ripped out, the pain was nothing compared to the pain in his heart and the suffering that Alicia had to endure.

And then he cursed. It was a hoarse and painful sound filled with emotions.

"I hate this..." he muttered under his breath. His grey eyes gleamed with unshed painful tears as he lowered his head until his forehead touched over her chest. "I hate that I always can't do anything while you suffer. Why can't I stop this from happening to you? Why is it that I can stop anything in this universe but I can't stop your suffering? Why?"

As his quiet rage began to stir the tamed and calm darkness in him, Alicia made a faint sound that had Zeke instantly pulling away to look at her face.

Her eyes were still closed but her pale lips were moving.

She was... calling his name inaudibly.

"Alicia..." he uttered her name in response as he pressed her palm on his cheek. The cool frailness of her hand was another stark reminder of how she had withered so much. "I'm here, my love..." he added in a hoarse voice and her lips tugged up into a smile so faint yet looked so happy as his fingers twitched a little against his skin.

...

Lucas finally caught up after following Sebastian. It took him a long while to catch up because Sebastian had used his demonic power to change his location. But thanks to the tracker he had on Sebastian, he was able to find his whereabouts. It was actually Zeke who put a tracker on Sebastian back when the prince was still in the dungeon, just

in case he would escape. No one actually knew about this tracker's existence except Lucas and Zeke until now.

But when Lucas arrived in the Underground cemetery, Sebastian was no longer in the cavern anymore. He was about to turn around after he saw that his location suddenly changed, when he heard a familiar voice from within the cavern that could only belong to Alexander.

So Lucas decided to keep going as he also needed to tell Alex about something important when he was welcomed by two males. One he knew and the other was a stranger, though the other one certainly looked and felt familiar for some reason.

"Oh, it's good that you're here, Lucas." Alexander broke the silence. "I'm leaving those to you to settle." Alex told the man, gesturing to the pile of unconscious bodies at one corner. "I think it's better for you to deliver those fellas back to the Black Forest. We still need them for some questioning."

Lucas glanced over at the pile of bodies before returning his attention back to Alex.

"Where is –"

"There's no time to explain for now, Lucas." Alex cut him off. "Because we need to catch up with Zeke this instant."

Lucas' eyes widened at what he had heard. What? What did he just hear? Z-zeke? His Highness Zeke?!

Before Lucas could even open his lips to clarify if he heard Alexander right, Alex was already facing the other male, talking to him. "Now let's go. You better use your teleportation magic for us to catch up with them."

"If you say so." The other man replied with a shrug and Alex quickly leaned on that man's shoulder, as if Alex did not trust the man enough to not disappear without him.

"Zeke actually asked me to babysit you for a while so behave, okay?" Alex grinned at him playfully when the man glanced at his hand on his shoulder.

"I'm not certain what you are talking about but I do need to catch up with him this instant." The other male replied with a blank face and then the two of them were swallowed by black smoke that surrounded them swiftly, before disappearing and leaving Lucas standing there.

A soft sigh escaped Lucas' lips before he looked around the entire place. He could still sense Sebastian's magic and finally... Zeke's presence.

The realization that Zeke was truly back now had the man's eyes glinting in the darkness. Excitement and something more filled his gaze. "He's definitely in the Black Forest right now, right?"

Lucas was certain because Alicia was in the Black Forest! Azy was there as well, so of course, Zeke would go there as soon as he was back!

"Alright! I better get there as soon as possible too!" tilting his head left and right, he cracked his neck menacingly, and then he approached the pile of bodies he was tasked to move.

Chapter 326 Interesting

Chapter 326 Interesting

As soon as they materialized, Alex's eyes widened in a mixture of shock and disbelief. Never had he even imagined something like this would happen! That he would find himself materializing in the midst of a bustling city street!

"Oh, sh*t!" Alex cursed under his breath as his very first reaction was to look around to see if someone had caught them just appearing out of nowhere on camera. There were a few people who were looking at them with horrified expressions, as if they just saw something completely impossible, while others simply went about their business, oblivious to the oddity that had just occurred.

Alex did not mind if some people saw them doing that 'magic' as long as there was no evidence. His gaze looked for any nearby CCTV's and groaned at the sight of a couple of cameras attached to the street lamps.

"Oh, damn it!" his hand braced on his hip as he pinched the skin between his brows. He had never thought this newbie friend of Zeke would instantly give him this amount of headache just by helping with a little bit of transportation! He could not help but immediately regret even at the thought of babysitting him even for a while! Rather than babysitting, it is more that he was being tricked into cleaning up the mess that was Gav.

As he turned to face his companion. "What the hell are you doing?" he demanded, his voice low and laced with irritation.

But as he looked at Gav, his words trailed off. Gav was staring up at the skyscrapers, looking around in curiosity and wonder as though what he was seeing was something so alien and never seen before. Alex momentarily fell speechless, realizing that this guy

had never seen anything like this before. And from the way he was gaping at the buildings and the people, Alex quickly deduced that his world was obviously very much different from theirs. In fact, he even suspected that his world might not even have much resemblance to theirs.

The screeching of tires brought Alex back to reality, and he quickly pulled Gav off the street before the lights turned red.

"This place is...interesting," Gav commented, his eyes still fixed on the towering buildings. His entire being seemed to be buzzing with curiosity.

Alex let out a heavy sigh as he looked at Gav. "You...!! Didn't you say you needed to catch up with Zeke?" He reminded Gav, almost sure that the man must have forgotten about his aim for at least that moment.

"I do," Gav replied, his tone nonchalant, as if he did not do anything wrong at all.

"Like hell you do!" Alex retorted, rolling his eyes. He was so tempted to smack Gav up the back of his head. "You brought us both miles away and to a different country in just the blink of an eye. Are you actually dumb, or are you just roaming around now that you're away from Zeke's watch?"

Gav remained calm, but something dangerous momentarily flicked in his grey eyes at Alex's words. "If I know the place, I can bring us both where he is in an instant," he said in a cold tone. "You're the one who asked me, who knows nothing about this place, to bring us both to wherever Zeke is." He stated the fact - which was right on point.

Alex opened his mouth but he shook his head and could only sigh again. It seemed that this guy was another handful to deal with. Poor Zeke, that guy was never getting any breaks in getting tangled with troublesome people...

Wanting to just catch up with Zeke before the guy disappears again, Alex gave in, "Fine, fine. Let's just say that I am at fault for that. But we're too far from where we should be - return us both to where we came from."

All too soon, Gav's dark magic began to appear as he was about to teleport them, when Alex suddenly grabbed onto his wrist. "Stop!" he hissed, dragging Gav away from the busy street. "You can't just use your powers of teleportation in front of all these people!" he explained, looking as though he had just aged ten years! Alex looked so indignant as he thought of how thoughtless Gav was, not bothered at all about having his powers being exposed in public. However, he belatedly realised that it might be because in his own world, this kind of display of power must be a normal and accepted thing.

Alex then rummaged through his pocket for his phone and sighed again when he found he had none. He really needed to make a call for someone to immediately clean up the

footage of them both doing that appearing act before someone caught on and spread it online!

Gladly, Alex spotted a telephone booth. Again, he grabbed Gav and dragged him along, not daring to even let go of the guy even for a second. He knew this type of person. The moment he takes his eyes off Gav, the guy would end up causing another trail of mess that needs cleaning up. What he needed was to catch up with Zeke. He really did not have the time to babysit this guy right now!

After he made the urgent call, Alex pulled Gav along with him again, not minding the giggling girls who might be thinking some silly things about them right now.

As they walked down a dark and narrow alley, Alex finally sighed out in relief.

Gav, on the other hand, seemed to be distracted by the world around them. "You said this is a world where magic is not a norm, but what makes those things move?" he asked, pointing at the cars passing them on the street.

Alex rolled his eyes, feeling a mix of disbelief and amusement. Gav was like a child seeing the world for the first time, and Alex was not ready for this.

Chapter 327 I don't know

Chapter 327 I don't know

Alex thought though that he might actually have fun with this creature if only their situation was different.

"I'll have someone explain it to you later," Alex said. "Let's get out of here first before you do something else funny."

"Now let's go, get us back to the cavern before Zeke disappears on us." he said, his voice firm and that was all it took for the guy to make a move in an instant.

And with that, the two of them were swallowed by that same dark smoke that seemed to have a life of its own.

As soon as they emerged back in the now empty underground cemetery, Alex asked him to follow after him as he rushed out of the cavern.

Soon, the duo was sprinting through the dense forest, their forms a blur as their vampiric speed propelled them forward with ease. The rustling of leaves and the sound

of twigs snapping under their feet echoed through the woods, as they weaved through the trees with practiced agility.

"I'm sensing dragon blood in you," Gav broke the silence, his words carrying a note of curiosity. "You're obviously the troublesome dragon Zeke had mentioned before, so why not just shapeshift? That would bring us to our destination so much faster."

Alex feigned a scoff. "Troublesome dragon? I do believe you're far more troublesome than I am."

"I never heard Zeke call anyone 'troublesome' apart from a certain dragon." Gav retorted, giving back as good as he got.

"Don't worry, I'm certain Zeke's calling you that behind your back." Alex grinned.

"I don't think so. Since Zeke likes to say whatever he wants to say right in front of your face."

Alex could not respond to that because Gav was actually right about that. If he never heard Zeke call him that, then it means he truly never called him 'troublesome'. For real? How come? He better catch the guy to have a heart-to-heart talk with Zeke about this. Hopefully, he still had time to speak with him.

"Did Zeke not mention to you that this world of ours is a place where magical things are not meant to be real?" Alex finally answered Gav's initial question.

"Zeke never really talked about his world," Gav replied. "He didn't like being asked about it as well."

Alex fell silent, understanding what exactly Zeke must have been going through that he did not want to talk about their world.

"How about yours? I mean your world?" Alex glanced at him. "I could guess it's a place where magic is everywhere based on your behavior."

"I don't know," Gav's simple and emotionless response had Alex furrowing his brow and he turned to look at the man. He thought that the guy was trying to be evasive.

However, when he looked at Gav's eyes, Alex saw something in them. It was like he was suddenly seeing a different person. And for a moment, Alex felt as though he was looking into a mirror. Alex was seeing someone who reminded him of his past self, before he regained his memories of the woman he had lost and before he had met her once again.

"You don't know...you don't remember?" Alex asked in a low voice.

Gav did not answer, but Alex did not need his verbal reply. The words hung in the air between them, heavy with unspoken meaning. Then they continued running on in silence, the only sound was the crunching of leaves and twigs beneath their feet.

...

In the Black Forest.

Sebastian and everyone except Alicia and Zeke were outside the house, facing the newcomers. Raven and two other royal guards – they were messengers sent by Lucas to deliver news to Alex.

"We need Alexander at the castle this instant," he said, his voice laced with urgency. "Elijah's already started his coup to take over the throne and lead the kingdom to start a war against the humans."

Elle's eyes widened with shock. What?! The news of a coup was already shocking enough in itself, but the mention of war against the human race made Elle's heart shake even more. What was Elijah aiming for?

She looked at Sebastian with panic and fear in her eyes but when she saw that he was remarkably calm, Elle felt her panic subside and calmed down a little. As she observed Sebastian, she noticed that he looked as though he had been expecting this already. What had happened? What did he know that he had not told her?

"The officials are mad and resentful towards you, Your Highness. So it's better for Alexander to be the one to go," Raven continued. "The humans might be preparing an even more extreme measure to infiltrate our country at this moment, and war could really break out any time soon. So Your Highness, would you please ask Alexander to head over to Queza right this instant?"

"Alexander isn't here yet," Sebastian said calmly, as though he was replying to any ordinary request instead of a national emergency.

"May I know where he is at the moment? I'll go to him myself right this instant," Raven said, his voice urgent.

"You don't need to go anywhere. He'll be here very soon," Sebastian replied, and then his gaze drifted towards Azy, who stood by the door.

Sebastian approached the boy slowly. "Why are you here? Go back to your parents, Azy," he told him gently, wanting the boy to spend as much time with his parents as possible.

But Azy shook his head. "I'm...I'm fine now, Uncle," Azy replied in a quiet voice. He looked as though he understood what his uncle wanted, but he had already made a

solemn decision to give his parents time to be with each other. As much as he would love to be with both his parents, he knew that his dad would need that personal time to spend with his mom even more.

Sebastian did not say anything more, and that was when Alex and Gav finally arrived.

Chapter 328 Lovers Of Peace

"Now what's this another commotion, hmm? Raven?" Alexander said as soon as he landed behind Raven with Gav next to him.

Raven looked so relieved at the sight of Alex that he immediately began reporting.

Alex on the other hand, just quietly sauntered towards his wife Abi, and kissed her cheek before standing next to her with his hand naturally resting on her back.

Once Raven was done, Alex sighed. "That little bastard's timing is truly something, isn't it?" He commented in a calm but a little frustrated tone. "And the prophetess? Do you even know where she is?"

"She's been with everyone before we left the palace." came Raven's response.

"I see... Elijah didn't start an unnecessary bloodshed in the palace, did he?"

"I believe so. He didn't seem to have any plans in killing anyone. But that was maybe due to the reason that everyone easily turned their backs from His Highness Sebastian for him."

"That's great then."

Alex's nonchalance only made Raven blink. Though it was somehow reassuring that no one was panicking or reacting urgently so far, this was absolutely something unexpected.

It was as if everyone was already expecting this would happen or were they just not at all bothered by it? But this was a serious problem. Was it not...? Though they could win over the humans, the fact that a war would even break out between the humans and them vampires, who are not supposed to be known to the humans was a huge problem in itself.

Raven was having a hard time figuring out what was going on now or what he should say next for a while.

"Err... does this mean you're not going back to the palace right now?" Raven asked hesitantly.

"Not right now, Raven. There is no guarantee of what Elijah would do if I suddenly show up there without a plan. I'm certain the little bastard had planned all these ahead of time anyway. There's no way he'd just stand there and watch while I go there to knock some senses in everyone's head. So there is no point in me running over right now and even falling into his trap that he might have laid. However, I need you to go and pay attention to the humans' activities instead."

Raven could only nod and after a few more instructions from Alexander, the man and the other two vampires with him finally left.

"This world of yours really is one of a kind it seems." Gav commented, cocking his head slightly. "How come it's the humans you are most worried about?" It could be seen that Gav was confused at why the vampires, who are the superior race between the two, were so careful in their dealing with the humans who were the weaker of the species.

"This is a world dominated by humans. There's just too many of them, so it's going to be much harder to deal with them than the vampires who are really small in numbers." Alex explained.

"But humans are powerless. Their numbers should not be a problem at all to you vampires."

Alex smirked. "Seems that you underestimate the human race a little too much, young man. Well, perhaps the humans in your world might be a little different. But the humans in our world are innovative creatures and many of them are heartless monsters too. They don't actually need magic to annihilate an entire country and even turn the entire world into chaos."

Gav looked like he was having a hard time believing Alexander's words.

"I'm not even exaggerating." Alex added. "They are even capable of going to war and destroying each other's kingdoms. So attacking and destroying another race is nothing to them."

"Are you saying that you guys are afraid of what the humans could do and that's why you are worrying about them this much?" Gav asked again, still obviously not grasping how the hell would the humans in this world have made these powerful vampires seemingly under their control. In his mind, it was as easy as annihilating them all if they were such troublesome creatures.

"Whoever said that we're afraid?" Alex raised a brow.

"What else could the reason be, if not fear of something?"

"Well, maybe it's indeed fear. Though it's never a fear of humans per se." Alex smiled as his gaze fell to Azy who was listening so attentively. "Maybe it's a fear of creating a world of chaos where our children no longer can live the peaceful lives in the future that they fully deserve. Maybe it's just us not wanting our next generation reaping the consequences of the actions caused by their parents' generation."

"Then why not take over this world? That's a more certain way for you vampires to create the future you wanted, isn't it? Don't tell me you don't have the power to do that because even without Zeke, you alone should be able to accomplish it if you really want to."

Alex could not help the ironic smile that crossed his face. "You think no one had attempted to do that before? Well, that has been done long ago, Gav. The result so far had been way more disappointing than expected. You'll only turn this world into a new kind of hell." Alex shrugged as he continued. "I'm not entirely certain if this applies to all worlds that exist out there. But I know at least that in this world, war and games of power were never the solution to a problem. And we vampires here, of course, except for some, are generally lovers of peace. We would do all we can to advocate peace and avoid war."

As Alex ended his statement with a proud grin, Gav looked like he no longer had the interest to continue on with the topic. His face showed a look that stated the vampires here were a lost cause.

"No wonder you were itching for a fight while back in the cavern." Gav mumbled as his attention was pulled towards the window of Alicia's room.

- Chapter 329 For Zeke's Sake

Chapter 329 For Zeke's Sake

Special shout-out to @MonsterUnderTheBed! Thanks sooo much for the supergift!

The slight change in Gav's expression as he looked up at the window of Alicia's room had Alex creasing his brows as well.

In fact, it was not just them that made a reaction at that moment. Azy and Sebastian had suddenly rushed inside the house. And Gav... the guy had jumped before Alex could stop him and landed like a cat on Alicia's room's window pane.

Gav's eyes stretched a little at the sight that welcomed him.

Zeke was right there, sitting beside a woman on the bed and his dark magic was...

"What are you doing? Zeke?" Gav broke the silence and Zeke's concentration.

The dark magic calmly swirling around the person on the bed dissipated as soon as Zeke raised his head and looked at Gav.

"You know your demonic power can never heal anyone, don't you?" Gav continued asking as he jumped down on the floor as soundless as a cat.

"I know that." Zeke replied. His voice was emotionless and as flat as how his eyes looked at this moment.

"Then what are you trying to do? To her?" Gav gestured to Alicia by tilting his head in her direction.

When Zeke did not respond, Gav approached the bed. He could feel from just the heartbeats and breathing of the person that she was currently in grave danger. And obviously... no matter how blank Zeke's expression was, Gav felt that he was being shaken right now. Terribly. And that only told Gav how important that lady lying on the bed was to Zeke.

Zeke had been the master of hiding whatever he was feeling or thinking. And that was why everyone in the Underworld had thought that this man was a heartless and emotionless being as he appeared on the outside. In fact, even he too had thought the same way about Zeke at first even after years of being with him.

But after the two of them made a blood oath with each other, Gav started to feel the ripples of emotion that sometimes moved within Zeke. Back in the Underworld, he could barely feel anything worth noticing except whenever Zeke was staring at his ring. But here, back in his home world, Zeke was like a different person. Especially right now. He was currently very much shaken to his core.

"So, she must be Alicia –" Gav broke off the moment he moved his gaze from Zeke and stared down the face of the woman who was lying in bed.

His head suddenly throbbed with extreme pain that Gav stumbled back, hand flying to his head as he groaned.

As he squeezed his eyes shut, a flash of long silvery hair appeared in his mind. Bringing along with it, was a warm and gentle emotion, one that made him feel much familiarity and a sense of miss. It was as though he should know who that long silvery hair belonged to.

And then it was gone. The pain too was suddenly gone. Though the physical agony was no longer there, somehow there was a gnawing void that seemed to be left behind where the pain had once throbbed so powerfully just a few seconds ago.

Panting, Gav slowly lifted his head. Zeke had already stood up, looking at him, asking him what was wrong, to the point that he had even stumbled back for no apparent reason at all.

"I don't know..." Gav replied as he steadied his breathing. "I just... felt a throbbing pain as soon as I stared at her... hair." And his brows furrowed as he continued staring at Alicia's hair, as though willing for some kind of memory to be triggered if he looked at it longer.

Zeke suddenly approached him and blocked Alicia from Gav's sight. "Then don't look at her." Zeke said. "Go out. Wait for me outside. Now, Gav."

Gav's jaws clenched, looking as though he did not want to listen to Zeke's instructions, but he could not go against Zeke's words.

As he turned back towards the window where he jumped in from, Gav turned his head slightly, but to the side where Alicia was not visible.

"She's in danger. There's something that must be done very soon or it would be too late." Gav said softly, knowing that Zeke would be able to hear him. He was not trying to overstep his boundaries or be a busybody, as he did not even know the woman. But there was one thing he knew. This woman cannot die. She must not die! And it is for Zeke's sake. He was not very sure on why he was so convinced, but he felt like it might even be for his sake too.

"I know." Zeke again responded shortly, causing Gav to form lines between his brows before realization dawned to him. Wait... don't tell me...

Gav turned around to confront Zeke, but he accidentally caught sight of Alicia's hair and once again he experienced that extreme throbbing pain, causing him to nearly fall to his knees.

"Go. Wait for me outside." Zeke told him and this time, Gav could only do as he was told.

The door was pushed open as soon as Gav was gone and Azy stood there, looking at his father with his large grey eyes. Fear and desperation were filling his eyes again.

"Dad..." he uttered. "Mom is... she's fine, right?" he asked. His voice so strained as his small fists clenched tightly at his sides.

Zeke sat next to Alicia. His hand was still holding hers as he stretched his other hand towards his son. "Come here, Azy." He said and the boy slowly approached.

Once he reached his father, Zeke held his hand and pressed on his son's palm quietly for a few moments.

"I have something to tell you, son. I need you to listen carefully."

Azy held his father's eyes as he nodded with conviction. He trusted that his father would somehow fix things.

"I... I am going to take your mother away, Azy."

Chapter 330 To save her

330 To save her

Azy dropped his head, and his large eyes stared at his small hand, which was clasped in his father's large one. And then, he lifted his gaze towards his mother. His eyes lingered onto his mother's form as a gleamer of sadness and concern filled his eyes.

"Take her with you, Dad," he said, his grey eyes sparkled with relief as soon as he returned his gaze back to his father. "Don't worry about me. I will be fine. Take Mom with you and keep her safe."

He smiled even as his large eyes watered. Azy was genuinely relieved. Of course, he was sad to part with his beloved mother, but he would be okay even if they were apart for thousands of years, as long as she would be healed. As long as she wouldn't suffer like this again. As long as one day, he could see her again.

This time, Zeke was the one who dropped his head and looked down on the floor. He didn't say anything as his thumb fiddled on his son's small but resilient and tough hand.

For a long while, they stayed like that, with Azy simply standing there patiently, waiting for his father to say what else he wanted to tell him.

"Forgive me for not finding a better solution than this, Azy," Zeke eventually uttered in a quiet voice.

Azy shook his head. "I'm sure you did everything you could, Dad. Mom knows that too."

Zeke's lips curved into a faint smile before he lifted his face and meet his son's gaze. He could sense the depth of Azy's love for his mother, and it was evident in every gesture he made. Alicia's words about their boy being dependable had finally made sense to him. However, this realization only made things harder for Zeke.

His son had been deprived of a father's presence and support since birth, and now he was going to lose his mother too. Although Zeke made a vow to himself that he would do everything he could to make sure that Alicia would return to Azy as soon as possible, he knew this wouldn't change a thing, that Azy would be left here not only without him

now, but without his mother too. The conflicting emotions were etched on Zeke's face, but he tried to maintain a calm facade. But as if as though Azy could sense the turmoil going on within him, as he leaned in for a hug.

For a fleeting moment, Zeke froze, unsure how to react. But then, he lifted his arms and gently rubbed his son's head, enveloping him in a warm embrace. It was a small gesture, but it conveyed a world of emotions that Zeke could not put into words.

Zeke let out a shaky breath before speaking, "This might take a long while, son."

Azy's response was unwavering. "I don't mind waiting, Dad. I'm a big guy now, and I still have family here to support me and be with me. Uncle Alex, Auntie Abi, Alexis, Alice, Auntie Elle, and Uncle Seb are all here for me. I won't be alone. So you don't need to worry about me. I'll be just fine."

Placing his hands on Azy's shoulders, Zeke smiled with relief and gratitude and at the same time, behavior was just due to a change in his personality or something.

09:22

For a while, Alex remained silent, his gaze fixed on Alicia's window. He watched the white curtain dance in the breeze. "I always knew I could depend on you, Azy," he said and Azy beamed, his chest swelling with pride at his father's words.

...

As soon as Gav left Alicia's room, Alex noticed a change in his demeanor. The man had suddenly transformed into a completely different person, brooding and silent. Alex tried to engage him in conversation, but his attempts were met with stony silence.

Alex couldn't help but wonder what had happened between Gav and Zeke in that short while he was inside Alicia's room. He hoped that it wasn't anything serious, and that Gav's sudden change in behavior was just due to a change in his personality or something.

For a while, Alex remained silent, his gaze fixed on Alicia's window. He watched the white curtain dance in the breeze, lost in thought, wondering what could be going on behind it.

Soon, Alex's tone turned serious as he broke the silence once again, asking Gav, "How long can you guys stay here?"

Gav met his gaze with sharp intensity, no longer ignoring him. "It depends. But given Zeke's woman's condition, I believe he'd want us to go back very soon. If not now."

Alex's eyes widened in surprise before furrowing with confusion. "Why would he... don't tell me, did Zeke already find some cure to improve Alicia's situation?" he asked, hope creeping into his voice.

Gav's response was matter-of-fact. "Demons cannot heal," he stated bluntly.

"Then why..." Alex paused for a moment, a realization dawning on him. "Because he's going to go back here immediately, right?"

Gav's expression remained stoic. "No," he replied. "No matter how powerful an individual is, they can never summon the same demon twice if that's what you are hoping to happen. Zeke still cannot return here on his own as well."

Alex's brows furrowed even deeper, his puzzlement evident. The situation seemed to be more complicated than he had initially thought.

Before Alex could speak again, Gav continued, "Zeke is going to take his woman with us. To save her."

Alex's eyes widened, shocked. He had never expected that to happen!

For a few moments, no one spoke until Abi's soft voice broke the silence. "Do you have any idea on how long it might take for them to return?" she asked.

Gav's response was grim. "I don't know," he admitted. "This isn't going to be easy, and it might take a long time. I don't know exactly what Zeke is planning, but the process will be complicated. And then there's the matter of the price his woman must pay for crossing dimensions."

Abi's expression turned even more worried. She knew about the price that Alicia had paid to cross dimensions, as Alicia had confided in her.