

# SPELLBOUND

## *Chapter 11:RIP*

Evie felt her throat dry up. But before she could even form any verbal or physical response, her stomach suddenly growled. Her face turned red, and she immediately looked down in embarrassment while Gavriel blinked and pressed his lips together as his eyes travelled down her stomach.

After a moment of silence, Evie's stomach growled again. Evie couldn't see his expression, but she finally felt him pull away and heard him calling for the maids.

Gavriel grabbed a robe and was putting it on when the door opened. When Evie raised her head towards the door, surprise colored her face at the sight of two women dressed in black and white maid outfits.

"H-humans?" she muttered as she looked at Gavriel with wide eyes.

"Don't tell me you can't recognize your fellow human?" Gavriel looked at her with a quizzical look. The displeasure on his face was gone.

"O-of course I can. It's just that... I just..." Evie was so shocked. She didn't know what to say. Everything... the opposites of her expectations kept on happening. She could tell that the two ladies were humans in one glance but Evie couldn't help but doubt because the girls were... they were fine, very healthy and even looking bright and cheerful. This was an absolute shock. She was expecting to be served by humans alone because that was included on the deal but she thought her servants would probably look awful because they were supposed to be treated as slaves who were forced to provide blood and sexual pleasures for the vampires. So why? How come? How could they look so fine and healthy as if they were living their lives happily in this land?

"Good day my lady," said one of the girls. They were both red-haired, but one had long braided hair while the other one had a shorter hair neatly tied-up into a ponytail. "My name is Fray." Introduced the long haired one and "My name is Gina," introduced the short-haired one. "We are so pleased to finally meet you and serve you my lady." They bowed at her.

Evie momentarily struggled to find her voice. "Nice to meet you too, Gina, Fray." She managed to say. Her mind was still whirling with questions, but even though this was totally unexpected, she was still feeling very glad and relieved. She didn't know how would react if these two girls would appear in front of her in the conditions she had been imagining and expecting.

"Help my wife get ready and immediately bring her to the dining hall." Gavriel's pleasant voice echoed and the maids immediately bowed at him. Evie noticed the maids never looked directly into the vampire prince's face.

"Yes, Your Highness." They said, simultaneously before they approached Evie and led her towards a door that appeared to be the bathroom.

Evie glanced back and when her eyes met Gavriel's, she abruptly looked away. She didn't like her body's reactions towards him. She was confused on how his gaze seemed to be affecting her in some strange but surprisingly not unwelcomed way.

And she was still stunned at his words right before her stomach growled. The look in his eyes as he said those words stirred something inside her and an emotion close to alarm had hit her.

Since even her husband couldn't touch her without her permission, Evie had never bothered thinking about herself as a wife or her life as a married woman. She never thought about any of that. Because she knew this wasn't a normal marriage. In fact, this was the first time in history where a vampire and a human were ever joined in marriage. Everyone, even her parents and herself included, had also expected that her soon to be husband wouldn't even want to be with her anyway since he already knew about the deal that he could not touch her as he wished. She had also expected that he would ignore her, send her to a separate or a secluded palace while he continued enjoying his life as usual, as if he wasn't married at all. So why? Why did he say those words? Why did he want to stay with her and even sleep in the same bed with her?

"My lady, are you okay?" Fray asked and when Evie saw the worried look on the maid's face, she immediately composed herself.

"I... I'm fine. I think I am just hungry," she smiled, and the maids relaxed. "Where did you both come from? Were you from the Eastern empire?" Evie then asked as the maids hovered around her.

"No, my lady. Me and Fray were both born here."

"R-really?" Evie was surprised. She was shocked but just barely managed to keep her composure and tried not to be so obvious.

"Yes. My grandmother was from the Western Empire," said Fray. "And my father is from the Eastern," continued Gina. "So, we have never ever set foot in any human lands yet, my lady. That's why we were so excited to meet you when His Highness told us about you."

Evie wanted to ask more about Fray's grandmother and Gina's father, but she refrained. Because she remembered her father and the emperors' stern words that she must not fully trust the human servants that would be assigned to her. Evie thought that made

sense, considering that these maids were born in this land. Their loyalty might be completely for the vampires or worse, they might be under the vampires' spell. "He told you about me? When?"

"Just a couple of days ago, My lady."

"Were you both servants of the prince for a long time?"

"Yes. My parents were gardeners here."

"I see." Evie nodded and she focused her gaze on the water. She wanted to probe further but she stopped herself. She still had many opportunities to question them. For now, she would try observing them and behave as normal as she could around them.

As Evie was led by the maids out of the master's room, her eyes didn't stop looking around. The corridor outside the room was spacious and there were chandeliers hanging above the high ceiling.

A door at the end of the corridor seemed to be leading to an open veranda that would surely be the perfect place to enjoy a view. In Evie's mind, she imagined it to be a place where one could sit back, relax and enjoy the view of the beautiful garden while having a nice cup of tea. Her family's castle back in the Southern Empire had a remarkable garden she always adored and spent whatever free time she could in there.

"Where is this place?" Evie asked her maids as they descended a spiraled stairway. "We're not in the imperial capital yet, right?"

Fray and Gina looked at her with confusion and then in surprise. But they eventually smiled. "You're already in the imperial capital my lady. This is the prince's palace."

Evie halted for a moment before she continued walking. So that's why this place was quite extravagant and huge. Even more beautiful than Castle Ylvia, her home. But how did she arrive in this place so soon? It should not be possible with the speed they were going using the carriage, could it? Did Gavriel ended up carrying her all the way from the Dark Valley to the imperial capital? But he did say it was too dangerous for her. So how did he transport her here so quickly?

Once they arrived in the dining hall, Evie was awed at the sight that greeted her. Her eyes sparkled by observing how intricately well-designed and magnificent the hall was. She had always imagined vampire castles and palaces were places which are somewhat dark, creepy and unpleasant for human habitation but then again, she was proven again and again to be totally wrong in her assumptions so far. The place was very neat and well maintained. In fact, everything was perfect. She even saw a lot of seemingly luxurious materials that she had never seen inside the grand palace in Southern empire. It seemed vampires loved beautiful residences that screamed with elegance and luxury.

Gavriel was sitting at the head of a table that was long enough to seat twenty adults. His moon-like eyes locked onto her the moment she entered the hall's double doors.

Quietly and a little nervously, Evie sat next to him. Her movements were stiff and awkward. Never in her wildest dreams – or perhaps nightmare, did she think they would actually sit down and dine together. When she had a meal before crossing the Dark Valley, he didn't join her.

The prince didn't speak but Evie could feel his piercing gaze on her face. She could not bring herself to raise her face to look at him.

"Evielyn..."

"Yes?!" Evie instantly exclaimed, flinching at the same time as she was jolted by his deep voice calling her name and ended up looking at him.

A heavy silence permeated the hall as their eyes locked before the glorious prince caught his lips between his teeth. His pleasant and calm expression had darkened a little.

Realizing that her reaction displeased him, Evie swallowed and nervously retracted her gaze to the juicy and delicious looking steak in front of her. Her mouth watered and her empty stomach screamed at her, momentarily distracting her from her predicament.

She was so hungry that the sight of the juicy steak seemed to momentarily overshadow the effects that Gavriel's presence wrecked on her. Her hands moved on their own and then landed on the table, her gaze not leaving the inviting steak. When she was about to reach out for the utensils prepared for her, someone took the steak away. Her eyes widened as she followed it until Gavriel placed it before him.

Evie's lips parted as she blinked at him. She was speechless and was in a daze when the prince began to slice the steak silently. He looked serious and graceful. How could he make cutting steak look like it was some kind of honorable task?! Wait! That's not the issue here. Why did he take the steak away from her?!

When he stabbed a piece of the steak with his fork, Evie couldn't help but follow it as he moved it. The steak stopped right before his lips and the sight of his thin lips jolted Evie awake. She couldn't believe what she was doing! But before she could look away, he had stretched out his hand and the piece of steak was suddenly near her mouth.

The delicious smell made her mouth water even more.

Her eyes were wide as she looked at him. What was he doing?

"Open your mouth, wife." He said, his expression soft and his eyes seemed to be smiling at her. Evie's jaw dropped the moment she realized he was trying to feed her.

The prince momentarily stilled at the sight of Evie's reaction. And when she closed her eyes as if she was savoring something divine, the corner of his lips curved up into a slight smile. This was the first time she showed him these expressions. He thought she was incredibly... cute...

"You love it?"

"Yes." Even her voice was now sounding like melting honey. This was unexpected. Gavriel thought she would tense up again or flinch whenever he spoke. But she didn't and he smiled again as he speared another slice of steak with his fork and put it at her lips.

Evie ate the steak without hesitation. "God, this is so delicious!!" She sighed in obvious pleasure, making Gavriel's slight smile widen even further. He stared at her lips as she slowly chewed the meat and worshipping its taste at the same time, when out of the blue... his thought strayed. He began to imagine how delicious would she be once he finally got a taste of those lips his eyes was trained on. Would she be so delectable he would forget every thought at the very taste of her lips? Would she be that divine ambrosia he would find himself worshipping her?

A slight tension began to build in his muscles and as he became aware of his body's reaction, he froze. He even felt the tiny hairs rising on the back of his neck. 'Heavens,' Gavriel muttered under his breath. He couldn't believe he was having these kind of thoughts and reactions in a place and situation like this. This was the first time something like this happened to him. He even had to force his gaze away from her face to clear his thoughts. But as he fed her another piece of steak, her words truly threw him off.

"This is so delicious, definitely the best I ever tasted!"

Suddenly, Gavriel found himself glaring daggers at the steak in front of him. As they say, if looks could kill...RIP steak.