

## SPELLBOUND

### *Chapter 13: Ready?*

When Evie stepped out of the castle, she was already wearing the same black cloak that Gavriel and his men were wearing. Her fiery dress and silver hair were now hidden under that thick and luxurious black cloak.

While Gavriel was speaking with a man who was also wearing the same black cloak, Evie was busy looking around. She turned and looked up. She knew it was dark, but she still couldn't help but admire how intricately beautiful the castle grounds were. Even in the dark, it was nonetheless obvious to see how massive the castle was and the garden on the front yard was also vast. Her vivid thoughts could already picture the view of this place in broad daylight and she must admit, this place was more beautiful and bigger than the infamous Lily palace in Southern Empire. As she looked around, she thought that there must have been an error in thinking that the emperor doesn't favour Gavriel. He must be the emperor's most beloved and that's why he was given the most beautiful castle in the empire.

"Wife," Gavriel pulled her attention back to him as he walked closer to her. "Before we go, I'd like you to meet my men," he said, and five men stood in a line a few steps away before her. The hoods of their cloaks were down. Evie swallowed inaudibly at their overwhelming presence. Three of them were just as tall as Gavriel but the other two were huge. Evie immediately remembered the huge and terrifying generals that used to accompany her father and the human emperors back in the Southern Empire. In fact, despite looking very relaxed, these five men were emitting a powerful aura that surpassed any human generals she had ever met.

"Good evening Your Highness, I am Samuel," said the biggest one with long brown hair. The first thing Evie noticed was the two big scars running from the middle of his forehead down to his left cheek. Trying her best not to stare at his scars due to her surprise, Evie's curiosity was sparked because it was common knowledge that vampires heal themselves and if they do get healed, they would never be left with scars. So how was it that this man had a scar?

"My name is Levy. Nice to meet you My Lady." The man with a jolly and friendly smile introduced himself next. His hair was brown as well, but he had a neat haircut that complimented his good looks. The first thing Evie noticed about him was his wide, friendly smile.

"I'm Luc, My Lady." The third man was almost as tall as the huge Samuel. He looked aloof and expressionless. His tussled golden hair stood out and Evie thought that his bright hair – though gorgeous – gave quite the exact opposite feel of not complimenting his rather grey personality.

"I'm Zolan, My Lady." The fourth man had a lively voice and an energetic smile. He had long blond hair tied loosely behind him and Evie's eyes immediately caught the lone golden earring in his ear.

The last one had an innocent look. He was as tall as the others, but he looked young. His blue eyes and curly ash grey hair were standing out. "Reed, My Lady," he said simply.

"N-nice to meet you all." Evie was a little confused what was the point of the introductions. Back in the human empires, this wasn't a norm. There was no need for a soldier to do any introduction like this unless the person they were serving asked for their names. Moreover, they definitely were not Evie's men. They were her husband's. Why were they introducing themselves to her?

As though Gavriel had read her thoughts, the prince spoke. "These five are my most trusted men and they will be the ones guarding you whenever you venture outside our castle. So, it would be good if you memorized their names and faces."

Evie creased her brows. They were guarding her? Why did she need to be guarded? Vampires cannot touch her and harm her, right?

Before Evie could ask a question, another man approached them. The man doesn't feel intimidating and he wasn't a towering tree like Gavriel and the other five. He was wearing a kind smile and his demeanour was almost human-like. He even had the same red hair as her two human maids. Yet clearly, he wasn't human. He was a vampire. A weak vampire, maybe?

"I am pleased to meet you, Your Highness. I am Elias."

Evie slightly nodded in acknowledgement of his greeting and then Gavriel leaned in on her. "Are you ready?" he asked. "We're not going to use a carriage as we are already late. I will be carrying you in my arms, wife."

"O-okay," Evie could only nod and her approval made Gavriel's lips curved in a slight smile. Evie avoided looking at his face, so she didn't see how his gaze mischievously flickered.

Without wasting a moment, he bent and lifted her so easily it was as if she was made of paper. "Wrap your hands around my neck, wife." He said gently and Evie obeyed. Her eyes carefully avoided looking at his glorious face. This was the solution she had thought of to avoid temptation. She shouldn't look at him longer than necessary.

Her hands around his neck were so loose that she didn't even allow her hands to brush against his naked skin. However, the moment he leapt high above the ground; Evie's hands instinctively tightened around his neck.

She was holding her breath and her eyes were squeezed shut. This was the first time she experienced this. Were they flying?! She had always wondered how flying would be like before but now that she was experiencing it in the flesh, it actually felt scary.

When she felt him land, Evie let out the breath she wasn't even aware she was holding in and prepared herself for another leap. But the man holding her didn't move again.

"Open your eyes, Evielyn." His deep voice echoed, and she slowly opened her eyes. "I told you I will show you the city while we are on the way there."

"But... you said we're already late."

He smiled at her. The moonlight was so bright that night that she could see his other-worldly face clearly. "Yes, but it's fine. No one can scold us for being late." She saw a naughty yet seemingly dangerous glint in his eyes. Why was he so carefree? Weren't they going to meet the emperor? He is known to be the most powerful and dangerous being in this empire and perhaps even in the entire continent.

"Now look, Evielyn. This is the view of the city at night."

Evie could no longer resist. She slowly turned her head away from him and her lips parted at the sight that welcomed her. The vampires' imperial city was totally different from what she had imagined. It wasn't that creepy and lifeless place that she expected it to be. Lights were everywhere, the shadows of countless castles looming over certain sections of the city and the streetlights made it look so magical – as though she was looking at the imperial fairy city. How could a place that supposed to be hell-like end up looking so enchantingly picturesque!?

"Do you like it?" He asked and Evie couldn't even stop herself from nodding. "That's great. But we better move on. We can roam around on our way back."

The next second, they were flying through the air again. Evie fought her instincts to shut her eyes and when she looked down while they were in mid-air, she was surprised at the thrill and excitement she felt. She wasn't scared anymore, and she actually found herself enjoying it. Oh my, she was flying!

She was so busy enjoying the incredible experience that she almost asked Gavriel why had he stopped. Thankfully, she heard him speak before she could ask and embarrass herself. "We're here." He said as he put Evie down.

Evie turned and was speechless when she saw that they were already standing in front of a huge double door. This was obviously the palace's door. When she looked behind her, an even larger garden came into view. Oh my, just how big is this garden?

"Let me help you with your cloak, wife." Gavriel, pulled her attention back to him and Evie could only stood still as Gavriel carefully pulled down the hood of her cloak. While he removed the cloak from her, he whispered in her ear. "Are you ready?"