

## Hellbound Heart #Chapter 91-100

### Chapter 91 Vulnerable

The moment Elle turned her back to him and walked away, the dam that had been standing strong all these times finally crumbled, causing her tears to gush forth like a deluge of rain. r

It had been a long time since she had cried outside the confines of her dark room. She had long stopped crying where there might be others around who could see her. Because it made her feel even more vulnerable. She had never wanted to appear vulnerable in the eyes of anyone – most especially her father and Brandon Haze. No matter what kind of situation and hurt they put her into, Elle had refused to give in. She refused to give them the satisfaction of seeing her cry. She had always chosen to remain silent than risk crying before them. And she had succeeded every single time. r

But with Sebastian... she did not know why, but it had never been this hard for her to hold back. She thought she could at least hold her tears until she returned to her room. She thought she was going to manage until she could at least go to the bathroom and cry under the shower, allowing the sounds of the falling water to muffle her tears. But lord... why was everything involving Sebastian just so damned hard to bear? r

Her feet were now numb from walking barefoot in the freezing cold, but she continued walking away as fast as she could. She did not want him to witness her in this state – crying. Vulnerable. r

But then, a hand had suddenly grabbed her arm, turning her around without any warning. Her eyes flew open wide as she looked up at the person that had clutched her. Though unclear, she could tell that it was Sebastian. r

Her eyes were blurry due to the tears that were flooding her eyes, so she could not quite see his expression. But she felt him instantly stiffening, seemingly paralyzed, as if something had shocked him to his core. r

She blindly pushed at his chest, stepping back from him. She harshly pulled her wrist from his grasp and walked away again, but he only resorted to grabbing her from behind and scooping her up into his arms. He tucked her tightly into his embrace and walked forward – toward the same direction that she had been moving in. He had moved so fast that Elle who was in an emotional daze and feeling utterly cold was late to register what had just happened. She could not do anything but to just give in as her body betrayed her and sought for his incredibly warm body. r

However, her tears did not stop, and she did not know why being in his arms made her cry even harder. Wanting to hide her face, she snuggled and buried her face into his

chest, clenching his shirt so tightly in her fists, as she sniffled and fought to control her upside-down emotions. She was desperately hoping that once they reached their room, her tears would have somehow stopped flowing. r

But contrary to what she was hoping, her tears did not stop. Not in the least. They fell and flowed as though they were seemingly endless raindrops. r

"Get Lorna. Now." Sebastian's curt orders echoed, alerting Rion and Raven to immediately move. r

Sebastian pushed the door opened with his foot. The wolf was right there, sitting by the window. Only this time, it was facing the door, as if waiting for his master – Elle – to return. r

At that same time, Lorna had arrived before the door could even swing close. r

"Your Highness –" r

"She's... so cold." Sebastian cut the maid off, informing her of the problem. At the same time, his quiet words also seemed to be a statement he was telling himself. "She'd stayed out in the cold for too long and was even walking around barefooted." There was anger in his voice as he said the last line. r

"Oh my god...!!" the maid gasped. "Let me check on her." She hastily approached them as Sebastian sat at the foot of the bed, with no intention in letting Elle out of his arms. r

Elle was still burying her face into Sebastian's chest, refusing to let anyone see her face. r

Lorna touched her as if to feel how cold she was. r

"Do we need to rush her to the hospital?" Sebastian asked, the worry in his voice had surprised Elle. She had never thought that he would think of rushing her to the hospital just because she was exposed to the cold for a short while. r

She shook her head quickly without raising her face, letting him know about her refusal to be brought to any hospital. She knew she was cold, but it was not something that was so severe to the point of being sent to the hospital. He had already given her his jacket earlier. So, her feet were the only problem right now. It could be treated with just a warm compress. r

"I think she just need to get warm, Your Highness." Lorna said in relief after checking Elle over thoroughly. r

But Sebastian sounded skeptical. "Are you certain?" r

"Yes, Your Highness. And the princess seemed to not want to be brought to the hospital, too. I'll go prepare a warm compress. For now, wrap her up with a blanket and try to keep her as warm as you can. I'll have Rion take care of the hearth." r

Elle felt him cover her with the thick, downy blanket and then he picked her up and moved them towards the chair facing the fireplace. He did all those moving without putting her down even for a moment. r

Soon, Elle felt something so deliciously warm seeping up her toes and feet. The fire next to them was now, also glowing and crackling merrily. r

"When she calms down, have her drink some warm water. I'll leave it here, Your Highness. Call me if you need anything else." Lorna reminded and then she bowed her head before heading out the door. r

Once she shut the doors, Lorna sighed out heavily. She had honestly thought that the princess was in utter danger or perhaps even dying when she saw Sebastian's expression at first. To think that she was just cold, and he was already in that state. r

This bonus chapter is dedicated to @MonsterUnderTheBed! Thank you so much for the supergift!! <3

Sebastian was still unable to relax even after Lorna had given her diagnosis. r

His own reaction at that moment when he saw her tears was... it was shocking. Simply inexplicable. She had done it again. To think that he would be able to feel like that just by seeing her cry. Just with those tears, they were enough to evoke such another violent emotion within him. And to think he had nearly panicked just because... just because he had felt her skin so cold to the touch. F\*\*k... he was really screwed. This woman had truly screwed him over so bad. r

And now here he was, not knowing quite what to do. Not knowing what to even say. He could only stay still and hold her close to him, imparting as much warmth to her chilled body as he could. Because he was afraid that whatever he was going to do or say, would only make her feel worse. He had never wanted to see that look on her face crying like... like he had made her so miserable. F\*\*k... had he really made her so miserable? All he wanted was to protect her. To have her as his. r

He had already decided to claim this woman for himself. Because he truly wanted her, and he was afraid that she would run away screaming once she found out the truth. He did not want that to happen because... because he would not be able to let go of her! He could feel he would never be able to let go if she suddenly decides to leave after knowing the truth. That was how crazy he was for her right now. r

He had thought that it was fine if she gets angry with him. He could and would do everything she wanted to ease her anger later. He also knew she could get lonely and

bored and maybe even get hurt. But he had thought that was normal. He had already thought to make up to her later for those too. He was confident that he could deal with her unhappiness, her tantrums. He was confident that one day he could make her never want to leave his side. He would make her his. Fully his and his alone. r

But when he had seen her cry earlier, and that hurt in her eyes had created a serious crack in his confidence. He was so wrong to think that he could stand any reactions or emotions that she showed him. He could not f\*\*king stand it. The thought that he was unknowingly making her so miserable was... the feeling was f\*\*king suffocating. He had never thought that he would ever feel like this. He had never thought that things would end up like this. r

The room was silent for a long time. He honestly did not know how long. He had lost concept of time – at least for now. The only thing that could be heard were the crackle from the fireplace from time to time, his steady breathing and hers that were sometimes punctuated with a sniffle here and there.r

He did not make any sounds and just held her close to him. Holding her securely wrapped in the blanket. He did not move too, until her tight grip on his shirt suddenly loosened, indicating that she must have had fallen asleep. Slowly bending his head to look down at her, he saw that her eyes were closed. r

Sebastian listened to her heartbeats as he continued holding her, still not moving. He did not want to disturb her rest. As he listened, he noticed her breathing was now steady but at times, they still shook a little. He knew how much she had cried from the wet patch that was still there on his shirt. r

A long while later, he moved her into a more comfortable position. But she was still in his arms though. r

He stared silently and contemplatively at her tear-stained face. She looked so pitiful and as though she had been so wronged. His dark and hard face softened a little as he started brushing her fiery hair back, albeit a little absentmindedly. r

"I... honestly don't know how to deal with you from here on..." he suddenly muttered. "You're like an unexpected trouble I just somehow found myself landing into and..." he smiled disbelievingly, "I'm usually really good at dealing with troubles. But f\*\*k, this is the first time I've come across a trouble of your caliber. You're a... dangerous little creature, Isabelle. Nothing and no one could even come close to being compared to you. I can already tell that you're a massive trouble that would drive me right into the brink of madness. You're such a vivid red for me, baby... and I know that I too, am a bloody red flag for you. But f\*\*k me because I still want you so bad even knowing that so clearly. I'm afraid I'm starting to become obsessed with you. Or maybe I already am. I think I already am... Isabelle..." r

He shut his eyes tightly closed. His brows creasing hard and meeting together in the middle of his forehead as if something had made him feel as though he was in turmoil. r

"I don't want you to become miserable. I don't think I could ever stand it..." He muttered softly to himself before he opened his eyes and let out a long deep breath. r

After another long stretch of utter silence, Sebastian felt that Elle's body was getting warmer and warmer. r

She had also started to make small and almost inaudible sounds in her sleep as she attempted to make movements in his arms. r

Thinking that she might be starting to get uncomfortable in that somewhat upright position he was holding her in, Sebastian reluctantly stood up and went to tuck her back into the bed. r

He put her down ever so gently and then covered her with the blanket. She then stopped moving around. r

"Was being in my arms so uncomfortable for you?" he asked a little bitterly as he remember how she had hugged that f\*\*king wolf so happily in her sleep like a bolster. He had been so upset that he had ordered the wolf to be brought outside of their room for now. r

He then walked towards the window and stared out into the darkness. He brought his cigarette out but suddenly killed the lighter before it could even touch his cigarette. r

His mind wandered about what he would do, what he would say, once she wakes up. He must come to a decision tonight whether he should finally reveal everything to her or not. Right now, there was actually no better choice than that and he could not help but feel troubled, wondering if he would end up regretting or making things worse again between them. r

It took him so long before he finally walked back to their bed, only to frown at the sight of Elle sweating profusely.

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Goal for month of September: top 1 in GT ranking = mass release

Frowning at the bright white ceiling she was looking up at right now, Elle kept still as her mind tried to recall what had happened. This was not the usual view she was used to seeing upon waking up. Elle then slowly looked around in confusion. Wait... this is... she is in a hospital? Or perhaps a large clinic? What in the world was she doing...

She sprung up to a sitting position, only to have her head spinning. She quickly squeezed her eyes shut and stopped moving, taking in steady and calming breaths before opening her eyes again. And it was then that she noticed the IV drip taped to the back of her hand.

The door swung opened.

Elle slowly looked to the door, reminding herself not to move too quickly this time, and saw Sebastian entering. Time seemed to halt for a moment when their eyes met. He was still dressed in the clothes she had seen him in from last night. And he looked grumpier than usual.

His expression slowly softened upon seeing her sitting up, before saying something to whoever it was that was standing outside the door. He entered after closing the door and approached her quietly.

Sitting at the edge of the bed, he casually reached out and placed his hands on her forehead, as though wanting to check if her temperature was back to normal.

Elle felt her heartbeat picking up speed at his gentle touch. But she quickly distracted herself and opened her mouth to ask. "Why... what happened?" she looked at him curiously. She did remember that she suddenly felt so unwell before she fell asleep in his arms. But it should not be something so serious that warranted her to be rushed to the hospital. She believed it could have been just a cold or a fever as she had already started feeling as though she was going to fall sick the night before. Could it be that it happened to her again? That ache in her heart? But she should have at least woken up if that happened.

"You have a fever." He answered simply. His hand then moved to her neck, feeling her temperature there as well.

His answer had her blinking. "Oh... and?"

"The doctor said, you'll be fine."

Her brows creased and then her lips parted in disbelief. "You mean... I only have a fever and nothing serious had happened?" 'Then why am I in the hospital?' was the unsaid question in her mind. Elle wisely held back and bit down on her lips.

He nodded. "You still need some rest. I think your temperature is still a bit higher than normal." Sebastian commented in a rather serious manner.

"Sebastian." Elle caught his wrist. "You didn't rush me to the hospital just because I had a fever, did you...?" she phrased it in what she hoped to be a milder fashion.

p It was his turn to frown. "Can't I?" he looked like he was genuinely questioning what was wrong at what he did. "You're sick. Humans... go to hospitals when they are sick, or they will..." he trailed off, stopping himself from saying anything more.

Elle bit her lip. She did not know whether to laugh or cry right now. And what was with him talking like he was an alien or non-human? She needed to be brought to the hospital or she will what?

"You really think of me as the ultimate weakling, don't you? I've been through many fevers and I survived them all without getting hospitalized, Sebastian. Even without anyone's aid. I'm not as weak as you think I am." She told him. She knew these words were unnecessary and even petty, but she could not help it. She was still mad at him.

Being reminded of last night and everything that had happened between them had her mood worsen in the blink of an eye.

"If you say so," was all he replied and shrugged noncommittally, causing Elle to feel even more ticked off.

"For your information, I have been training in martial arts as one of my home lessons ever since I was thirteen. And believe it or not, I'm pretty good at it. My teacher even said that I would have a chance to win some top awards if I were allowed to compete." Elle blushed after blurting these words out. She used to never say words like these. She was never the type to tell others about the things she could do like some proud and spoiled brat. Lord... Sebastian seems to just keep bringing out the worse in her.

"Why are you not allowed to compete?" he asked, slightly tilting his head as though he was suddenly interested. She was actually expecting him to throw out a mocking 'really?'.  
really?'

Looking away, Elle answered. "My father just doesn't allow it. I don't know why. He never gives me any explanations and just decides on everything on his own. He had forced me to pursue dancing instead when he saw how good I have become." Elle did not realize that as she was explaining, a small sneer had appeared on her face. But Sebastian who was looking obviously noticed it.

"So, you stopped training in martial arts?"

"I've trained by myself in my room secretly. I am still practicing just because I don't want to forget what I've diligently tried to learn for years. I doubt this skill will come in handy someday anyway." She shrugged as though she did not care.

"Why do you doubt it?"

"I had initially desired to learn, thinking that I could protect myself and my sister if I become good at it. However, I couldn't do anything in the end. Even if I turned out to be

the best, I doubt I could fight vicious men with my fists and kicks. I should've learned how to shoot guns instead. That would be far more effective..." Elle pressed her lips tightly together, realizing how she was suddenly talking a lot more than usual. "Well, anyway. Let's go home. I don't want to stay here anymore."

She reached for the drip on her hand and attempted to pull it out, but Sebastian caught her hand.

This bonus chapter is dedicated to @Sacogun! Thank you so much for the supergift!

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"You can't remove that yet! Unless your doctor says it is ok to do so." He said that when the door suddenly opened, and a female doctor stepped in. She had heard what Sebastian just said.r

"Uhm... actually, it's okay for her to remove it... Sir." The doctor informed them, and Elle raised her brow at him. Her eyes were literally yelling the word 'see?' r

Sebastian sighed heavily and gave in. "Then you should let the doctor do it." He firmly told her before stepping out of the room. r

Once everything was settled and Elle was now all prepared to leave, Sebastian talked to the doctor. When he saw her standing, Sebastian suddenly rushed over and scooped her up into his arms, surprising Elle and the doctor too. r

"Wait... Seb... you're not going to carry me all the way like this are you?" she whispered embarrassedly as she saw how the doctor was eyeing her with a smile. "I can walk. Really!! Or I could just use the wheelchair –"r

"Just be good and let me take care of you, Izabelle." Came his firm and controlled voice. He obviously did not like that she was adamant in having him put her down. Elle looked at him with a curiosity and a tinge of confusion. However, once she heard some ladies gasping and saw everyone else looking at them, Elle realized that Sebastian was just doing his part of the bargain again. Right... they needed to keep up their appearances since they were outside now.r

So, she could only lean her head obediently on his chest and went with the flow. Her mind whispering cynically to herself the words 'if you all only knew...'. And she could not help a bitter feeling surge from the depths of her heart.r

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Sebastian never put her down. Even when they had reached the car, he kept her tucked in his arms. Until they were finally back in the castle. He carried and brought her straight to their original bedchambers and sat her down gently on the bed. r



Elle saw her phone on the side table and looked at Sebastian in surprise. Was he finally done with the confinement and restricting her in her room? r

She remembered his words last night saying that she could now do whatever she wanted before storming off as though he did not want to care about her matters anymore. r

Just as she was about to speak, a soft knock echoed at the door. r

Sebastian immediately opened the door and stepped outside, leaving her alone again. She was careful to move slowly in case her dizziness strikes again and picked up her phone. r

It was turned off. Pressing the power on button, her phone flashed bright with the welcome greeting. r

Series of buzzes suddenly filled the room and Elle did not know why, but her heartbeat began to race. She could see numerous messages from unknown numbers. r

Unlocking her phone, Elle swallowed nervously as her fingers move slowly to tap on the messages to read them. r

Her phone was snatched from her hand before she could see what the messages were about. She whirled around and just as she had expected, it was Sebastian who had her phone clutched in his hand.r

"S-sebastian!" she was unable to stop herself from yelling his name a little louder than usual. "You said... you had said that I can now do whatever it was I wanted last night. Remember that?! You're not going to continue locking me up, right?" her eyes started to turn red and teary as she became emotional again.r

"Izabelle..." He whispered gently, reaching out to touch her head but Elle stepped back. "Listen. I'm not locking up you up again. However, I need you to listen to me. I've decided to reveal everything to you... but only after I return. I won't take long. I'll just need to deal with this one last thing first and foremost. Once I am back, I'll reveal everything to you myself. I want to be the one you learn anything from. So, I still can't allow you to use your phone. I will allow you to go out, but just until the garden. And Rion and Raven must be by your side at all times. Can you accept this?"r

Elle stared at him. She could see how serious he was. She noticed his expression had change since he went out of the door. As if he had heard some bad news. She could tell that whatever this thing he was dealing with, it must be really serious just by the immense change of air around him. r

"How... long? How long will you take again before you return?" she asked, trying her best to stay calm and composed. r

"Give me two more days." r

"Do you promise you will tell me everything in detail when you're back?" r

"Yes." r

The lack of hesitation in his bright eyes had Elle slowly calming down. Two days... she had already waited for five days. Two more days would not hurt, right? As long as he would keep his promise. r

"Alright, fine... I will wait for two more days." She gave in. r

He looked relieved. Then he turned her phone off again. "I'll keep this phone with me for now. Internet will continue to be unavailable to you. And... that f... wolf, I won't allow you to sleep with him again. Agreed?" r

Elle could not believe the wolf was still such a sore spot to him in this situation! r

"You can go visit him in the other room. But you are never to bring him in here. And never visit him at night. Are we clear? Also... I want you back at your full strength once I'm back. If you get sick again... I might omit some details from you. So make sure to take care of yourself, did I make myself clear?" r

Elle wanted to argue, not liking all this endless conditions of his, but seeing at how he was obviously needing to rush off, she decided to hold her tongue. She would make sure that she would get back at him once he returns. r

"Crystal clear, Prince Sebastian." She told him. r

He smiled. She did not expect him to show her that elusive dimple. "Good girl." He uttered and suddenly, his lips were on her throat.r

His parted lips moving gently against her throat made Elle freeze with shocked surprise. This man... why was he suddenly...

She felt his hot tongue lapping against her skin, and then he suckled on that patch of skin, hard. That had caused Elle to gasp out loud and unconsciously clung onto his broad shoulders. Her heartbeat raced like crazy as he continued kissing her, his mouth sliding along her throat and then sucking hard again at places that was just so sensitive that she trembled helplessly. Oh lord...

"Seb... Sebastian..." she uttered his name as she started to feel herself burn and melt. Why in the world was he doing this all of a sudden? Was he not about to... rush off?

Part of her wanted to push him away. To stop this sudden and complete turn of events before she ends up getting completely and mindlessly seduced by him again. She must step back before she starts grabbing him like she never want to let go.

"Sebastian..." her hand pressed on his chest as she called out his name once again with a shaky breath. Every time she touches him, it was as though her whole body would be mildly electrocuted, and she would experience a very pleasant shortness of breath. However, that would also render her mind to be in a daze and reduce the strength of her logical reasoning.

He finally stilled his movements. But he did not move or pull away. He seemed to have said something from the movements of his mouth, but Elle did not seem to catch it. All her senses had caught was his warm and moist breath that had puffed against the wet spot he had created on her neck, and Elle felt chills all over her at the feel of that hellfire-like sensation.

His hold on her had tightened and just as Elle thought that he was finally going to let go, he whispered, "once more." Her breath snagged and he latched his erotic mouth on her skin again. Oh lord...

"F\*\*k... tell me to stop, Izabelle." He uttered in a bewitching voice which was a total contradiction to his actions as he continued kissing all over the skin of her neck. He was going hungrier, wilder. And that only turned Elle's body so much on fire that she had not noticed how they had even travelled from the middle of the room, right up to the door. He then pressed her against the closed doors and his mischievous, fiery hands began to caress her, starting from her waist, right up to her chest.

"Izabelle, you have got to tell me to stop. I need... I really need to... go..." he continued panting out. But though his words carried one message, his one hand carried another message as it slipped under her shirt.

Elle could hear the begging tone in his voice, but his words and his actions were saying and doing completely different things. And lord help her because her body seemed to not want her to listen to his words. It was very keen on just listening to the language of his body.

Maybe it was because she was still a little feverish, but her mind was also so weak right now. Her resistance was fast in dissolving and now it was literally nowhere to be found. Lord... she was supposed to be mad at him... and yet, here she was...

He jerked back on his own accord. His breath was labored as he looked down at her with those steel-colored eyes burning with a metallic grey fire. "You, naughty girl..." he smirked disbelievingly at this girl that was his wife. "When I was begging you to have me previously, you had refused me as though it would kill you if you had not. Now, when I am begging you to stop me, you don't. You really love to play hard-to-get with me, don't you?" he pinched her chin lightly. "Only you are able to treat me like this. You truly

deserved to be punished like the naughty girl that you are once again." His tone was teasing, and Elle was reminded of the pleasurable things that were involved in Sebastian's interpretation of 'punishment'. And at that thought, her cheeks flushed and turned red in embarrassment.

And he kissed her throat once again. Only this time, he sucked on her skin so hard that Elle could not help but allow the moan to escape her mouth.

He pulled away, licking his lips as though he had tasted something deliciously sweet as he stared down hungrily at her. His intense gaze sent tingles zipping down to her lower abdomen. "Don't look so disappointed, baby. It's not that I'm cutting you off. We can continue this when I'm back, remember? Make sure you get yourself well prepared." He teased her in a dark tone, as a meaningful gleam flashed in his eyes.

And then he was gone. Just like that. Leaving Elle gaping at the door in a daze, utterly speechless and blazing with embarrassment, knowing exactly the reason why he had said those last lines of his. He had seen her desire for him. And it had been palpable!

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Later that day, Elle went out to walk Snow White around the garden. It was somehow relaxing, finally being able to walk around after being locked up for five days in her room.

"Rion." Elle faced the man as she had released Snow from his leash to run around the garden.

"Yes, Princess?"

"Who's better at fighting between you and Raven?"

Elle's question caused Rion to blink in confusion. Raven who was on guard somewhere a little farther from them looked at their direction as if he had heard what Elle had just said.

"Me." Rion grinned, pointing at himself proudly. "But Raven's stronger and has an insane amount of stamina."

"I see..." Elle nodded. "I'm in need of a sparring partner. You're not too tall for me, so I think you're the best choice."

"Oh... Wait, what?!!" Rion's eyes almost popped out of their sockets. He was completely shocked at the princess' unexpected words.

This bonus chapter is dedicated to @Chinawa! Thank you much for the supergift!!!

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Rion had initially thought that the princess just needed some human punching bag to vent or to release her pent-up stress from the several days she had been locked up. Or maybe she was even joking with him. But he was wrong! Absolutely wrong!r

"What's wrong, Rion? Don't tell me that this is the limit of the skills from the Reign family's royal guards?" Elle had asked, looking down at Rion who was currently flat out on the ground. She had actually managed to bring him down!!! This fragile looking red-haired lady! Who would have ever thought that she had been actually hiding such skills? Now, Rion believed that this was not just mere skills, but talent as well. Her movements were quite fluid. She was very flexible and quick as hell!!!r

"Haha." Rion scratched at the back of his neck a little sheepishly. "Of course not, princess." r

"Then do be serious. I told you I am used to this already. When I was younger, my trainer had come at me like he really meant it. And that was how I managed to improve a lot. So be serious." r

"But... princess..." the stare she threw him had Rion sighing in surrender. 'Oh well, might as well entertain the princess a little. His Highness did not forbid physically training her anyway. I might as well teach her more skills as she still has so much to improve.' Rion told himself and stood. "Alright, princess. Come at me." r

Her eyes lit up and she immediately went at him with her topnotch high section kick. r

But Rion easily caught her ankle, holding her leg up high in a steady grip. Elle's eyes widened at how he had blocked her move. r

"Now how are you going to get away if this happens to you in real life? Huh, Princess?" Rion was suddenly behaving like he was a strict teacher. r

Elle's eyes gleamed and she jumped, twisted her waist, and aggressively kicked at him with her other leg. The core strength she had shown was truly impressive!r

Rion was again shocked at her aggressive choice of move. Whoever had taught the princess was well... he seemed to be the really aggressive type of fighter. But for Rion, this was not the fighting style he would have wanted the princess to learn. r

,m Elle ended up on the ground. She smiled disbelievably because of Rion. She could not believe that he had managed to dodge her kick at point blank range. This guy is really not bad.r

"That's one fluid move you've got there, Princess. But that's pretty dangerous." Rion complimented her but at the same time, provided her with advice as a professional.r

"For my opponent, of course." Elle was confident in her moves. r

"Nope. More like for you. I think your teacher only taught you to fight. But he or she might have forgotten to teach you how to defend yourself while you are attacking. Your skills could help if you were in competitions, but not in real circumstances. Also, with your size and strength, my advice is for you to focus on defending yourself instead of focusing on how to take the opponent down. Do not fight them head on, especially if you don't have a clue at what skills they actually have up their sleeves." r

"Defending myself...?" Elle looked at him seriously. Her interest piqued and it was flashing intensely in her eyes. "But what's the use of defending myself if I can't bring the opponent down? The fight will never end that way." She rebutted. r

"You're right, princess. I'm not saying that you need to forget about how to bring your opponent down. I am just reminding you that you should focus more on defending yourself. Like what happened a while ago, you came at me with that high kick. However, you have left yourself wide open and vulnerable for even a simple attack. That could be a fatal hit for you, especially if your opponent is much stronger than you. And I noticed that you would attack aggressively but you're not aiming at the vital spots. I guess, your teacher missed teaching you that important point as well. I'd like you to learn more moves which are the not so flashy ones. I can teach you the kind of sneaky and less flashy yet deadly attacks, if you are willing to learn, princess." r

Elle held his gaze for a moment and then nodded decisively. "Of course, I'd love to!" r

Her willingness to learn had Rion nodding his head in approval. She was definitely not the typical princess that needed to be coddled and pampered. r

"But we'll need to stop here princess. At least for now. You've just recovered. I can't risk you getting –" Rion did not want to overexert Elle as she had just barely recovered from her sickness. If Prince Sebastian finds out that she got sick again because of their training sessions, he would surely be skinned alive! But... r

"No, I'm fine now. And seriously, we only went at it for several minutes. I'd like to train more today. Yesterday is already more than enough for me to rest. Sebastian is set to return tomorrow, so today might be my only chance to practice with you as long as I'd like." Elle insisted that she was fine and wanted to continue on their sparring cum learning session. And of course, being so insistent, Rion could only give up in the end and continued their session. r

...r

Elle's training with Rion was such a big distraction for her. She honestly wished that she could have trained with Rion in those five days she had spent being locked up! What a complete waste of time those five days were! r

Time had gone by quicker than ever, at least for Elle. And now it was time for Sebastian to return as he had promised her. r

The waiting time as she sits in their room and waited for him to appear was just purely torturous. She was having so many emotions running through her all at once. Excitement, restlessness, nervousness, and more. r

Looking up at the clock, Elle took a deep breath and then unconsciously held it in when her room's doorknob finally turned. r

Disappointment washed over Elle when whoever it was that was standing behind the door did not push the door open and only a knock came first instead. That alone told her it wasn't him. r

Her fingers clenched slightly before taking a deep breath and saying steadily, "Come in." r

It was Lorna. She gave Elle a nod as she entered, professionally balancing a tray of fruits on one hand and another filled with desserts on the other hand. After stepping in fully into the room, Lorna then used the ball of her feet to push the door closed behind her before putting the trays down before her. Smiling at Elle, Lorna indicated with her eyes that all the food was for her to eat. The lady had been giving her lots of fruits since she last got sick. But right now, Elle did not have the appetite to eat anything. More like... she had lost it after seeing that the person she was expecting turned out to be someone else. After serving the fruits and dessert, Lorna excused herself and left the room.r

It was exactly two days since he had left her room. So, she had thought that he would have arrived at this same hour since he had promised her two days. But it seemed that she was wrong again. Apparently, she had been too optimistic in trusting him to follow the exact two-day timing that they had agreed upon.r

After another hour, Elle who had not moved from her seat the entire time, now stood up to stretch her legs. They were getting numb, and she had enough of sitting and waiting. She walked over to her dressing room and took her clothes off before grabbing her gym outfit consisting of a pair of black jogging pants and a tight sando bra. She put on her shoes and tied her hair up high before finally stepping out of the room.r

She was not going to waste her precious time, sitting there and just dumbly waiting for him. She had come to accept after the hours of waiting, that he might arrive late again. As per his usual habit. Perhaps late afternoon or even later tonight. She should have thought of that possibility from the start, instead of waiting for him so early in the day like that. She hated how she was still stubbornly expecting for Sebastian to arrive on time after the many times she had experienced waiting for nothing. She scoffed at herself before shaking her head a little to get herself out of that slump.r

"Rion?" Elle called out for Rion the moment she shut the door closed behind her. "Time to continue our lesson." r

Rion, who was still on guard outside her door, straightened up and blinked. He looked confused for a moment. "But didn't you say –"r

"I changed my mind. Sebastian might come home late again so I better go train. No point wasting daylight." Her clipped tones stopped Rion from asking further.r

Without waiting for Rion's response, Elle walked on ahead, giving Rion no choice at all but to follow after her. r

After arriving at their usual sparring spot, Elle did not even give Rion any chance to say anything before launching an attack. She used all the advice and lessons from the other sessions she had had with Rion and incorporated them into her attacks. Attack from Elle followed by a defend from Rion. High swing kick, followed by a quick snap kick, both aimed for his vital points – side of neck, jaws, eyes, nose and temple. Rion sweat-dropped as he dodged her every oncoming hit, wondering what had pissed the princess off to the point of her being so ferocious in their session today. At the end of the session, Rion sincerely complimented the princess for being a quick study and improving so much even from just a few sessions. r

...r

Elle was shocked to see that it was already dark when she woke up. She had trained with Rion until she was too exhausted and ended up napping for hours.r

She looked at the clock and saw it was already dinner time. Lorna then came to serve her meal and after her dinner, Elle made herself busy, going about preparing for her beauty sleep and trying not to stress out waiting for the man she knew would never arrive whenever she waits. r

Soon, it was ten minutes before midnight. r

Standing by the window, Elle's fingers tightened against the window pane. r

A cold and slightly strong wind blew at her, causing her long, red hair to dance wildly behind her. The curtains sashayed as well. Was a storm coming? Elle thought it looked as though a thunderstorm was coming. r

Letting out a long and deep breath, she shut the window closed and then slowly moved towards the bed. r

She halted. A folded paper on the floor caught her attention. r



Brows creased, Elle bent and picked it up. She could not remember seeing this paper anywhere inside the room earlier on. Did the wind blow it in from somewhere what was not visible to her?r

Elle curiously checked the paper. It did not look like it was anything special. It was a very normal paper, so Elle thought it must not be something important. r

Looking around if there were more of the same, Elle found nothing. She then returned her attention to the paper and slowly, she began unfolding it. r

There was... something written on it. r

Her frown deepened and when she read the note, her eyes narrowing. r

[Twist the left candelabra down on the wall.]r

Lifting her eyes, Elle looked at the ancient candelabras that were on the bedroom wall. There were two on each side of the hearth. r

What was this? Sebastian?r

Elle lifted her gaze to the clock, and it indicated that it was already exactly midnight. And yet Sebastian was still not here. She wanted to scoff, but this piece of paper intrigued her. And then she suddenly thought that this might be Sebastian's message? How else would this paper get in here? No others had come over to leave this paper here. r

Reading the note again, Elle approached the hanging candelabra and slowly reached out, twisting it down as instructed in the paper.r

This bonus chapter is dedicated to @Babsia! Thank you so very much for the supergift!

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The Victorian mirror moved back and swung to the side the moment Elle twisted the candelabra, shocking her. It moved so impossibly quiet that Elle could not help but feel amazed at the mechanism that had gone into making it.

Her palace back home also had secret passages like this. So, Elle was not really surprised that this was a secret door, but she was shocked that it did not even make a single sound. Their secret passages often make sounds as they opened! Some passages were even so loud!

She twisted the candelabra even lower until the mirror was completely moved to the side and a square hole about a meter long on each side appeared. Elle could not help but be intrigued by what was behind this secret entrance. Searching for secret passages in her palace back then was actually her hobby ever since she was young.

She was fascinated with these secret chasms as they tend to lead her to some unknown, quiet and interesting places.

Seeing one again right now, made Elle felt as though her inner child was squealing excitedly within her, eager for an adventure. She was eager to find out where could this secret passage lead her to and what would she see along the way. She had been so bored out of her mind that this unexpected find was a pleasant surprise for her.

She had not tried to look for any passages in this castle since she had arrived. It was not that she had no interest in doing so. But it was simply because she felt as though she was not allowed to do so. Since Sebastian or the butlers revealed these to her, then that means she was not allowed to know about it.

But now, here she was standing before an opened passageway, just waiting for her to explore. There was no way she could deny this temptation placed right before her! She took another look at the note again, flipping it to see if there were more written messages that she had perhaps missed. Unfortunately, there was nothing other than that one lonely line. This only meant that the one wrote this wanted her to go inside... wait...

Elle whipped her head towards the clock and then towards the still tightly closed main door to her room. Could it be that Sebastian was waiting for her on the other side of this passage? But why would he even do such a thing when he could just barge back into this room of theirs?

Her brows creased harder. It was a little hard for her to believe that Sebastian would be fond of something even remotely fun like this. But then again, she truly did not really know if he might be the type to secretly be fond of this kind of thing. So far, he had never revealed anything personal about himself to her, nor even talk about anything related to his past. The two of them... still barely knew anything about each other. And it was more glaringly obvious especially on her, to him.

Staring inside the dark hole again, Elle went to grab a small flashlight from her bag. She had not seen any emergency flashlight in this room, so she had bought one some days ago.

She thought that perhaps, Sebastian wanted her somewhere else to reveal the secret he was going to talk about. Perhaps, he wanted her to see something in there and that was why there was this... note and this passage. Perhaps, he was late because of this?

Elle clenched on her flashlight tightly, turned it on and then, after taking a deep breath, she entered the dark passage.

As soon as she was inside, the door automatically slid shut quietly behind her. Again, she only stared at it as it closed. She knew many passages that closes on their own

from the outside like this one. However, the silent way it slowly slid back and seamlessly disappear gave Elle a slight shiver.

Shaking her head to dispel that weird feeling that had come over her, she then pointed her flashlight straight ahead. The path was not as narrow as she had thought it would be. However, this passage could only accommodate one person moving in it at a time.

Wasting no time, Elle moved forward. The walls were not decorated or carved with anything, and it seemed that no one had entered this passageway for many years. She avoided the spider webs as she passed through. The ones that were blocking her way, she used her flashlight to push them out of her way.

Soon, she reached a stairway. Pointing her flashlight down, she saw that the stairs went down in a spiral. Again, a narrow stair.

She tested the stairs first. She held on to the railing and shook it, testing to see if it was as flimsy as it looked. Surprisingly, it was made of steel, and it seemed to be pretty sturdy. She extended her feet and kicked the first step, and she found that the steps were made of steel as well. Deciding that it was safe, Elle proceeded. She descended slowly.

A long while later, Elle pointed her flashlight down again. Somehow, it was weird how long this stairway was. It seemed to be spiraling to no end. She was appalled to see that her flashlight's ray could not reach the ground.

Hesitation hit her, but after a short while of contemplation, she continued descending.

Thankfully, she soon reached the end of the stairs. What came next was a long straight path. And then another stair!

Elle had thought of going back. Judging from the length of distance she had already travelled, she must have gone way too deep already. But she clenched her fists tight and continued. She did not want to go back to the room sulking and angry because Sebastian did not keep his word. Again!

And she also had a feeling that she was already close to the end. The change in the air's freshness gave her that idea. So, she pushed on ahead. More determined to see this through till the end.

Walking faster, Elle halted after a gust of strong cold wind welcomed her. She blocked her face with her arms from being directly blown at, and then slowly put them down as the wind seemed to have calmed down. It seems that she was right! The passage did not bring her to anywhere in the castle itself but outside, somewhere below the castle itself!

Elle moved slowly, and she could already see the dark sky and the moon peeking through the clouds. The space became bigger until it looked like a small cave that had been carved into a stony hill.

She stood there, quiet and still, only her arm that was holding the flashlight moving. She pointed her flashlight everywhere to look for Sebastian.

Her flashlight then caught a man's silhouette to her far right and she focused her flashlight towards it.

Something suddenly shattered and the light from her flashlight was gone before Elle could see the face of the person.

Her heart drummed in panic as she flicked the button on her flashlight on and off, trying in vain to turn the light on again. All the while, she took a few steps back. To her chagrin, her flashlight was not working anymore! Could it be that it was broken? Was it the shattering sound that she had just heard?! Oh lord!! How in the world did it get broken like that? Her flashlight was small, and it would require extremely good marksmanship to aim and break both the protective glass and bulb. Who could it be? Was that even possible?

She jerked her head forward, now keeping herself alert as she continued clicking the button of the flashlight, hoping that it would turn on.

The silhouette was still there. Even without the light from her flashlight, she could still see the dim outline of the person. He was sitting on top of a stone. She could not see his face, but she just knew instantly that the person was not Sebastian.

With her heart drumming up a quick beat, Elle tried to calm down her panic. She told herself that there was no use panicking. She needed to calm down and be alert. This was a good time to utilize all the training she had been doing with Rion the past few days. Running back to the passage was not a good choice for her right now. She was not confident that she could outrun whoever this man was in the dark without her flashlight. Though she could somewhat make things out in the dark, it would not be wise to run when her vision was nearly zero.

The peeking moon came out a while ago, giving a slight light to the darkness. It cascaded onto the silhouette and Elle saw a familiar pair of gleaming grey eyes.

"Hello there, Sunshine..." came a smooth, a little deep, and pleasing voice.

"E-Elijah?!" Elle exclaimed, eyes circling wide. What on earth was he doing down here?

His response was a soft chuckle. It did not sound sinister or anything bad, but Elle's heart somehow shivered anyway. She could not believe that the silhouette was indeed Elijah! "I'm flattered you managed to recognize me so quickly, Princess Izabelle."

Elle swallowed nervously and fought for calm. She did not know how to react to this. Why? Why was it him again? What did he want with her?

"W-what are you doing here? What... do you want from me?" she asked, trying her best not to show him how terrified she was. It was just so unsettling... everything about him was just so unsettling. And the realization that he had toyed with her just by using a piece of paper to lure her out like this... it made Elle want to scream at herself for being so rash at her decision. She had not thought that she was so silly. For being so easy a prey to be lured out like this. She shouldn't have gone ahead by herself. She should have at least called Rion to accompany her!

"Don't be scared, Sunshine. Don't worry. I won't hurt you I promise." He sounded serious.

"My name is Izabelle, Prince Elijah. I'd appreciate if you use it." She retorted, fighting for total composure and alertness.

"I like giving nicknames to everyone I like. And Sunshine really suits you..." he tilted his head as he looked at her, squinting his eyes a little. "Because you seemed to glow even in the darkness."

"P-please get to the point, Prince Elijah. What do you want from me? And how did you... how did you manage to put that paper in my room? Did you have a mole in the castle?" Elle bombarded him with questions. There was no way Elijah could have placed that note in her room himself. The only logical way she could think of was that someone among the servants and or guards were under him!

She blinked once and he was gone, causing her to gasp in shock. She looked around, her heartbeat racing so damned wildly. What... what was... that...? G-ghost? Did she just see a ghost?! It... he... disappeared...

Gooseflesh crawled violently across her skin. The fear seeped through her first, paralyzing her for a moment.

The next thing she knew, a hand was wrapped around her neck, holding her securely in place. She stopped breathing for a couple of seconds.

"Breathe, Sunshine..." he whispered out a reminder softly. "I don't want you passing out because of fear. Easy..." he coaxed. "I told you, I'm not going to hurt you. I've already promised that."

"T-then let me go... this instant." She replied, panting heavily. "You... you are contradicting your words with your actions, Prince Elijah. You are scaring me to death right now."

"I will, don't worry. Just give me a few moments. I just need to do something to you..." his words drifted into her ears. He was speaking so closely to her that she could feel his breath blowing over her left ear.

Elle used her elbow and jabbed it back into his abdomen, now putting the lessons that she learnt from Rion. But to her shock, he seemed to have seen it coming, which was supposed to be impossible. He grabbed her hands, locking them behind her. He was... so strong... as if he was not someone made of flesh and bones but metal and rocks. However, he did not lock her hands hard enough to hurt her. He was still confusingly careful not to hurt her.

"Stay still, Princess Izabelle. If you don't, I might be forced to do something bad to you and ended up hurting you." He threatened in a soft voice that had Elle instantly going still. She could not help but feel scared. "What I'm going to do to you is a little... hmm. But don't worry, I will not do anything more than that. You have my word." And his fingers gathered her hair to the side, exposing her neck.

## Chapter 100

This bonus chapter is dedicated to @Hollygolightly and @MonsterUnderTheBed! Thank you so very much for the supergifts!!!

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Elle stood there in utter shock for a moment. But she soon struggled and tried to get away but Elijah's grip on her seemed impossible to escape from. It was as though his hold was comparable to an iron cuff around her wrist.

Chills ran through her being as she felt him move her hair off her neck. She needed to get away. Immediately!! But her fear was so paralyzing, and he was too strong.

"Se... Sebastian's going to... to go after you... if you... if you do something... to me..." Elle stammered, gritting her teeth.

"I'm sure he will..." was his response.

"P-please... let me go, Prince Elijah." She finally begged, realizing that she could not escape from his hold no matter how she tried. It seems that she was right all along, no matter how much she trained, she still could not do anything in reality. She was still so powerless against these very strong men. It was so unfair... that these men were just too strong.

"I have told you, haven't I? I will let you go. After this..." came his dark whisper and then his hand was on her jaw again, tilting her face up.

The next thing she knew, his mouth was latched onto her throat, sucking hard.

Elle gasped out loud at the unexpected indecent assault on her and she struggled violently from his hold, not caring how her arm twisted in pain at her desperate movements.

He loosened his grip on her and the moment he pulled away a strong punch hit his jaw. And then a kick followed, hitting him right in his chest, causing him to tumble on the ground in a heap.

"Wow!" he glanced at the fiery woman standing, panting before him. "I didn't know that you're –"

Another vicious kick landed on Elijah's face and then another. Elle came at him with rage and Elijah did not bother to fight back, defended himself or even dodged each fierce attack. He had just let her hit him until Elle was heaving and out of breath. There were two bright red spots high on her cheeks as her eyes glared at him with a deadly quality.

"Why... why did you that?!" she shouted at him, looking down at the man on the ground, still clenching her fists. Her eyes felt as though they were burning hot. Her entire body was still shaking from the explosion of anger.

Elijah propped himself up and sat. He wiped something off his face which Elle knew should be his own blood. She still could not quite see his face clearly save from the gleaming grey eyes. It was not the full moon, and the moonlight was not enough for her to see his face.

"Hmm..." he looked up for a while and cracked his neck, causing Elle to become alert again, ready to kick his face once again if he dared to make another move on her. He should not be able to still look so relaxed anymore after all the beatings she had given him! She was certain her rage had unleashed her full strength a while ago. He should not be able to even sit up anymore after the vital points she had attacked! She had not been holding back at all and was even hitting with intention to hurt.

"I'm sorry for that unforgivable action, Princess Izabelle. Ah, I'm not asking for any forgiveness though." There was a peculiar smile in his tone.

,m "You didn't answer my question." Elle clenched her fists even tighter as she growled at him. "Why did you do that?!" she could still feel her skin crawl at the touch of his lips on her skin.

He then turned his face to her and his eyes glimmered. It was the kind of glimmer that would be enough to paralyze anyone. That moment, Elle felt as though danger was right at her doorstep. "I..." he paused and stood.

Elle could not move. Something seemed to happen to her when he looked at her with those unsettling, indescribable gaze. She could not even take a step back. It was as if

she was suddenly stuck in a dark spell, restraining her from any movements no matter how much she fought back.

He stopped a step before her. His gaze seemed to fall to her neck again. "Alright, I'll tell you, Princess Izabelle..." he bent closer and whispered, "What I want is for Sebastian to go... insane. I want him to... lose his mind... completely once again..." his soft voice had been wrapped with deep and undiluted hatred and malice as he said those last lines of his. She did not understand what he was saying but the emotions in his voice was enough to drive deep and bone-cold fear into her heart.

Pulling away, he stared deep into her fear-struck eyes. He could feel how her entire frame was frozen in fear.

"Good night, Sunshine. I'll be seeing you around soon." He uttered in a dark melodious voice before he walked past her. The light brush of weird fragrance that she realized only belonged to Elijah seemed to be the thing that snapped her out of her frozen stupor. She blinked a couple of times before realizing that she could now move.

Forcing herself, Elle turned around robotically but found that he was already gone. Her knees weakened and turned jelly-like before she fell to the ground. Panting hard at the ordeal she had just experienced.

She did not know how long she had spent just sitting there and panting. But soon, she finally forced herself to stand. She walked towards the direction that Elijah had disappeared to and she stumbled back to see that it was a steep cliff.

She took another deep, shaky breath, and she was about to turn around when someone grabbed her from behind and whipped her around. Just by the touch of those hands was enough for Elle to know who it was.

"What the hell are you doing here—" Sebastian broke off as his eyes fell to her neck.

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A/N: Happy 100th chapter hellbounders!!! Thank you for all your support and I am hoping for your continues support as we accompany Elle and Sebby in their journey.

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P.s. I would also want to ask you guys to drop a review. For those who already dropped a review before, a new review for HH's first hundred chapters is very much appreciated. Thank you so much. <3