

SPELLBOUND

Chapter 12: Temptation

Finally, Evie snapped out from the strange but pleasure-filled induced haze the delicious steak had trapped her in for that duration of time she was savouring it. Every. Single. Bite. She couldn't believe she allowed something so basic like food, to take her on a flight into the clouds and made her forget about everything else. However, she comforted herself in the knowledge that though food was basic, but in no means was that piece of steak plain. It was far from plain!

Also she couldn't believe she had allowed herself to be fed like she was a child. And even allowed a prince to... heavens, Evie!

Stunned, Evie sat there, unmoving, while Gavriel's hand was stranded mid-air in his attempt to feed Evie another piece of steak.

He moved the steak closer to her lips, causing Evie to flinch – again. After which, she winced and quickly shut her eyes and took a deep breath, remembering how her newly minted husband had made that statement about not wanting his wife flinching away from him. With that deep steadying breath, she opened her eyes and bravely lifted her hand and held Gavriel's wrist so she could gently move the steak away without it seeming rude or discourteous.

"I... I can eat on my own, Your Highness." She blushed hard as she stammered those few words out and when she finally realized she was still holding onto his wrist – a very strong yet tantalising wrist she might add – Evie yanked her hand back as if scalded before awkwardly averting her gaze away from him. She was a hundred and one percent convinced that smoke was wafting off her red-hot ears as she felt his gaze on her face. What was she doing? Letting her guard down like that just because of a delicious steak! Was she so easily duped like a child? She never thought there would ever come a day that the temptation of a plate of food could easily win her over – hook, line and sinker!

'But that was no ordinary plate of food! That steak was so heavenly it was almost sinful!' she fell into her old habit of arguing with herself whenever something truly threw her off and completely flustered her thoroughly. However, she failed to realise that this only happens when she is totally comfortable with her surroundings. Back then, in her own home, it was understandable. But now she was in so called 'enemy territories'.

While Evie was busy berating herself inwardly, Gavriel leaned back. His smile had long faded because the effect of the food was gone, and the little bunny was wary and on guard again. 'Too bad,' he thought. He was enjoying feeding her and she was so cute when she was relaxed. He wanted to feed her like that every time they eat together. He

wished he could continue feeding her more but looking at her tensed shoulders made him silently back off.

Without a word, he put the steak in his mouth, using the same fork he used to feed her. He didn't see her how she secretly threw a glance at him and was observing how he devoured the piece of steak that had just touched her lips. He also missed seeing how her face flamed red before she practically tore her eyes away from his face and refocused her gaze back on her own plate of food.

After dinner, the couple had just left the dining hall when Gavriel spoke.

"I would like to escort you around the castle, but the emperor had requested for your presence in the imperial palace as soon as you woke up." He said and as expected, Evie tensed up.

She halted and looked at him with eyes wide opened. "You mean... now?!"

"Yes. Once you're ready, I'm taking you there."

"But it's already dark..." she bit the inside of her lower lip the moment she realized what she just said. How could she forget that to the vampires, the night was their daylight?

"I will show you around the capital on our way there." He added. "You're asleep when we arrived so you didn't see anything. I think you might like it."

But before she could open her lips again, Gavriel was already talking to her maids to prepare her for her first appearance to the emperor.

"Yes, Your Highness." The duo bowed and they excitedly approached Evie, eyes all sparkly.

"W-wait... Gavriel, I..."

"Yes?" he suddenly leaned closer on her. So close that Evie's mind was momentarily dumbfounded once again, with her husband's beauty and she forgot what she was about to say. "Don't be scared, I am here to protect you. Now go and get ready, I'll wait downstairs."

With that, the man left, leaving Evie silently berating herself again for being so weak – so defenceless against his beauty. Oh please, Evie. You can't be so easily swayed like that! You can't! You can't! She was mentally shaking herself up, hoping to get a firmer grip on her on mind.

As the maids brought her to her dressing room, Evie's mind was busy thinking on how to deal with the temptations. She finally realized her greatest weakness – food and her

husband's beauty. What should she do to raise her immunity against those two things? Food is an essential! How can she even say "no"?

Evie had cloaked herself in her own world, thinking and thinking on how to solve this matter of hers that she didn't realize a long time already went by until Fray's voice reached her ears. "My lady? Are you okay?"

She was yanked from her thoughts. "Yes?"

The maid smiled at her. "We're done, My Lady. You are looking so amazing!" the maids were gushing with praises as she turned around to look at herself in the mirror. Her lips parted in surprise and awe. "I can't wait to see His Highness' reaction when he sees you!"

"Right," Gina piped in. "Now let's go, My Lady. We can't let His Highness wait any longer." She urged gleefully and Evie could only let them lead her out of the room.

As she descended the grand staircase, Evie didn't know why her heart suddenly picked up the pace and started thudding loudly in her ears. Oh my, was she nervous? Why? Because of Gavriel? Certainly not, right? This must be because she was going to meet the vampire emperor – humanity's ultimate enemy. She was not ready for this! Can she still back out of this? Certainly! She could back out when she wanted to. No one in this place could force her, not even Gavriel.

Evie's hands were clutching her gown so hard, her knuckles had turned white. She was too engrossed in her own predicament that she was jolted to awareness when a hand appeared in front of her. She realized she had reached the last steps and when she took the hand and looked up dazedly, warning bells echoed inside her brain, being able to make sense of one word being screamed out – TEMPTATION!!