

Chapter 52

Here's another update my lovely readers. Hope you enjoy and share your honest thoughts.

Have a wonderful day ahead and God bless you guys

"Good evening," I mumbled as I walked into the dining hall. They were just about to have dinner. Everyone except Phoenix. He said he would leave me alone with my family.

Heads instantly turned in my direction. Blushing due to all the attention, I slowly padded towards an empty chair next to India. She looked at me and began to fill up my plate while Beth grimed at me proudly. My parents gave me their sweet smiles. Everyone looked at me approvingly. All except Alex. He on the other hand, signaled that he was going to have a word with me after dinner.

I gulped.

"I'm okay now, I promise," I said for what felt like the tenth time. Alex just shook his head. We were both currently in his study.

"You just blocked everyone out Evie. What was I supposed to think? Why do you have to do that?" he asked with a hint of disappointment. I didn't blame him. We used to tell each other everything. We're twins.

"I was a mess and I didn't want to pull others into it." I admitted while taking a seat on the small couch. "Sharing your problems is not pulling others into it. Going through hard times doesn't exactly mean that you're a mess. Eve, if you're feeling down, don't shut others out. We're all here for you. Don't you remember what happened when you did this back in the castle?"

"Alex don't."

"Your health started to deteriorate. I know I was a jerk back then but not anymore and you don't even have to tell me, you can share with the others."

".....I know. It just didn't feel like the best option. It's not always that easy but I'll try next time. I won't shut you out again Alex." He stopped forward and gave me a warm hug. I closed my eyes and hugged my brother back. "You better not Eve. I am happy that you're feeling alright because Tomya and Kyle would not be pleased to learn otherwise." I sighed and hugged him tighter.

"I am pleased that he's here, you know," I didn't need to figure out who he was talking about.

"He seems to really know you and he understands what you need."

"He does...."

"You like him.....don't you?" We broke apart and I stared into my brother's calculative eyes. Why did his question frighten me?

"Yes, I do Alex." I said in a so whisper, looking downwards. I didn't fully understand my feelings yet but I told my brother the truth. I like Prince Phoenix. Alex then slowly led me chin up. "What are you afraid of? You look pale."

Taking his earlier advice, I decided to open up. "I like him. I really do. I'm just afraid to.....completely.....fall." I bit my lower lip.

"You're afraid of falling in love with him."

"Yes, I'm more afraid of how fast it might happen."

Or maybe it's already being transpired between us," I hesitantly looked at Alex. "You're right I am terrified of falling for him and you know what? I'm going to fall really deep if I do. That scares me." I swallowed hard and looked away.

"Well, Eve it shouldn't," he took a seat next to me and let out a heavy breath.

"I experienced the same thing. When I realized how I felt about Beth. Gosh, I remember being shit scared and nervous about it was all my feelings. The only thing I was brave enough to do was write her cheesy letters." At this we both laughed.

"I thought they were sweet," I smiled remembering his adorable attempt.

"It was before I realized it wasn't an act of revealing my inner feelings for her. I just wrote because it was easier than confrontation. It was much easier than talking to her face to face. I was actually hiding behind my pen and paper." He scooted and rested his hands at the back of his head.

"This happened until Kyle knocked some senses into me. He was the one who forced me to go back to Red Kingdom and to meet Beth myself. A er I saw her, I was more grateful for what Kyle did. For the push he gave me. This was because of the state I saw her in. She looked nothing like the bright, energetic girl he'd be hiding. At that moment I realized that if I had waited any longer, I might have lost the woman I love forever."

"That must have terrified you to the core."

"It did Eve."

"So, what do you want me to do?" I asked so shy, fidgeting with my fingers.

"I don't want you to do anything. I just don't want you to be afraid of your feelings. Be more sure of yourself so that way, you'll know what you want. I'm glad that you're feeling better about the family thing but I'm talking about you and him now. Don't hide away from what your heart wants that's all I'm saying." I sucked in a deep breath at what he said. My heartbeat spiked up on its own accord.

"I know I hated him a lot in the beginning Eve and maybe some of that dislike still remains. I don't know but it's only natural when a guy like him is going a er my sister. The thing is, I can see how much he cares and more importantly I can see how hard he's trying to win your heart. To add up, he's constantly dealing with father's obvious detest and hostility towards him but he never backs down."

"I've been observing that as well, Alex," I murmured shyly. Of course I was deeply aware of everything the Dark Prince was doing. I chose to forgive him a long time ago and even a er that he was willing to go to great lengths in order to earn my affections for him. Both my parents weren't exactly easy to please. Especially my dearest papa. He was purposefully hard on Phoenix.

I was against it at first but my father stated that he was going to be like that anyway and that I will not be able to change his mind. Mama advised that it was best that I let him be. She also said that my father loves me very much and he was doing it for my own good.

Phoenix on the other hand, was willing to bear with it. Him being the Dark Prince could easily give my father a piece of his mind like always.

Yet for some reason he would just keep quiet about many things. His attitude towards my father changed from the time he was allowed his extended stay in the castle.

There was also a remarkable improvement in his personalty towards me. Being with him now, I simply can't fathom the deadaly Dark Prince he was, close to a year ago.

Everything is different now, our relationship has somehow evolved into something else. Something unexplainably magnificent. The Dark Prince now, was more humane and he was no longer the cursed, out of control, animalistic hybrid that instilled fear in everyone for centuries.

He was always gentle with me. His touch, his voice. Yes he was easily angered but with me, he would try not to lash out. He would always ask my opinion on many topics. He even seemed to enjoy learning my thoughts on things. He never forced me to do anything I didn't want to and he took care of me. I felt cherished whenever I was with him. I felt safe and needed. I enjoyed those feelings.

"This doesn't sound like me at all but he somehow managed to earn my approval Evie." I gaped at my twin brother with shock written all over my face.

"Wha.....really?" He chuckled while ruffling my hair.

"Yeah, I guess." I looked at my las feeling loss for words. I am glad for how Alex felt but at the same time, I was still nervous.

"Whenever I'm with him, there's a small part of me that's always holding back Alex. Maybe I'm afraid of completely giving myself to him because then he'd have more power over me. The more you give yourself to a person, the more power that person will have over you, right?"

Once I completely, wholeheartedly give myself, I have no doubt that I would do anything for him. What if something bad happens along the way? What if it doesn't go the way I expect it to go Alex? What if we get hurt?" My breathing became heavy and ragged. He took my hand in his and looked at me knowingly.

"Nothing will go the way you expect it to. There is always, I mean always going to be ups and downs in a relationship. Will you get hurt at times? Absolutely, but it will not be just you. He will go through it as well."

On a more important note, you don't have to assume that when you give yourself to a person that they automatically have power over you. It's not like that. If you really love someone, both of you will have to give yourselves completely to each other. There will be obstacles. Tons of them. Whenever you face them, always remember this. However difficult it may seem, at the end of the day love conquers everything. That's the beauty of true love. It is everlasting. If you truly love him, everything else will find its way." I sucked in a deep breath, processing every word that came out of my brother's mouth.

"Hey look at me," he squeezed my hand. "Take your time. We have forever Evie."

"Yes, we do." Forever? I was already falling for him. The desire for him grew everyday and I don't know how long I could contain this feeling anymore. It was begging to come out.

I think I to.....

Oh God

Shaking my thoughts away, I thanked Alex for everything again and stood up to leave his study.

"Good night Evie, sleep well okay."

"You too but I wanted to see India and Beth first."

"Where we le them."

With that I le the room and went straight to the dining hall.

"Look who I decided to grace us with her presence." I stared at India while she announced my arrival. "How are you now?" She observed me closely.

"I'm okay now India. I also apolo."

"No, you don't have to explain yourself. Come sit with us," Beth said, pouring me some hot tea. "We can talk about something else." She added a er a moment.

"Really?"

"Look, if you're fine now, we don't have to dwell on those matters anymore. So I managed to train Rex on how to jump over oers."

"That.....that is cool," I said impressed. "Thanks for the tea Beth."

"No problem. Let me know if you want some more and India, I wanna see that horse jump."

"Only five feet for now, since he just started but soon he'll jump way higher. Anyway, I'm not training him tomorrow, so you guys can catch him in action the day after."

"Don't push the poor fellow too much." Beth said worriedly.

"I won't," India chuckled and stared at me. "So, how are things?"

"Before that, I want to know how married life is treating you Princess Bethany." Interrupted India and turned towards Beth. She instantly looked dreamily at an empty space. Typical Bethany.

"So romantic." She sighed in content.

"Mm hmm," India rolled her eyes. "She wouldn't stop talking about your brother, Aeval and let me tell you, some things I did not need to hear."

"What? I can't help it okay? I may be a princess now but I swear he makes me feel like a queen you guys. Especially in bed."

"We don't need to hear that! Do you know how many times you've talked about your sex life to me?" India scolded her. Beth simply shrugged and continued to sigh dreamily.

"I love him so much. To say we're husband and wife, I feel so complete and so full of love and joy that I wanna spread around," she gushed, hugging herself while she smiled widely like a child at a candy store. I couldn't help but giggle at a starstruck Beth while India flicked her forehead.

"Erghh, such a mood spoiler," she whined. I shook my head at my two friends. Well, one friend and one sister-in-law to be exact.

"Beth when do you guys plan on going for a honeymoon?" She shrugged at me.

"I'm not sure about that Aeval. I think he's planning something but I don't know. Honestly though, I haven't given much thought to it. I am happy just to be with him." Came her giddy response again.

"She is so whipped and Aeval please. No more questions about her love life. I am basically sick of it. The more you ask the more our new princess will keep talking." I laughed and raised both my hands up in surrender.

"Okay, I'll stop."

"Now, for this upcoming conversation, we can't be here."

"What do you mean?"

"We're in the dining hall. It's too open. We need someplace more private. Come on let's go to your chambers." India pulled me along with her.

Upon reaching our destination, we plopped down on my bed.

"Come on Aeval. Status report. On you and your prince." India demanded while Beth looked at me expectantly. I rolled my eyes at both of them not being able to wipe the smile on my face.

It was going to be a long night.

Prince Phoenix's POV

"Do you like this one?"

"Yes."

"How about this?"

"Yes," I sighed and looked at her disappointingly.

"You've been giving me that same answer for the past ten items or so." She sobered up and blinked at me. She then looked around as if just realizing that we were standing in a gi shop.

"You look like a zombie Little Flower. That's a lot coming from a vampire," I stepped closer to her.

"I'm sorry, I did? I sleep well. We had a.....um.....girls night." I raised a brow. Girls night?

"What's that?"

"I just spent the night with India and Beth and we talked and talked. Meaning we didn't get much sleep," she looked up and smiled sheepishly at me.

"If you're so tired then why did you agree to go out today?" I asked curiously. I wanted to spend the day with her and gave my Little Flower the option of picking a place. She suggested that we go to a neighboring town to explore a little. This particular town called Orion Hill, was located at the eastern border of the kingdom. It was lively and the people busied themselves with various activities. Their marketplace stretched far along the town's main road. Basically, visitors will not get bored.

"I don't know! I thought I'd be active if I went out," She looked at her toes.

"You're tired," I stated blankly.

"I know I know. Show me that item again, I'll concentrate more," she rubbed her eyes.

"Seriously, we could have gone out another day."

"I didn't want to say no. I thought maybe you prepared a lot for the day and to just cancel everything, it would be disappointing. I didn't want to be disappointing." She mumbled. My heart swelled up at the realization that she didn't want to upset me. Her reaction was the childlike, innocent and it came so naturally to her. I only wish that we weren't standing out in public.

"You cannot just get all sweet and adorable here Little Flower." Lightly tracing her jawline, I smirked down at her already flushed face. She swallowed hard and stepped back.

"I'm awake now. Let's go," chuckling to myself I followed her out the gi shop.

"You like that dress?"

"It's beautiful. I want to go inside. Only for a short while, please." She asked as if I was going to pull her away somewhere else.

"Why are you asking me like that? I'm not going to say no and we can go wherever you wish to go."

"Oh, well. Alex would usually whine and basically throw a tantrum whenever I went into any shop that sold clothes," she rubbed her chin and tilted her head.

"Guys don't really like shopping?"

"Why aren't you complaining?"

"Because I'm four hundred and twenty seven years old and I've been through a lot of shit. Some worse than shopping." I winked down at her.

"It's actually very simple. Which do you like?" I looked at my Little Flower squinting her eyes at the dresses. One of them was a sleeveless, short, baby blue dress and the other was sleeveless, knee length yellow dress which complimented her skin more.

"I can't decide. I wish the girl's were here. They would know," she pouted at the two different dresses. I narrowed my eyes at what she said. What the hell!

Slowly stepping closer to her, I took the yellow dress and placed the fabric against her bare arm.

"The yellow suits your skin. You're already born with fierca, flaming loose curls, my dear Flower. The yellow dress only intensifies your radiance. Much like the Sun. The blue is also delightful in it's own way. I like how it emphasizes your so, feminine nature and the way it brings out your mesmerizing eyes. So, in conclusion, take both. Come on." I grabbed the dresses and walked the other way so I could pay for them. I knew she was staring at me dumbstruck. She wasn't expecting me to be paying so much attention while she eyed the clothes. I'm glad I surprised her with my comments. This way, she'll learn that she could always ask for my opinion regarding her outfits.

"T.....thank you. For being this ask for me and for your kind words back in the shop."

"I'll buy you anything you want, remember that and about what I said, those were facts."

"Well, thanks." She let her fiery waves cover her face but I could still see her rosy cheeks.

"Anyway, we didn't really do anything for your eighteenth birthday last month."

"What? We were all busy with the wedding and even then you bought me a small cake."

"A big mu in," I corrected her flatly.

"Well, I enjoyed it because the mu in had a generous amount of chocolate chips in it," she said feeling pleased with her simple birthday gi. "We literally had no time due to all the preparations. They didn't let any of us rest throughout the wedding fever so none of us gave much thought about the twins' birthday."

My lips tugged at the precious memory of that day. My little princess was beyond happy to see that lame mu in. She even asked me to sing the bloody song.

I refused of course.

She then lit up the single candle and made a wish before stubbing her face with the mu in.

"You're smiling, why?"

"I guess I smile whenever I think of you?"

"Am I that funny?"

"Yes, you are. I remembered your birthday." She stilled and looked away from me.

"Don't think about that! I was hungry!" she said adamantly.

"Yes, you were famished. So famished that you forgot to remove the candle from the mu in," I chuckled.

"At least I spat it out before swallowed it," she argued with her chin held high. "Why are you still grinning?"

"I may have recalled a few more comical behaviors of yours," I gave her a lopsided grin. She looked up at me broadly.

"Like.....like what?" she squeaked out not wanting to hear what I had to say.

"Firstly, it always amused me to see you talk to the white roses back in my chambers. It was even more amusing that you named the single roses Flower. Leaving all that, there is another prominent memory that just refuses to fade away. Your were still very new and on that particular day, I think you got bored when you didn't see me for breakfast. You did an unusual thing to pass time. Too bad I was cut short when Odelle came to collect you," I smirked at her now red face. She was blushing so hard that she refused to make eye contact with me and that made me laugh.

I couldn't help it so I laughed freely and it felt amazing. When I turned my attention to her again, she wasn't beside me. My Little Flower had strode ahead of me and she le an extremely long gap between us.

"Wait, stop!" I chuckled and rushed to her side. She looked away again and walked faster. "Alright, I'm sorry," I grinned down at her. "Wow, your face is still red Little Flower."

"Go away," she lightly pushed me and continued walking. Refusing to budge, I gently pulled her back and cupped her face but she stubbornly brought her hands up to cover her rosy cheeks.

"If you keep hiding your face, then I will kiss you in front of all these innocent people. Come on, open up."

"No! Go away," she wanted to turn away while covering her face. A few heads turned in our direction as she raised her voice. Hopefully they don't recognize her as the princess. She was dressed in jeans and a simple white blouse anyway. Plus, she was wearing a cap too.

"Don't shout. We don't want to attract attention now do we? You still have your shopping bag?"

"Y.....yeah, why?" she mumbled. I gave no reply as I scooped her up in my arms. She squealed in surprise and slapped my chest.

"Put me.....oh I can't believe you! Put me down Phoenix! Now you're begging for attention!"

"I can be stubborn too, little tomato!" I chuckled at her shyness. Her eyes widened at my new nickname and her blush spread to the sides of her neck and ears.

"Let go! Now!"

"Nope," she hit her head on my shoulder as a sign of defeat. "I like holding you like this," I murmured.

"Okay, can you put me down now?" she muttered against the crook of my neck.

"I simply don't wish to." I stared at her adoringly.

"I don't like you very much right now."

"Why is that my Little Flower? Because I witnessed your weird work out routines? I thought it was nice, honestly." I received two more slaps your my chest. "Would you stop that? You're hurting your palm." I lightly scolded.

"So? It doesn't hurt and you were watching the whole time!" another smack.

"I was in my chambers and you Little Flower was supposed to leave the tray on the table and walk out. Did you do that? No, I enjoyed watching her dumbfounded expression."

"You're not very nice," she said disappointed.

"I am sorry but it was hard not to look and you made yourself even more desirable to me. Everything that you do, it amazes me one way or the other. I blame you for constantly catching my attention." I smirked at her.

"I can't believe you."

"I love you too," I smiled teasingly as I lightly drew the words out.

My outward portrayal was quite the opposite of what was going on inside. My sleeping heart began to pound in my chest as my mind went blank for a few seconds. I meant what I said but she didn't need to know that. Maybe she still thought that it was too soon.

"What did you say?" She asked a bit alarmed. To hell with the rational thoughts!

"I said I love you, Little Flower. I always have and you know that. I don't worry. You don't have to say it back. At least now.....now, I didn't mean to make you feel uncomfor."

"I like you a lot Phoenix, I really do. I want you to know that," she said so shy. Her voice sounded angelic as she let the words out, I tightened my hold on her and kissed her forehead.

"Well, I'm pleased to hear it from you."

Pleased? I was beyond pleased. I was touching the clouds.

"What I did was embarrassing," she mumbled and covered her face again. I smiled and then kissed her cheek. "No it wasn't! Don't be absurd. Now, show me your palm."

She turned her face hand over, exposing her red palm. I gaped at her.

"Look what you did." She smiled sheepishly and then blamed me for upsetting her.

I gently let her down on her feet and took her palm. Bringing them up to my lips, I kissed her open palm a few times.

"Is that supposed to ease the pain, mama?"

"It should and never call me that." I said cily. She simply grinned up at me.

"Ice cream?"

"Sure."

"Flavour?"

"Strawberry?"

"Alright then."

"Wait you don't have to eat the same flavor because of me. Which is your favorite?"

"You should have asked me that sooner," I said teasingly.

"Alright, what is it?"

"Strawberry."

"No."

"Yes."

"Really?!"

"I don't look like a creature who enjoys strawberry ice-cream." I raised a brow at the bewildered look on her face. "I can certainly understand that reaction. No one would have guessed that I enjoyed strawberry goodness in the form of ice-cream."

Her reaction was priceless. "Whoa, the Dark Prince," she brought up one hand and "moved strawberry ice-cream," she brought up her other hand and "and moved both her palms as if balancing the two factors."

"Say that out loud again and I'll plaster your mouth," she giggled at my failed attempt to threaten her. I couldn't help but smile at her joy filled face. The crinkles at the corners of her eyes, her pink cheeks and her melodious laughter was all too much.

I carried her by the waist and spun her around. She squealed and continued to laugh. I then set her on her feet and cupped her beautiful face. "Was that so funny?" she only nodded with a wide smile.

"Come on, I'm hungry." She cheerfully said.

A week later,

Princess Aeval Florentine's POV

"I understand India, I really do."

"I know you do but this is so heartbreaking."

"Where will you go?"

"Back to my remaining family members. They're still in Red Kingdom. You've always known this right guys?"

"Yeah," me and Beth solemnly nodded.

"Hey at least you'll be closer to Kyle!" I said in an attempt to lighten up the mood.

"Yeah as much as he drives me nuts, I'll at least have a close friend there and if things turn out for the better when the Dark Prince sits on the throne, I can get myself a better job."

"Exactly!" Beth agreed. "This time I didn't break down. This time I was excited for India. She was going back to her family as a free woman and that was amazing. Her family members were going to be so happy."

"Aeval?" Beth suddenly became serious.

"Yes?"

"You and Prince Phoenix are getting much closer to each other. I have no doubt that the love you have for each other is only going to grow. My question is, what happens when he becomes king of the mighty Red Kingdom? What happens if your parents decide to make you queen of Golden Haven? What are the two of you going to do?" I stared at her, loss for words. Feeling heavy all of a sudden I plopped down on my bed.

"I've been wanting to ask this as well," India added.

Dun Dun Dnnnnnnnn. That's all for now. Till next time babes!