

SPELLBOUND 151

Chapter 151 - Fifth

Evie blinked at him when she heard that statement. But somehow, she found that she was not that surprised at what Gavriel just disclosed. Superior creatures like vampires and even dragons exists so it should not actually be that strange anymore if there were still other non-humans that existed somewhere that was relatively unknown to the majority of the public.

"So, the fairies really do exist?" she asked, all perked up. Her eyes now filled with curiosity.

Gavriel shifted his gaze and stared silently for some time into the darkness. A short while after collecting his thoughts, he answered Evie. "It was said that long ago, the forbidden land was once the fifth empire of Lirea." He said and Evie's eyes widened. She had always wondered about the forbidden land every single time she looked at the map of the continent of Lirea. This large land with a shape of a crescent had intrigue her ever since she was young. So now that she is hearing such a shocking story, her curiosity was now increased double fold and wondered what intrigue and mystery that were hidden behind the stories of the fairies.

"And this empire is the empire of the fairies?" Evie's voice was filled with interest as she looked at Gavriel, hungry and eager for more information about this fifth Empire.

"Yes. It was said that the Middle Empire was once the empire of the Fairies. But they were annihilated countless of years ago. It might even be a few millennia. According to the tales, they were more superior than the vampires and they were considered as the most powerful race in Lirea."

"If they really were the strongest, how did they end up getting totally annihilated? We're talking about a whole race. Not just a small group or city."

"For some strange reason, no one knew what had happened to their empire. Perhaps because it's been so long since it had happened. Also, chances are that if there were any records about the empire that were documented, they were most probably destroyed. So right now, there is absolutely no written records at all to even prove that they indeed once existed." Gavriel candidly answered all of Evie's questions.

Evie swallowed. Suddenly, she could not explain what she was feeling at that moment. Does this strange feeling she is experiencing had something to do with the fairies and Middle Empire?

"If I hadn't been to the forbidden lands, I might have doubted the legitimacy of this matter and would have thought of it as an old wives' tale like everyone else does. But I have seen too many evidence in the forbidden lands that they did once existed, and the tale was actually true and not just some cooked up tale used to tell little children to help them to bed. Not to mention that the dragons are there as well. And now..." Gavriel paused as he seemed to struggle for a moment not to harden his tone, "this strange invisible creature..."

"Did the emperor confirmed that it really is a fairy?" Evie was getting more excited as she continued asking. She did not notice that Gavriel had somehow slowed down in his explanations at the end.

"Yes. But apparently, that creature is not a fairy but a dark fae." Gavriel's tone darkened when he mentioned the words 'dark fae'. Evie finally noticed and saw his eyes flashed with something that she could not identify.

"D-dark faery? The evil faeries?" Evie too was shocked at the revelation. She knew from the tales she heard that fairies are usually referred to the good fairies or the fairies of light. However, when mentioning the dark fae, they are the ones who tend to be associated with darkness, bad magic, and the sorts.

"Yes. Those faeries apparently actually exist too. My theory is the dark faeries might have something to do with the annihilation of their empire." Gavriel shared his speculation on the matter of the extinction of the fairies with Evie.

Evie was silenced for a moment, and she remembered the necklace that Gavriel had bought and gifted to her, which its' jewel was originated from the forbidden lands. She also remembered the magical lake as well. Just seeing those two things alone was enough for Evie to believe that those creatures were true and make her a believer that they might not be as extinct as everyone have thought them to be.

"But it seems as if, from what I have been telling you, they are not completely wiped out. And it's very suspicious how they are suddenly reappearing now after being missing for so many years. The vampires don't even believe nor acknowledge that these magical beings once existed. Not until recently, when the vampires began to survey the forbidden land to find the dragons nest. We concluded that there was a race that once lived there. Remember when I told you we reached the heart of the land?" he asked and Evie nodded, "Aside from the unusual things that you do not usually find outside of the forbidden land like the glowing flowers and magical lakes, we have also stumbled upon some ancient ruins which I believe were once castles. I honestly believe that there are more things hidden inside that large spot the dragons are currently occupying and seem to be protecting."

"Could it be that some faeries who might have survived ended up staying in there for so many years?" Evie questioned, "And could it be too, that that's the reason why they are only appearing now and revealing their presence to us?" she pursed her lips in thought and was also guessing along in why the fairies had remained hidden for so long but only now are showing themselves to the world again.

"That might be a possible case," Gavriel agreed but Evie seemed to find a loophole in what she just said.

"But... why did they wait for so many years to reveal themselves?" she asked again, her gaze serious as she searched Gavrie's eyes. "Did the emperor reveal any more pertinent information about that faery?"

Chapter 152 - Lost Empire

Gavriel did not give an immediate answer and his gaze fell at the dark space again. "I found out from him that the faery had been living there in the imperial palace. Or it was more apt to say that the faery was trapped inside a huge black crystal, the exact same stone that your necklace is made of. It seemed that the crystal was already there for a very long time. Even Lorcan has no idea how long the crystal has been sitting there. But it was the previous emperor, Lorcan's father, who had accidentally awakened the creature inside the crystal." Gavriel sneered slightly when he mentioned that.

Evie's voice softened as she continued asking. "How did he manage to awaken the faery?"

Gavriel pressed his lips tight, he looked like he was deciding right then if it was right for him to reveal this to her.

"Tell me more," Evie urged Gavriel, fully noting and understanding the complicated look in his eyes. "I truly want to know. Please?"

Gavriel was not even surprised with the almost excessive interest his wife was showing regarding these matters with the fairies and the invisible being. Because even before he found out about these, Gavriel already had that nagging feeling that his beloved wife has something to do with this lost empire. And whatever connection she had with the fairies; he was quite sure it will not be something ordinary or run of the mill. And it genuinely worried him. He was concerned with how all these revelations will change things in the future. Also, there was that question if any of it might change Evie herself.

However, after weighing everything and battling within himself whether or not it was right for him to tell her all this, Gavriel could not bring himself to hide it from her, even though he genuinely wanted to. He remembered their promise that they would not hide important matters and keep secrets from each other anymore. Moreover, he thought that perhaps this was meant to happen, for her to know about this.

"They had used the blood of the dragon guardians they killed in the past." His voice came out very soft and Evie caught her breath, eyes going wide with shock.

Gavriel went silent, observing Evie's face very closely.

Evie took a while to process what she had just heard and Gavriel considered to stop talking about this topic. However, before he could start to divert their conversation to other subjects, Evie recovered and asked again with a severe look on her face. "H-how? Could it be that their blood melted the crystal and freed the trapped creature?" she guessed.

"Yes." Gavriel nodded and a distressed laugh escaped from Evie's lips. So, this was why the humans could not retrieve most of the bodies of dragon guardians who were killed in the battlefield. Evie had heard about this previously when they visited the tombs of the fallen guardians. It was said that almost all the tombs were actually empty and what was inside were just a few pieces of the guardian's personal belongings. Because the vampires would always make sure to take the guardian's body with them. Now she knew the reason behind why the vampires were doing that. They were actually using them to awaken a certain faery! To be more specific, they were draining each one of them of their lifeblood!

"Lorcan revealed that they could speak with the faery even when he was still inside the crystal." Gavriel then said after another long silence.

"Is..." Evie had to swallow before she continued, "is this dark faery powerful? If he is evil, he couldn't be helping the emperor just to return the favour, right?"

"You are right. I believe that the creature is very dangerous." The change in Gavriel's voice was apparent. "Not only because he is a dark faery, but also because of the fact that he was able to survive up to this day when all his fellow faeries had been wiped away." Gavriel's eyes were now intense and gleaming with a calculating look as he stared into space.

When Gavriel and his men emerged from the dungeon, chaos had already ensued inside the castle. Zolan had left an order to the duchess to open the dungeon after exactly two days because that was

the exact length of time for them take to reach the library going at their fastest pace. The moment he captured Lorcan and found out that Evie and Leon had escaped the fortress itself due to the emperor trying to take a bite out of his wife, Gavriel nearly lost himself.

But for the sake of saving Evie and the other matters, he swallowed all the killing intent that was ready to burst forth out of him. However, the moment he saw the bruise on Evie's back, Gavriel could no longer control his bloodlust. When he laid eyes on Lorcan upon coming into his cell while Zolan was still in the middle of interrogating him, everything in him broke loose and he came at the emperor like a merciless beast. His eyes were flashing between red and blue, burning with bloodlust and wanting to tear the wretched emperor into shreds with his very hands.

He barely managed to keep Lorcan alive, had not the emperor been smart enough to reveal everything about the faery, as he knew Gavriel wanted intel on the matter. He thought he had come at him so brutally because he wanted to know the truth, but unbeknownst to him, it was all because of what he had done – or almost done – to his wife.

Somehow, Gavriel was glad he had not killed the emperor right off the bat or else, they would not have gotten such detailed information about the dark faery. Now Gavriel was not only worried about his wife being connected to all this matter. But he also had the feeling that this faery has something to do with what happened to the real vampire's royal family. Because no matter how he looked at it, Lorcan and the previous emperor were never powerful enough to destroy the real royals.

Gavriel had a sinking feeling in his gut that this faery was not just a mere invisible creature... he was very powerful, and very ancient. And this powerful and ancient creature definitely wanted something out of all the effort it had expended for the late emperor and Lorcan. Or it is aiming for something. And Gavriel's gut feeling very seldom lead him wrong.

Chapter 153 - Trouble

Unease and dread immediately replaced the intrigue and curiosity that filled Evie's eyes when Gavriel was talking about the lost empire of the fairies. She could not help but feel the fear creeping up on her and was now worrying about her father. Especially now that she had heard from Gavriel on how the dragon guardians were killed and their blood was used. She suspected that by now, the dark faery must have already left Dacia and was now with them.

"Gav...is my father going to be alright?" she asked Gavriel. The dread was evident in her voice.

Gavriel turned her to face him before cupping her face gently in his palms, resting his hands below her ears. "Don't worry, Evie..." he assured as he stared into her eyes, "If this dark faery wanted your father's blood, he'd have already done something to him when your father is still in the imperial palace. But he didn't do anything to him, right? Maybe because of the fact that he is already freed and that he does not need the blood of another guardian now."

Her husband's words immediately made Evie feel better. What Gavriel said made a lot of sense. Her father was alright all this time, even when this dark faery was probably with them as they travelled together all the way from the imperial capital to the time that he arrived in Dacia.

"I believe this dark faery is definitely aiming for something, but I don't think its aim is to kill the dragon guardian. So, you can be rest assured wife, your father will be alright." Gavriel added and Evie hugged him tightly, both in relief and with some slight fear as well.

"What are we going to do now?" she then asked in a soft voice after a long while of silence between them.

"We will wait for them here. If our prediction is right, they should be able to arrive back at the fortress by daylight." Gavriel had already done his predictions and calculations.

Evie nibbled on the inside of her lips. 'Already? Isn't that a little too fast?', she thought to herself and her grip on him tightened again. "Gavriel..." he called out as she looked up at him. Her large eyes filled with determination.

"Hmm?" Gavriel raised his brow, knowing that she must be about to tell him something. And this something must be a huge deal because he could tell just by the way she looked at him.

"I want to join in the battle, too." She declared and Gavriel froze in utter shock. He did not expect her to spout this. But knowing his wife, he should have known better.

Gavriel rubbed the back of his neck and took a deep breath before he replied. "No, wife. I can't –"

"I don't want to stay in the castle and stand there all day and night waiting and worrying..." she cut him off, shaking her head. "I don't want to go through that again." Though her voice was gentle and soft, he could hear the underlying steel in them and knew that she was going to fight him on this matter.

"Evie, listen. I can't possibly put you in any more danger –"

"Gavriel." She suddenly caught his face with her two delicate hands and made him meet her intent gaze. "With the existence of this dark faery, being in the castle is a moot point right now. I believe I am not safe in the castle anymore. To be precise, I think I might be more at risk being here." She firmly argued her point, then her voice softened as her thumbs caressed his cheeks. "I believe the safest place for me now is by your side. Don't you agree, husband?"

Her words made Gavriel's eyes widen. Good lord, this was trouble. Now that she mentioned it, he could not possibly leave her all alone anymore. If he leaves her with his men during the war, would his men be strong enough to go against this faery? No... this was the same faery that must be behind the annihilation of the royal family, none of his men could possibly stand against such a creature. But how could he even fight when Evie was in the battlefield with him?

The thought of Evie standing next to him in the middle of the battle made Gavriel's stomach churn. Never in his worst nightmares did he ever imagined that his beloved wife would be joining him in a war. No... he cannot accept this. He just cannot ... Damn it all! He growled inside his mind. Knowing that at this point, he could not even think about another way out. He cannot leave Evie now because of this damned dark faery! But there lies his agony. He could not leave her. But neither could he bring her to war.

Gavriel had been feeling a little uneasy about his wife since he heard about the dark faery from Lorcan. He grew even more uneasy after listening to his wife and Elias' story and that made him think that what if, this dark faery's actual aim was his wife? He tried to tell himself that he was wrong or perhaps he was just overly paranoid. Because if this faery truly was after Evie, should it not have already done something to her? If this same faery was the one Elias felt hanging around her room, why did it stay just outside of Evie's door? And why was it that his wife never felt any danger from it when it had come that close to her?

However, despite all these thoughts, and no matter how Gavriel try to reason things out that the dark faery might not be after Evie, he could just not stop the unease that kept bubbling up within him.

"I really understand why you don't want me to be there," Evie continued, noticing the turmoil on his face. "But I just feel like this is the best choice for us. I never wanted to be the cause of your distraction. I know why you're worried, and I can't deny that with my mstrength, I might just end up becoming the damsel in distress again, in need of your rescue in the middle of the fight... but I just thought that maybe, being rescued like that is better than being used as a hostage?" she explained almost in a panic, ending in a question. "I might be just overthinking things but what if the dark faery did sneak into the castle and take me hostage? What if by taking me hostage, they end up using me to take you down?"

Chapter 154 - Am I Right?

In actuality, Evie hated that she needed to end up saying that she would become the damsel in distress again, but it was the harsh truth she could only accept. She knew that joining a war when she was only a powerless human sounded so idiotic. It was something not done. Even if she allowed herself to think twice or second guess her decision, she even might be tempted to pull back on this plan and reconsider it. But she just somehow knew that her decision was right. She had to choose the lesser of the two evils.

She could never live it down if the enemy ended up using her and thus, being the cause of Gavriel's downfall. She refused to accept it if he ends up losing because of her. Though she knew that her being with him in the frontline could also be a huge disadvantage for Gavriel, she believed that this husband of hers would never let her watch him lose a fight, much less an important war like this one.

He was strong and Evie always believes in him. That was why she dared to propose this seemingly foolhardy plan and she was going to insist on it. No matter what he says, she is not going to just hide and wait. Moreover, Evie still had one more reason in doing this. If she were at the frontlines, her father would see her, and she knew that she could make him turn his back against Caius. That's right, even though she could not possibly fight against the vampires, she would do anything and everything to be useful and help her husband with any method she knew.

"It's alright, Gavriel." She continued, smiling at him before she showered his face with gentle kisses. "Would you believe me if I tell you that it's actually a good idea that I should be there by your side?"

Gavriel groaned helplessly, still tormented. "Evie... good lord..." he ran his fingers through his hair then tugged at them as he bit his lip hard. He looked again at his wife and saw her eyes sparkling and twinkling in thrill and confidence. She was so adorably lovely whenever she becomes this way. He could only draw in a breath and ready himself for whatever she was about to throw at him.

"Let me tell you why..." she said, and a confident smile flashed across her face. "I believe my presence there would be helpful to you. You will fight hard and come out victorious no matter what happens. Because you would hate it if you lost right before your beloved wife's eyes. Am I right or am I right?" She grinned confidently and Gavriel stilled before a quick laugh escaped his lips. He could not believe how confident she sounded at the moment. However, he could not find fault in the points that she was laying out for him. It was true that he would give his all even if he had left Evie in the castle and gone to war on his own. So... what more if she was there alongside him, riding

into war and looking at him fight their enemies? There would be no way he would be giving her the view of her husband losing in a fight. He would never allow it.

"You..." he was speechless at her argument and Evie took the chance to put her point across. She grabbed him close to her and placed his head on her shoulder and caressed his dark locks.

"It's alright Gav, my father would be there too. He would never let me get hurt. The fact that he came all this way, supposedly to save me from you should already tell you how protective he is of me. He would definitely be there to protect me as well, so don't worry too much, okay?" he whispered and Gavriel could only sigh in surrender, shaking his head as he wondered since when he was this easy to convince and change his plans so far along in the making.

He understood where his wife was coming from and though it was hard for him to accept, this truly seemed to be the best way. He was worried to death that he might lose himself during the war and he would actually forget about Evie. His distrust towards himself, more specifically to the monster within him was so strong. But seeing the seemingly unbreakable trust Evie had in him, he could not help but give in. It also helped that she mentioned about her father. Perhaps, having her in the battlefield might really bring wonders rather than woe.

"Alright... but now, I need you to go rest and sleep," Gavriel finally said as he pulled away.

"But I just woke up a couple of hours ago!" Evie spluttered in protest as she pouted her cherry red lips.

"There is still plenty of time for you to rest. And this might be the only time for you to rest right now. I can't risk you falling asleep in the middle of the battlefield."

"I would never –"

"I know dear wife. So, if you want me not to take back my word, you must listen to me."

Evie nibbled the inside of her lips and then pouted. "But even if you tell me to go to sleep, it would be useless if I really couldn't fall asleep at –"

"Alright, I'll go with you. I know a quick way to put you to sleep." He said as he scooped her in his arms.

"H-huh?" Evie did not know why but her mind suddenly thought about them being intimate again and she blushed. However, knowing this husband of hers, he might really be thinking of that way to put her to sleep! "G-gav... wait. I don't think doing it will give me any rest –"

"Doing it?" Gavriel tilted his head and when he looked down and saw Evie's blushing face, an evil smirk flashed on his face. "What's this wife... are you actually thinking that I'm going to make love to you again?" He then waggled his brows suggestively at her, earning himself a small slap from Evie on his arm.

Evie flushed even more. What? Was she wrong?

Gavriel chuckled. His pleasant laughter sounded so good to her ears as he leaped from the watchtower.

When they reached their quarters inside the walls, Gavriel put Evie down and pinned her against the wall. "I am so pleased that you're actually wanting us to make love again –"

"I –" Gavriel kissed her lips but before it would escalate to the point of no return, he pulled away and smirked.

"But I am not thinking about doing it again, my love. That was not the plan. It will only serve to exhaust you if we go for another round. That wouldn't be resting anymore. What I'm telling you is the tea that would make you fall asleep quickly. It's a relaxing tea and its harmless to vampires and humans alike. So be rest assured it won't keep you asleep for more than what's necessary." He said in a mischievous tone and Evie was about to hide her face in her palms when Gavriel caught her wrists and kissed her forehead. "You made me really happy though." He smiled and Evie thought that his smile that moment was the most beautiful she had ever seen. And she could only look at him in a daze. She thought to herself that if it were possible, how nice it would be to immortalise that beautiful smile in a picture. So that whenever she wanted to, she could just take it out and look at it.

After Gavriel made her sip a little amount of that special tea brew, Evie leaned her head on his shoulder.

"How about you? You should rest too, before they arrive." Evie said, as she continued sipping on the delicious tea that Gavriel had prepared for her. Between drinking the tea and chatting with Gavriel, it did not even take a few minutes before she was feeling the effects of the tea and her head was already dizzy.

"I will rest too, my love. Don't worry," he whispered as he saw her eyelids fluttering and he knew that the tea was working its magic on his wife. He smiled at her indulgently before tucking her into bed and under the covers.

Upon leaving Evie's room, Gavriel decided to seek Zolan out to discuss more on things. After walking for some minutes, he spotted Zolan who was busying himself at the wall, he leapt and landed behind the man.

Zolan was currently busy simulating their battle plan in his mind as he looked at the empty and dark meadow when he felt Gavriel's presence. He glanced back and upon seeing the look in his prince's eyes, he sighed deeply to himself. He already felt that he should prepare himself for what the prince was going to say. Because it was obvious to him that Gavriel was here to discuss with him on certain vital matters that he was sure is somehow going to change the plan.

Chapter 155 - Arrows

When daylight came, everyone was already prepared. The archers were all lined up and occupying the top of the walls with their bows and ample supply of arrows in barrels stationed beside them and the soldiers were now positioned and fully armed for the upcoming battle.

Looking down from the window and seeing the countless soldiers below, Evie let out a deep breath. When she woke up, she did not waste any time in preparing herself. She had requested of Elias to bring her an appropriate outfit to wear, and she liked the outfit so far. She liked the feel of wearing pants and boots again. It gave her the feeling of freedom and the ease of movement that was afforded by it as opposed to dresses and their skirts.

However, since she woke up, she had yet to see Gavriel at all. Of course, she knew that he must be busy right at this moment, but she could not help but worry that he must have had already changed

his mind and decided to keep her out of this. She waited, nonetheless, but daybreak came, and she still did not receive any word from him.

Evie huffed out a puff of air and tried to stay calm. She told herself again that her husband was extremely occupied right now so she could only be patient. She must believe in him no matter what happens. She could only cling on tightly to that.

Sitting down on a chair, Evie brought out the necklace that Gavriel had gotten for her from the town before and wore it. When it again emitted the glow against her skin, she quietly stared at it for a moment before wrapping the gem up with a small cloth and proceeded to hide it inside her clothes, securing it carefully so that it would not fall out even during a chase. Evie then stood and pulled the dagger from her hips. She slashed it through the air a couple of times, when suddenly, the vivid memory of when she slashed Lorcan's face.

Thinking back, what she had done was really surprising even to herself. She did not know how she managed to even successfully wound him. But somehow, what she did to Lorcan gave her some confidence. Now she felt as though she could at least do something to defend herself. She could do something against a vampire too despite being just a powerless human.

With renewed confidence beaming in her eyes, Evie slashed forward again, remembering the basic steps Gavriel had taught her before. She nodded in satisfaction after a few more slashes and then she grabbed her bow next. This was the bow and arrows Gavriel had bought for her that night they both went to the town to shop as well. A happy smile curved on her lips. But when she heard the turning of the doorknob, she quickly aimed at the door when it quickly opened.

Elias nearly stumbled in fright at the sight of a fully equipped Lady Evie aiming at him with her bow and arrow loaded in perfect form. "P-princess. Please put that down." He pleaded as he scrambled away from the general direction of the door.

A small laugh escaped Evie's throat as she lowered her bow and arrow down. "What... you think this princess has the guts to shoot her own butler?" she asked mischievously, and Elias scratched his hair.

"Well, err... I know, princess but what if you accidentally let go?"

Evie just chuckled again, before her gaze fell on a small black jar Elias was holding in his hands.

"What is that?" she asked curiously, and the butler approached her.

"Zolan gave this to me." He said and he opened it before her. "Please give me your arrows, Princess."

Evie's eyes circled wide. "Is this poison?"

"Yes. Zolan ordered me to put poison on all your arrowheads."

Immediately, Evie gave all her arrows to him, and Elias carefully dipped the arrowheads inside the jar one by one. Evie noticed he had ensured that every single arrowhead was fully submerged into the liquid poison before carefully lifting and blowing gently on it to dry before returning it inside the bag.

"These arrows are no longer ordinary arrows, Princess. So please make sure to only use it just when you are truly in dire straits." Elias said as he continued on with his task. "Otherwise, you can just use the ordinary arrows for normal attacks."

"Don't worry, Elias. I fully understand," Evie nodded, watching him intently.

When Elias was done, he held onto the bag of arrows. "Alright, please follow me, princess." He said and Evie felt a surge of thrill within her. Could this mean that Gavriel had not reneged on their agreement? Is he honouring his words in allowing her to come along with him to the battlefield? She was nervous but at the same time, relieved because she was finally leaving the quarters.

Luc and Levy were outside the door when she stepped out. She greeted them and the men bowed at her respectfully before they followed right behind Evie and Elias.

"Where are we going? Did His Highness call for me?" she asked as they leave from the inside of the walls.

"Apologies Your Highness but I haven't seen His Highness yet. It was Zolan who informed me to bring you to the watchtower." The butler replied. Evie blinked but she eventually nodded, telling herself that Gavriel must still be dealing with something important right now. A war was about to break out after all. She just wished that she could see him before the enemies arrive.

As they ascended the stairs to the watchtower, Evie's eyes caught sight of something, and she halted. She saw a man chained and bloodied beyond recognition. She could not help but swallow at what she saw and when she saw a huge bluish wound across his face, Evie instantly recognized that the man was Lorcan.

Chapter 156 - Risk

Evie remembered that Gavriel told her that the dagger he gave her was special and poisoned. It seemed the wound from her dagger will never heal and the wound ended up looking incredibly awful. Evie shivered a little as she surveyed more of the man's body. The once haughty and handsome looking vampire emperor was tortured beyond recognition. Was this the result of him being interrogated? Isn't this quite brutal?

Recalling all the information that Gavriel told her, Evie pressed her lips tight. Of course, she should have known that for a man like Lorcan, extreme measures would be needed to be taken to even dig a little bit of information out of him. If she was still her old self, Evie would probably have looked away in fear and felt pity for him, but she remembered how this man sacrificed her ancestors' blood just to awaken a certain magical and perhaps evil creature. This man had been merciless. He does not deserve to be pitied, she told herself firmly and then she finally continued ascending the stairs.

Upon reaching the top, Evie was welcomed by Zolan. There was huge arrow positioned in the middle now. She could not help but crease her brows because she knew this arrow was made to shoot down a dragon. It was the exact same arrow that had been used to shoot Leon.

"Where did all these arrows come from?" was the first question she asked Zolan, surprising him. While Evie was ascending the stairs, Zolan had been observing her while she was staring at Lorcan. So, he thought that the princess would jump on him on what happened to Lorcan and how did he end up looking like that. But it seemed, the princess could not have cared less about Lorcan now. Zolan smiled a little, acknowledging the princess' courage. Did she know that Lorcan ended up like

that not because of the interrogation but because of the prince's wrath on him for him daring to touch and harm her?

"Apparently, Lorcan brought these things with him. I believe your father didn't know about these because these arrows only arrived when Caius and your father left Dacia."

"So, Lorcan was going to kill my father's dragon once he managed to take down my husband, huh." Evie clenched her fists, remembering how her father was so hopeful that the war would end once Gavriel was gone. "What a sly old fox!" Evie muttered crossly under her breath. However, all the vampires there heard her, thanks to their superb hearing. They could not help but chuckle at her comment.

"I believe that's his plan all along. He's planning to kill everyone in this war once his aim of killing Prince Gavriel is met."

Evie could only grit her teeth, feeling sorry for her father for falling into Lorcan's despicable trap. She was so glad none of Lorcan's plan had happened yet and that her husband had outwitted him.

"By the way Princess," Zolan cleared his throat and stiffened up a little. "His Highness had decided that you will be staying right here in the watch tower." Though Zolan's voice was steady, Evie could see him look uncomfortable.

The man's words made Evie blink and freeze up for a second.

"You are not going to be with him on the ground. But he decided that you must stay in a place where he could see you even during the battle." Zolan continued and Evie could only fall silent.

"Please, you have to understand that why His Highness decided on this. We are aware about the risk about the invisible dark fae and your wish to be seen by your father, but we can't risk your life. However, if we see that there is less risk or if we find a way for you to reach your father safely, we will gladly help you and bring you down from here. For now, he wanted you to stay here with me. I understand your wish to help but by you staying here, it will be of a huge help already." Zolan smiled cheerfully, trying to elevate Evie's disappointment.

"Huge help? What am I going to do up here to help?"

"You have your arrows, princess." He grinned and Evie blinked. "Oh, His Highness is looking up."

"Where?" Evie immediately looked down and her eyes searched for her husband.

"There... right at the front."

"I can't see him." Evie turned back to Zolan and her eyes beseeched him to point out her husband to her.

However, Zolan smiled, "It's fine princess. Oh, he said he'd be here in a moment."

"You can communicate even from this distance?" Evie's eyes widened. She suddenly felt a small jolt of envy. How she wished that she could also do distant communication with Gavriel as it would be so convenient.

"No. We can only see each other clearly even at this distance but we can't carry out our special communication. I just read his lips." Zolan's lips twitched in suppressed humour as he explained to Evie. Evie's lips circled into a small 'o'. She might have overestimated the vampires' special skills as she laughed to herself again.

And just like what Zolan said, Gavriel landed before Evie in just a few moments. She was surprised how fast he took to be here already.

"Hmm... not fast enough," Gavriel mumbled to himself before he smiled at Evie. "I'm here now, wife. I heard you're looking for me. Not happy that I am going to leave you here?" he teased, and Evie pursed her lips.

"I... I just want to see you... that's all." She whispered, knowing that Zolan was with them when Gavriel gently pinched her cheek before pulling her close to him and hugged her. "I am not going to be stubborn, don't worry. At least you're not sending me back in the castle."

Gavriel smile and he was about to respond when his head suddenly snapped towards the frontline and his eyes narrowed, focusing to the far end of the meadow.

Immediately sensing the situation, Evie's grip on Gavriel tightened a little.

"Are... are they coming?" Evie asked as her heart began to beat wildly.

Chapter 157 - Practice

"Are... they coming?" Evie asked, her heartbeat beginning to thump and speed up inside her ribcage as she followed Gavriel's line of sight. For now, she still could not see anything, but she knew that Gavriel and Zolan were seeing something right then. "Have they finally... arrived?"

"Most probably," Gavriel responded without averting his gaze from the farthest end of the meadow, "but there is no hurry for now. We still have to hear what our messenger has to say first." He added and the three of them waited for a few more moments until someone landed before them like a blur.

It was the young vampire named Reed.

"Your Highness," the man immediately fell to his knees in a salute before quickly getting to his feet and rattled off his findings. "As per your instructions, we secretly surveyed the situation at the border but until now, there are still no signs of Caius' army approaching us." Reed reported and Gavriel's eyes twitched before narrowing into slits.

According to their calculations, Caius and the dragon guardian should have long crossed the borders of the Forbidden Land and Dacia by now.

"Are you certain? Did any of the spies miss out anything during their scouting mission?" Zolan piped in, wearing the same curious expression.

Reed nodded. "Definitely not. All of us have been extra careful in our duties. I've even crossed the border to make absolutely certain but strangely, there are still no signs of them." Reed continued in his reporting. However, after a few seconds of reflecting, he added, "In fact, the forbidden forests seemed to be unusually quiet."

This news made Gavriel's brows creased into a hard knot. What was going on? Could it be that the dark Fae did not find them and that was why Caius still have not yet heard about what happened to his father emperor back in the castle?

"That's fine for now. Go back to your post and keep watching," Gavriel then ordered. "They might be planning something to surprise us. When you or any of your team notices anything that is out of the norm, immediately send word to me. You're dismissed for now."

"Yes, Your Highness." Reed bowed and without wasting a moment, he was gone.

"Now this is strange," Zolan mumbled as he rubbed his chin, "did the dark fae fail to inform Caius?"

Zolan thought that there would be no way that the dark Fae could possibly fail! Why would he? They had found out from the emperor that the dark fae had the ability to teleport wherever and whenever he wanted. So why? What was Caius up to? Or perhaps the dark fae himself has his own agenda to carry out? Zolan was contemplating all the possible scenarios that could play out.

"And why would you think such a creature would fail?" Gavriel questioned, making Zolan ponder deeply again. "There should be no way it's because he couldn't find Caius or something like that."

"What if..." Evie suddenly piped in, "what if it's because the dark fae cannot enter the forbidden land? And that's the reason why he could not inform Caius?"

Zolan and Gavriel simultaneously fixed their eyes on Evie.

"Why would you think of that, wife?" Gavriel asked, curious.

"I just thought that if the presence outside my room was the dark fae, the only reason I could think about on why he only stayed outside my door was probably because he just couldn't enter. Maybe, there's a certain barrier or something else that's stopping him. Maybe this is the same reasoning? Maybe the dark Fae cannot enter the forbidden land and that could be the reason why he could not get to Caius to inform him of the happenings here?" Evie explained.

Her explanation did make sense. In fact, Gavriel and Zolan were awed at the way she thought about this. Because there was truly no other reason they could think of. Unless Caius already knew but was purposely delaying his attack because he has another plan up his sleeves.

However, Gavriel felt that his wife's theory was probably the closest reason behind this strange occurrence. Caius was an impulsive man. He was not the calculative type nor was he good at patiently waiting to get things done as well. So, the chance of him delaying the attack because he had another plan was quite low.

"Maybe you're right, Princess. But no matter what the reason, all we have to do now is stay alert." Zolan said. "They could probably just come out of nowhere so we cannot let our guard down."

Time passed and afternoon came and went, but not even the shadows of the enemy they were waiting for appeared. All the troops that were stationed were fidgety and wondering on what was actually happening. All of them were briefed that the enemy would be attacking them. However, they have seen neither hair nor hide of the enemy troops.

For the vampires who were used to attacking, the waiting was excruciating, especially when they had to stay alert because they do not have any idea now if the enemy would be attacking them or not.

Evie was stuck in the watch tower with Leon when Gavriel and Zolan left. Then after a few hours, Gavriel sent her word to go back to her quarters to rest. But Evie refused and instead, she started to wield her bow.

"I am going to practice, instead." She had said and then aimed at the space.

Leon delivered the message and Gavriel who was now at the front smirked and sent back word to her.

"Princess, His Highness said, you should aim your arrows at him, and he'll catch them as practice too." Leon said and Evie's eyes widened.

"W-what?"

"He wanted to know if your arrows would be able to reach where he is right now. It'll be good to test your archery reach."

Evie pressed her lips tight. Was her husband testing her? But it seemed that this would not be a bad idea after all. She could practice with this.

Chapter 158 - Clouds

"Alright," Evie said confidently and then she fixed her gaze to where her husband was. He had moved a little closer to the walls and looked up at her, smiling.

She was a little nervous but when she remembered that time when she practiced with Zolan, she relaxed, knowing that her husband would definitely be able to catch her arrows too. There would be no way that he would miss!

After making sure that the arrow she picked was not the poisoned ones, even asking Leon to double check it, Evie took a deep breath and prepared herself.

"Tell him to get ready," Evie told Leon and the man did as she said.

Gavriel smirked. He could see her clearly as she aimed at him. Her silvery hair dancing behind her in the wind as she pulled her arrow was truly a sight to behold. She looked like a warrior queen ready to go into battle. And he believed that she was.

He watched her released her arrow and with a proud smile, Gavriel caught it. He saw her smiled in triumph when she heard what Leon told her.

"That was a very precise shot." The duke, who was with his two remaining old generals, said. "The princess has some real serious talent."

"Of course." Gavriel glanced at the duke with a prideful smile. "And this is not the only amazing thing she could do."

"You mean the princess knows how to wield sword as well, Your Highness?" one of the grey-haired generals asked as Gavriel caught another perfectly shot arrow from Evie.

"No. She's actually bad at wielding swords but..." Gavriel paused, and his eyes gleamed with something unfathomable. The generals do not quite know if he was happy or not about it. "She has a weapon that only she could wield."

The duke and the generals furrowed their brows in curiosity. "Mind sharing what that special weapon is with us, Your Highness?" All of them wanted to know what special weapon that only the princess could use.

Gavriel's lips curved up into a small smile and without giving them any answer, Gavriel excused himself and the next moment, he was next to Evie up in the watchtower. The duke and his generals just watch him sped off with mouth slightly agape and exchanged glances with each other. They guessed that it would still remain a mystery – that special weapon only the princess could use.

The prince had sent Leon to the ground to be Evie's target instead of him and then he assisted Evie with her so-called archery practice. After that, he insisted that she had to go and rest.

Evie obeyed him this time, not wanting him to worry about her, and thus, she rested all throughout that afternoon and slept till evening came.

To her delight, Gavriel still made it in time to join her for supper. Even though they were in a dire situation, surprisingly Evie did not feel tensed up at all. Maybe because Gavriel was being the ever calm and collected being that he was.

They managed to dine as though everything was alright and none out of the ordinary. But the moment their delightful dinner ended, the news that they were waiting for came.

Their enemies were finally coming.

Rain drops began to fall, causing Evie's heart to stir and become uneasy. Somehow, she had always felt that wet and dreary weather like this usually brings bad news and are bad omens.

Gavriel had immediately brought her up to the watchtower. It was already nearing midnight and the it was raining too. So, the night was so much darker than usual. However, the entire castle walls had been lit, and even the watchtower was not left out. Evie was thankful because she knew that the vampires do not need any lights as their vision is enhanced and could see well enough in the dark.

After fixing Evie's hood to cover her head well from the lightly falling rain, Gavriel then moved to cup her face and kiss her lips. "Are you ready for the battle, my love?" he asked when he pulled away, his voice still field with mischief.

"I am," Evie replied with confidence, "I know everything will be alright again."

"I hope you are not upset at me in not allowing you to be with me at ground level when the battle starts. You do understand my reasoning though, right...?" Gavriel asked Evie, his eyes searching hers intently.

Evie looked at him with hooded eyes for a few seconds. "Though I was slightly upset at first, I do understand your reasoning. I am just glad that you still allowed me to participate in the battle from up here as an archer." Evie finally said, putting Gavriel out of his nervousness that he did not know he had. "Thank you, Gav." Evie added softly with a grateful smile.

"Yes." He smiled back at her. "Just stay here and do the best you can. Once you're done, just wait for me. We'll end this war tonight." Gavriel told her with utmost confidence brimming in his voice, his eyes shining as he stared into hers.

She flashed a gentle smile at him. "Please be careful and come back to me safe and sound. I'll be here, watching over you, my love."

He pulled her in for a quick hug then kissed her forehead.

"I'm leaving her to you," he told Zolan and as soon as Zolan nodded, Gavriel was gone.

Evie immediately grabbed her bow and arrows. Her heart was drumming in hard thuds as she looked down into the darkness. This was it. She mumbled as her grip on her bow tightened. 'It will be alright. He will be alright. Everyone is going to be alright...' she whispered to herself again. 'My husband is very strong. He is the strongest there is. No one could hurt him.'

But as she looked up into the dark sky, Evie's eyes widened in shock. Lightning began to flash intensely in the sky and thunder boomed loudly. Her heart froze, knowing what this phenomenon was indicating.

No... wait... this cannot be true... Father!! Her mind screamed as she saw a dark figure emerging from the thick clouds lit up by countless lightning.

Chapter 159 - Maybe

The shock rendered Evie immobile as her eyes were fixed to the dragon that was emerging from the thick dark clouds. Her mind and her heart were trembling in fright because of the fact that the dragon was already called. How can this happen?

Evie knew that calling the dragon was always the last resort. The dragon guardian would never call the dragon immediately because it was always their secret weapon. Apart from that, the main reason was because the guardians cannot keep the dragon for a long a time nor could they control the dragon however they wanted to. Dragon guardians do not have full control over the dragons they summon as opposed to general views. Thus, it was always a rule that the guardians would only call on the dragon when it was time for the final battle or when they were sure they were on the losing end.

So why? Why was the dragon already summoned out here when the war had even yet to begin? Most importantly, Evie could not believe that her father actually called upon the dragon after all the things that they had discussed, and she had disclosed to him about. She had told him everything. She had told him the truth... so why? What was going on? Something had to have happened. Something wrong must have befallen her father!

"Fuck!" Zolan cursed watching the dragon heading towards Dacia. They were not prepared for this. Just like Evie, the vampires knew about the guardian's strategies. They already knew about everything, even the exact amount of time a dragon would take to stay and fight before leaving the battlefield. Zolan had an access with all the records the vampires had about the guardians and dragons, so he already knew about everything.

However, never had they expected that the guardian would have summoned the dragon right at the start – even when both sides of the armies have yet to clash with each other. Worse was that the dragon was going to reach them first before any clash would happen.

Zolan could only grit his teeth as his gaze searched for Gavriel.

Their eyes immediately met. 'Take my wife and bring her to the dungeons, NOW! Have the women and children hide there as well!' Gavriel ordered and before Zolan could even hesitate, Gavriel roared the word 'NOW!', causing Zolan to curse again and suddenly, he grabbed Evie.

"Pardon me Princess, but His Highness had already ordered me to bring you to the dungeons now!" Zolan said and he was about to leap away with her when Evie pushed him away and screamed 'no'.

"No! I will stop my father!" she yelled at Zolan. "The dragon will not go against us! I have already spoken to my father! He knew that Gavriel is not the enemy! He does not plan on going against us!" Evie struggled as she hastily explained all that to Zolan breathlessly.

"Then how are you going to explain this, Princess? If the guardian is really on our side, he would never have summoned the dragon this early on." Zolan stated the blunt facts.

His statement was like a slap in her face, forcing her to accept the reality of things at the moment. Evie shook her head, unable to accept what Zolan had said.

"Please, let's go. This is His Highness' order." Zolan approached her again, but Evie quickly stepped back.

"No. There must be some mistake somewhere. My father knows that I am here. How could he call for the dragon? He knows that the dragon does not discriminate friend from foe! He would not attack Dacia knowing that I am still within these walls. He will never harm me! Let me stay here... so he could see me! I'm not going to go and hide!" Evie blurted out as she stepped away from Zolan's reach.

Zolan was torn and did not know what to do. He would normally follow the prince's order whatever the circumstances they might be in. And it seems this would be the first time that he was going to disobey the prince's order. He was fully aware of what was at stake here, but he wanted to believe in the Princess. He did not know why, but there was a nagging feeling deep within him saying that putting the princess in the dungeon to make her safe was a very bad move. He also wanted to believe that they were not doomed yet. And what the princess' said was true. That perhaps this was not what it looks like.

Maybe, this was just a decoy, and that the dragon would turn its back and burn the enemy instead if the guardian saw the Princess fighting here for Prince Gavriel and Dacia!

In that instant, Zolan ordered his men to have the duchess lead the children and women to the dungeons. He then proceeded to drag Evie away from the edge, so she would be hidden from Gavriel's view.

"I know His Highness would skin me alive for this later... but I am going to put my trust in you, Princess." He said with an ironic smile. For the first time, he was truly going to disobey Gavriel and believe in someone else. But oh well, he reasoned in his mind, was this woman not His Highness' other half? He could use that point of view to argue his case with the prince later.

Heaving a long sigh, Zolan braced himself. His intuition told him to believe in her this time, but if all things fell through, and it turned out that he was wrong, he at least knew that he was still capable of saving her from a dragon's attack. Though, that would most probably be the cost of his own life, of course.

"Thank you, Zolan." she breathed out in relief as a huge and bulky vampire maneuvered the dragon killing arrow and aimed it right at the dark dragon that was still quite far from them.

"Where is my father?" Evie asked.

Zolan's eyes focused towards the approaching army and his gaze settled on the silver-haired man riding in front on a white horse. But the moment he focused on Lucius' face, his brows creased into a hard knot, as if he had seen something unbelievable.

Chapter 160 - Clash

"Princess, your father's eye color is amber, right?" Zolan still asked, despite knowing that all dragon guardian had that distinct feature of having an amber-colored eyes.

"Yes. Why? What has that got to do with any of this?" Evie was confused at where the question was headed to.

At Evie's answer, Zolan's jaws clenched. At that moment, he realized that they were royally screwed. He had seen the guardian's appearance before, and though this Lucius still appeared the same, he still felt that there was something off with the man. After observing carefully, he saw that his eyes were no longer the bright and warm amber that Evie had confirmed with him, but an olive-green hue serpent-like eyes, as well as that evil smirk plastered on his face, Zolan gnashed his teeth before his gaze flew back to Evie.

"Princess... I think your father is not himself anymore." Zolan hated to be the bearer of bad news to Evie but he could only tell her the truth now.

"Wh-what do you mean?!" Evie was taken aback, shock reflected on her face.

"His eyes are different now... they seem to be more serpent-like... I believe that the dark fae... must have possessed your father's body."

Shock and disbelief filled Evie's eyes and before she could shake her head in denial, the dragon that had been flying high above the meadow suddenly dove downwards.

The dragon landed right in front of Caius' army.

"What's going on?" Evie asked frantically. She could see the dragon landing on the ground like an obedient pet. She knew for sure that her father's or the previous guardians' dragons never did that. The dragons usually simply fly over the sky upon being summoned, then after breathing out fire and destroying everything, it would fly away and return to where it came from, leaving the guardian exhausted as their powers were drained from the summoning.

"T-the guardian is climbing up the dragon's back." Zolan informed Evie, and she could only stand there in shock, her mouth hanging open in disbelief. That was totally unheard of! A dragon guardian climbing on top of the dragon's back? That was something that had never happened before! Never!

On the ground, Gavriel calmly clenched the hilt of his sword in his grip as his gaze was fixed against the man who was now seated on the back of the dragon. There were no other explanations. This man was not himself anymore. He was no longer Lucius, the doting father of Evie, nor just merely human anymore. He was now... something else. Gavriel was glad he had sent Evie away. Because he did not know what going to happen at the rate things are progressing this way.

When his gaze met that serpent-like eyes, Gavriel immediately felt the danger. It was extreme enough that he could sense it all the way from this side. And that gave him the chills – not because he was afraid for himself, but he was afraid for how it would affect Evie. He knew right then and there that it was not going to be as easy a war as he had expected and planned.

The moment the dragon catapulted powerfully off the ground with only one flap of its mighty wings, bearing together with it the seemingly possessed guardian on its back, Gavriel roared. "Everyone spread out!"

The Dacrians moved immediately to the prince's order and then the fire came rolling in.

"Attack!!!" he ordered nonetheless, and his men advanced to clash against Caius' army. Gavriel knew that no matter what, his soldiers could never be able to do any harm against the dragon. Thus, their only choice now was for his men to attack the enemy soldiers instead of just being burnt to the ground. If the dragon still went after them, at least, it would burn the enemies along with them.

He, on the other hand, changed direction, leaving the battle on the ground to Samuel and his other men.

His aim was to kill the dragon. There were no one else who could do this. On top of that, Gavriel did not want any harm to come to Lucius, though he believe he was now being possessed by the dark fae. If he could kill the dragon, and capture Lucius, they might be able to find a way to undo the possession of the dark fae. Gavriel promised to himself that he would do just so – as this was his wife's father. She would definitely be heartbroken if anything happened to him, even though that person was currently not quite her father anymore.

As the dragon breathed out fire on his attacking soldiers, Gavriel stood there, as still as a stone and looking up into the sky, bidding his time. His eyes then began changing from red to vivid blue. He could see the man at the back of the dragon laughing hysterically, watching the vampires being scorched and reduced to ashes. All the expressions that flashed across his face was the definition of evil and Gavriel was glad his wife was not present down here with him to be able to see this.

When the dragon finally aimed its flames at him, Gavriel dodged the ball of fire with ease. The man's laughter halted and his face contorted with anger. The dragon roared and then it came after Gavriel.

His soldiers and Caius' army finally clashed fiercely. The sound of clashing swords and the battle sounds began to fill the once silent atmosphere.

Gavriel continued luring the dragon towards the watchtower. He had glanced at the man maneuvering the dragon-killing arrow and gave him the orders to shoot the dragon down when it was within range.

Unbeknownst to him, Evie was still up there on the watchtower. Further back from the walls and watching what was happening from her higher vantage point.

Seeing that dragon was reaching them, Evie's eyes circled wide as she stood there, frozen. Time seemed to have halted and she clearly saw how the dragon received a huge arrow that was aimed right in the centre of its chest.

As she watched the dragon sway and fall slowly, lessening its distance from where she was, Evie felt the heat in her chest intensify. Completely oblivious that the necklace had been glowing up for a while now since the dragon flew towards the watchtower, and that the closer the dragon got to her, the brighter the glow grew.

And at that very moment, without her realizing, the amber glow was already enveloping her.