

SPELLBOUND 181

Chapter 181 - The Right Thing

Zolan and Luc saw how the determination was showing on Evie's face. They guessed that the thoughts currently occupying the princess' mind would somehow be related to her unique abilities and what she had planned for this journey to the heart of the forbidden lands.

Zolan recovered first before Luc. "Now get out of there and go get dressed!" Zolan yelled at the other vampire who was still standing in the stream when he just stood there and looked as though he was still trying to pull himself out from a certain magical experience.

Embarrassed, Luc immediately stepped out of the waters and left Zolan and Evie by the flowing stream.

"By the way, Zolan..." Evie started as she dipped her hand into the water again. "That... giant orc... I heard someone saying that it was nothing like what you have encountered before. Does this mean that this is the first time you are seeing such creature here?"

"It's not the first time, Princess. There were orcs here before. But that one a while ago was the largest we have ever encountered and is even much more powerful than the last one we manage to kill."

"Is it because that orc's eyes were the same colour as that dark fae?" Evie asked, having an inkling that it was the reason for the difference in the orc.

Zolan could not respond immediately. Alarm flashed in his eyes. "Are you saying that you felt the presence of that dark fae in that savage orc as well?!" Zolan did not think that the princess would have had observed closely enough to be able to pick that detail out as well.

"I don't think I felt the dark fae's presence in that orc." She answered and Zolan drew out a deep sigh of relief. Just the thought of that dark fae actually possessing orcs and following them made him panic for a moment. It would be such disaster if that was true!

"But, for some reason, just like that dark fae, I feel like the orc is after me as well. Like it too, wants something from me. But unlike the dark fae, that beast doesn't seem to want to capture me... it seemed more intent on wanting to kill me."

Her words made Zolan swallow hard. He had noticed it already. He was just surprised that the princess could actually tell the orc's real intent too.

Normally, orcs will go after whoever they see. But that orc actually had its eyes focussed on the princess and was determined to chase after her instead of focusing against the ones attacking him, like what a beast normally would have done.

"Or maybe these beasts behave differently sometimes, I guess?" Evie threw out her thoughts as she did not know the normal behaviours of these beasts in the forbidden land. She then tilted her head as she scooped water and washed her face.

"I'm not sure, princess. But maybe, we could find the answer as we go along on our journey. Though, I am hoping we won't be meeting such a beast again. That would be too dangerous for you, especially."

"Someone... a light fae..." Evie started suddenly, "when I stopped that dragon, a light fae showed up in front of me. She told me... or perhaps I should say that she had insisted quite persistently that I must go to the heart of the forbidden land as soon as possible for me to find all the answers to my questions."

Zolan had his eyes wide. So, this was what had happened and the reason behind the princess' dangerous undertaking on travelling to the heart of the forbidden land!

"She said that she was the presence outside my door... not the dark fae... and that she was waiting for my awakening before being able to approach me." She continued. "I didn't manage to ask her anything though, because she vanished once she told me to go to the forbidden land. Do you think my decision of following through on what she said was the right thing to do?" Evie was hesitant as she asked Zolan, a little afraid that he would say no.

"Absolutely, princess. I strongly believe that deciding to go on a journey immediately is the best thing you did, princess. I am certain you have so many questions about yourself, and this journey would be the only way for you to find all the answers you are seeking. So don't worry, you did the right thing. Never doubt that princess." Zolan stated and Evie flashed him a slight smile. On the inside, only Evie knew just how relieved she was after hearing Zolan's reply. His confirmation on her actions gave her the boost of confidence that she had made the right choices. She was initially confident, but as they travelled further into the heart of the land, doubts sometimes assailed her mind, especially at those times when she was seeing these men risking their lives to protect her. Thus, it was heart warming to know that Zolan too, approved of her decision.

"Thank you. I think I was just feeling a little worried that I'm putting you all to harm by following along with me on this journey." She laughed shortly.

"Don't worry, princess. We will make sure to take care of ourselves while protecting you." He smiled encouragingly and Evie nodded. "Alright, why don't you take your bath for now, Princess?" Zolan changed the topic as he stared at the filthy greenish coloured goop that were staining her hair and clothes.

"Ah, yes..." Evie looked at her clothes and she finally realized how filthy she was.

"I'll have Elias bring you your clothes," he said, and Evie nodded as she stepped into the water.

The water again turned into a bright golden liquid that the men could not help but notice the change of colour in their surroundings. It was as if that there was a bigger flame that had been miraculously sparked in the stream.

Chapter 182 - Tomorrow

"All of you men! Turn your backs!" Luc clapped his hands together as he barked out the orders and Zolan approached the men.

"Huh? Why do we need to? We are already behind a large rock." Levy complained.

"Still! Have some respect and let's give the princess the ultimate privacy she needs and deserve!" Luc insisted and with a sigh, the men turned. Some of them rolled their eyes at Luc's dramatic orders. There was truly no way for any of them to see anything of the princess bathing as the huge rock truly blocked all sight from the stream where she was washing up in.

The moment Zolan sat with them, and Elias was back from bringing her clothes over, Zolan started telling his comrades about what the princess had told him.

Seated on a small rock the stream, Evie quickly washed herself up. She knew that her men were very respectable, and they had also been so considerate to her ever since they followed her. But she knew she still needed to get things done with haste and not waste any time. Especially, knowing that this place was not entirely safe as a beast could appear at any time.

Thus, after making sure she was thoroughly clean from all those nasty fluids coating her, she left the water and changed into the fresh set of clothes that Elias had handed her. She took a while though as she still had to wash the goop off her clothes.

Evie had never done the washing of her own clothes before, so she took quite a bit longer than necessary in cleaning it up, making the men start to worry.

"Hey, Elias, don't you think the princess is taking way too long with her bath?" Reed asked worriedly.

"Well, yes... she's indeed taking much longer than she usually does..." The butler was also looking quite worried compared to the rest of them, and that just made the men even more anxious.

"Don't you think someone should go check on her?" The quiet big man said in a serious tone and Leon agreed with a nod. He too, felt that the princess was taking a bit too long compared to those times he remembered she took when he was guarding her.

"Yeah. I think someone should go check on her now." Reed butted in. "What if she slipped and hurt herself or something?"

"Y-you're right... something might have happened!"

"You go check Elias, you're the butler here!"

"B-but... I don't want to go. What if she's just taking her time? I'd never want to risk disgracing the princess by walking in on her bathing! I don't want to die yet!" Elias moaned out dramatically.

"Are you an idiot? The prince is not here so you will not die. And it's not like you're going to actually peek on her! Or are you..??"

"NO!! But even if the prince is not here, I still feel like I'm gonna be dead even if it's just accidentally. But I just wanted to make sure she's alright! You know our prince is beyond logic when it comes to the princess!" Elias rolled his eyes as the rest of the men just nodded sagely, fully agreeing to his statement.

"Sigh... Elias, just go do it. You are the most obvious choice. Close your eyes tight and just call out to ask if she's fine! Don't waste any more time."

"Then why don't I just yell from here? It is the same, isn't it? That way, I don't need to even go over and risk my life!"

"Alright, alright... just do it now! What if she's already drowning –"

"Shut up. The water's so shallow, you idiot. So, it is not likely that she'll drown. It is literally only a few inches of water even if she just sits in the stream."

"You underestimate the fragility and frailness of a human, Elias. Don't forget that the princess is still human. I saw a human girl died just because she tripped and hit her head when she fell."

The vampires all had their eyes wide at Levy's words. And extreme worry immediately filled their eyes.

"Princess!! Are you alright?!! Are you still there?! Please say something! We are worried here!" They all suddenly start yelling.

Evie was jolted by the sudden cacophony of loud voices shouting out her name and asking if she was fine. It was then that she realized she had indeed taken much too long with her bath and washing up her clothes that it ended up worrying them.

"I... I'm fine!!" she yelled back. And all of them sighed out in relief simultaneously and loud enough, that Evie could actually hear their sighs of relief. She chuckled to herself at how much they were worrying for her. "I was just washing up my clothes! That was why I took a little longer than usual." Evie shouted back her explanation to further put their hearts at ease.

The men's eyes whipped immediately to Elias. "The princess is washing her own clothes?!!!" They whispered amongst themselves and giving him looks that Elias sprang up from his seat as though he were sitting on hot burning coals.

"I know. I know... I'm going!" the butler frantically blurted out but instead of running towards the stream, he called out loudly first. "Princess! Can I come over to where you are now?! Are you already decent?"

"Oh... yes... it's alright now." Upon hearing her reply, the butler immediately dashed over to her. But to his utter dismay, the princess was already done washing her clothes.

"Where can we dry these?" she asked as she held up her dress that was dripping wet. With a regretful sigh, Elias immediately took the dress off her hands and draped the article of clothing to dry by the fire.

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After dinner and a quick meeting with the vampires discussing the plans for their journey tomorrow, Evie finally entered her tent and stretched herself out on the cloths Elias had spread as her bed.

Her mind was full of thoughts zipping around. Wondering what will happen tomorrow. Zolan had said that they were about to reach the place of the dragons latest by tomorrow afternoon. And after they pass through that area, they would finally reach that secret place the dragons were guarding. Would these dragons listen to her and let her pass through? Or would they need to fight them to death like that serpent-eyed dragon the dark-fae had summoned?

She remembered that amber-eyed dragon which she could communicate with and then recalled that it was dead. Evie's heart clenched in sadness and regret as she curled up on her makeshift bed. She also wondered what has happened to her father who was still under the possession of the dark fae, and her heart ached even more.

Then Gavriel's face appeared in her head. She took a shaky breath as she grabbed her necklace with both hands and clenched it hard.

"Gavriel..." she whispered as she closed her eyes and tears fell from her eyes. "I miss you so much."

Chapter 183 - Fog

It was still a little dark when Evie and her six vampire companions broke up camp and erased the marks of them being in the area. Once all traces of them setting up camp were removed, they embarked on their journey once again, moving efficiently and silently.

Once they reached another area, they ended up having to walk because the forest they had just entered was pretty dense. The undergrowth did not allow the vampires to run fast. It was also impossible for them to leap and travel above the tree line because of the thick blanket of poisonous fog covering the top of the forest.

The forest they had entered looked as though as it was always stuck in twilight even though it was still early morning. Evie guessed that the thick fog covering the tops of the trees was the reason that it was this way. The light could not fully penetrate the fog thus, giving it that twilight look constantly.

Zolan had said that they would be able to find the dragons at the end of this forest. And he had said that this forest was mostly quiet. Even the beasts seem to avoid it instinctively.

As they walked further in, Evie could not help but feel nervous. She could only think that it was most probably nervousness because she was certain it was not fear that she was feeling. Even though she could not forget how terrifying that green-eyed dragon which was summoned by the dark fae was, it was not enough to make Evie end up fearing the dragons. She just could not seem to feel that fear and she knew that it was a good thing.

Taking a deep breath, Evie's eyes gleamed bravely as she looked on ahead.

The vampires surrounding her were currently in their utmost alert state. Their minds were all focused on one thing. A fight against the dragons. All of them were ready and prepared to fight the dragons in the event that they ran across one – or more.

They could not help but feel anxious as all of them, except Leon, still very well remembered the ferocious fight they went through against those powerful creatures. If they fight one without the prince, they were certain a few of them will not managed to get pass through it alive. And if there were more dragons... there was a very high chance that all of them might get wiped out.

It had been on all their thoughts last night as they rested. They had resolved within themselves that whatever happens, they would do everything they could to protect the princess and stay alive. But if all else fails, they had to accept that it could not be helped if one or more of them fell to the dragons. Such matters were always inevitable as long as the princess is kept safe, and she would be able to reach her destination in one piece.

However, every time they thought of the princess and relive everything that she had done back in Dacia, the men's hope just burned brighter. And their uncertainties disappeared. That was right, even if the prince was not with them right now, the princess was. She would definitely manage to somehow come up with something miraculous to deal with those dragons and they will get past them alive!

Thus, with that hope flaring in their hearts and faith burning in their eyes, the group continued on with the princess moving in the centre of their protective formation.

Evie started to notice something odd about that the path they were walking on. It somehow seemed as though it were something created and not there due to the wear and tear of consistent walking that had made it. It was covered with a lot of things such as, leaves, twigs, and mosses, but Evie could still tell that this path made of ice-bluish flat stones might be quite wide before nature had swallowed it and covered its beauty.

There were also arch like stones along each side of the paths, but they too were covered with moss and most of the arches were destroyed. Evie wondered how beautiful this path would have been if it were to be restored to its former glory again.

As she looked around the quiet and dark forest, she felt that strange feeling coming over her again. But before she could ponder more about it, the earth shook, and the once deafening silence was broken and suddenly gone. Evie was shocked at the sudden change from peace and placid to chaos and confusion.

"Run!" Samuel bellowed out at once and the vampires moved to their places, ready for combat. Evie recognized this, as it was the same as yesterday when that savage orc had appeared. Only this time, it did not come on its own. There were many of them charging over and they are now very close to where Evie and the men!

Evie's heart thudded wildly as she turned to look behind her as she was fleeing. She could see them now, the gigantic orcs who did not seem to be affected by the poisonous fog above them as they leapt and landed right behind them. The others who were running just destroyed the trees blocking their way like they were just twigs.

"F*ck! They're going to reach us very quickly!!!" Samuel yelled and Zolan immediately looked over to Leon.

"Just run Leon! Don't ever stop no matter what happens and bring the princess to the gate of the dragons!!!" he yelled at Leon and the vampire could only nod.

But Evie was starting to feel the fear for her men after hearing what Samuel had shouted out to Leon. No... she could not just leave them behind like this and run for her life... they would not be able to defeat these many savage orcs on their own! It was already such a challenge for them to defeat one yesterday, how would they cope with today's number?!

Chapter 184 - Again

Evie thought it would literally be sending themselves to their deaths if they ended up confronting that savage group of orcs. What should she do? She needed to think of something fast!

She looked behind again and she saw the fight broke out. Even Elias, her butler, was forced to fight.

As she quickly looked about, counting the numbers of the orcs, Evie saw that there were seven savage orcs! There would be no way her men could defeat all of them!!!

Leon covered her head with his large palm and his pace quickened even more than just now. There were many trees that he was trying to evade but seeing that there was one orc that managed to get through the barrier that were their comrades and was now after the both of them, Leon could only

move faster. Evie could feel Leon's grip on her tightening to secure her while he run and evade around the trees.

The twigs were slapping against them as he sped up. He knew the princess would get whipped and lashed by the sharp points of the twigs, but he had no choice. These little scrapes and scratches would be preferable, as long as it was not life threatening!

Her cloak had already been shredded due to Leon's speed as they managed to get widen their distance from the orc a little. It was amazing how Leon still managed to evade the trees and the stone arches at the speed that he was going at.

However, Leon suddenly halted in his tracks and Evie heard cursing coming from him. She was disoriented for a couple of seconds from the sudden and screeching halt by Leon before she could reorientate herself and look around to identify what had happened.

Evie turned and saw a large stone blocking their path. The black stone was so large it was even taller than the surrounding trees and the poisonous fog was already covering half of it.

Without wasting a moment, Leon suddenly put Evie down and held her shoulders as he faced her.

"I'm sorry princess, but you'll have to go on ahead on your own! I will stop this orc from chasing after you right here. Don't worry, I will come after you immediately once I have dealt with it!" Leon said with a grin and a thumbs up for her. Evie only swallowed in concern for Leon's safety.

He smiled at her. "I know you can do it. I am quite certain that there are no more savage orcs on the other side. This might be the gate that Zolan had talked about. The dragons are close now! So, go now, please!" Evie could hear the pleading in his voice.

Before Evie could say a word, Leon grabbed Evie's arm and led her towards a small hole under the large stone. He squatted and upon seeing that the small hole was safe for her to enter, and it was leading towards the other side, Leon gently yet hastily pushed her towards it.

"Please go!" He hurried her to enter the entrance.

Then after saying that, he was gone. As the orc finally reached them, Evie looked behind her shoulder and Leon was already attacking it in the hopes of stopping it from going for Evie.

Her heart bled and her body started to shake. It was happening again. First, her husband made the sacrifice so she could escape. Now her men too were doing the same thing. She was scared to death... that none of them would return to her too... like Gavriel...

"No!" she screamed out as she clenched her fists over her ears. She then crawled into the hole as fast as she could and upon getting out, she started to run again. This was not the time for her to collapse and cry again! She would not give up!

"Wait for me! Hold on everyone! I'll come and help you!!!" she screamed as she continued running. The small wounds she sustained from the wild chase a while ago began to bleed. But she could not feel any pain. All her mind was focused on was just one thing. To reach the dragons and have them help her men and save them from the orcs! She was going to save them! She will save them! Wait for me, please!!

Evie ran and ran. She had tripped over and tumbled on the ground twice and scraped her knees raw due to the small stones on the ground, but she did not stop. The darkness that was thickening as she continued running further.

But despite the bleak situation she was faced with, there was no hint of giving up in her eyes. She rose and ran again as she bled, and her eyes began to glow even brighter the closer she reached the darkest part of the path. Evie just knew that she was getting close. Closer to the edge. To the end of this path. She did not know how she knew it. She just did. It was as though she could feel it in her bones.

She entered the darkness without hesitation, despite not knowing if there was light beyond it or if she could even see anything pass it. Without even slowing down, she just ran and to her relief, she realised that she could see something up ahead.

There were two much larger stone arches looming before her. They were so much larger compared to the huge stone that had blocked their path a little while back.

However, these two arches did not seem like they were swallowed by nature like the rest of the other arches behind her. These were even glowing!

Evie's heart thudded so wildly as she rushed towards it. Dragons! Where are you?! She screamed inside her and at last, she ran through the arch.

And the moment she went through it, two large amber coloured eyes opened in the darkness right before her and aimed its blazing gaze at her.

Chapter 185 - No Use

"Reed!!!" Levy yelled as he jumped towards Reed who had been viciously thrown on the hard ground. The same giant orc which had attacked Reed was lifting its large feet right above the bleeding and battered vampire. It was planning to step on Reed and literally going to flatten him like a pancake. Reed was going to die if nothing was done!!!

Cursing, Levy forced himself to leap towards the young man. Sh*t! Can I make it in time?!

Levy extended all that he had to speed over to the fallen Reed. By some miracle, he managed to get to Reed, but the giant orc's foot was only a couple of feet away from flattening Reed – and himself if he did not time his rescue perfectly. He could only grit his teeth as he grabbed and pulled on Reed with all his might to barely escape that boulder like foot from smashing into them both. As he skidded to the ground with Reed beside him, the stomp of the orc had created a little dust mist before settling down after a few seconds. When it saw that Reed was rescued, the giant orc roared out before taking another step forward to attempt flattening Reed, but this time with Levy included. Levy could not catch his breath as he dragged the injured Reed with him, all the while seeing the shadow of the large feet coming down right behind him.

They both thudded on the ground again. Reed had been badly hit and fiercely battered till his entire body was now bleeding from multiple cuts and wounds.

"Retreat!" Zolan's voice was the next thing Levy heard and when he looked back, he saw Zolan and the others covering for them. Zolan was also bleeding. Levy had never seen Zolan bleed this badly in any of their previous fights before. "Run! We'll try and make a run for it to reach the dragon's gate!!! Take Reed and run now!!!" Zolan quickly shouted out his plan.

Levy did as Zolan had said and he started running with Reed in tow. His body was screaming in pain, but he did not dare slow down nor take a breather as that huge lumbering orc was taking large steps to catch up to them. He knew they could not allow that orc to catch up. If it did, that would just spell their deaths right there and then.

The fight earlier on had been so ferocious and all of them were already on their last legs.

They had managed to kill off three orcs out of the six that were pursuing them, but now they could barely move from all their wounds and broken bones. Those savage beasts were definite at par with the dragons in terms of strength. If only these beasts were able to breathe out fire too, they might be almost as strong as the dragons. Just that they would be severely lacking in the looks department as orcs were not as elegant and majestic looking as the revered dragons.

And now, it was getting hopeless. They could not even have a moment to heal because the orcs were hellbent on killing them now that their prey, the princess, was out of their sight. The vampires could only hope that the princess had managed to reach the dragons now.

They saw that one savage orc had followed after them but since she was accompanied by Leon, the men were almost certain the man could deal with it. Somehow, deep within them they were confident and quite convinced that the princess would have reached the dragons by now.

Though they did not even know for sure if she would be safe from the dragons themselves, they could only hope and believe in their princess. It was only too bad that it seems some of them would not make it out and survive through this encounter.

The three savage orcs that are alive were still very much putting up a fight. And what a good fight they were giving the men too! While they were already battered and bruised black and blue all over, Samuel and Luc were still fighting against those huge orcs. But could they still managed to kill three of them off? They were so badly outnumbered and underpowered against these goddamned beasts!

Zolan had thought that maybe there were still a little hope for them if they managed to push their fight along and were able to reach the dragon's gate. He knew it should be alright for them to run towards the gates now because the princess must have reached the gate already! So bringing the orcs towards that direction should be safe enough. They would not be endangering the princess' life even if they themselves run towards the gates right now. However, the lingering thought in Zolan's mind was on whether they could survive long enough to get themselves all to the gate.

"Let's go, Samuel!!" Zolan yelled again and the huge man delivered a ferocious upstroke swing at the orc that had leapt at them from above and was about to smash its foot right on top of himself. These orcs were horrible! Even their fighting style were so unrefined and rough. They just crash, smash, tumble and stomp on anything or anyone they consider their enemies. "We need to head for the gates! Now!!"

Thankfully, Zolan's response was quick enough, and he managed to tuck and roll before springing it his feet and sprinting away from imminent danger. "F*ck!" Zolan could only curse up a storm, seeing how close it had been to him being dead and as flat as a plank of wood. He could already feel sweat rolling down his back. That was how dire their situation was at the moment.

Samuel grabbed onto Zolan's arm as one of his feet had been broken in the fight and they all started to run.

The orcs came at them like mad beasts.

"Sh*t! They're going to catch us! Damn it... run faster!" Luc cursed. Their speed had been slowed down due to carrying their injured comrades. There was no way in hell that they were abandoning anyone in favour of saving their own lives. However, the orcs seemed to have sped up even more. How was that even possible?

And just as Luc finished cursing out, the orcs had caught up to them. Samuel and Zolan tumbled over on the ground.

Luc had already started fighting them with everything that he had. He had to provide some sort of distraction for Samuel and Zolan to get up and ensure they were not being flattened into pancakes themselves. It seemed to be getting truly hopeless now.

Rising from the ground, Samuel looked over at Zolan. "Leave them to us. The rest of you go ahead with Zolan and look for the princess. You can still move, right? I believe you're the one the princess needs the most now."

Before Zolan could reply, Samuel leapt away from them and disappeared into the fog, not minding the poison before suddenly appearing out of nowhere, zipping down from a higher point and landing right on the head of one of the oncoming orcs. He slashed his sword at its head and all the rest of them could see was the ugly orc's head being cut into half.

Zolan forced himself to get up. He knew his broken bones would take a long while, probably days, to heal. With his current situation, he would not be of much use to the princess as compared to these two men who were much more powerful than him. Besides, the princess herself was quite as smart as the prince. He reasoned out that she would not be needing him that much. And that was why he should be the one to stay and try and act as the distraction for these beasts so that the other two can go on ahead.

"Zolan! I said to run now, f*ck!" Samuel growled as he blocked the orc that was about to slam into Zolan again.

"It's no use, damn it!" Zolan growled back and he leapt as well – albeit with a little trouble – helping Samuel to kill the beast. It was do or die for now.

As the three vampires turned their backs to each other, they gritted their teeth and gripped their swords tightly in their hands. Their eyes were locked onto the oncoming orcs. It was a tacit agreement between them that Zolan and Luc would take on one orc and Samuel would handle another one on his own.

Chapter 186 - Until The End

The orcs descended on them almost at the same time. Samuel looked up only to have the orc send a powerful punch aimed right at his face. He was already swinging his sword when he noticed too late that it was a feint! Could these slow-witted and dumb orcs know how to throw feints? Why did they not fight this way earlier? Could it be because he was having a one-to-one with it? Or could this be the leader of this group of orcs? Thus, making him a little smarter and with some brains.

While these thoughts ran through Samuel's mind, the orc had sent the second punch flying in from his blind spot. It caught him in the gut, and he doubled over, choking out the air before he was sent flying and crashed into a medium-sized boulder. Fortunately, he was used to it. Faced with brute

strength and being thrown around was something Samuel knew how to deal with. He was a little careless, but he was not going to make the same mistake again. His eyes narrowed and sharpened as he primed to launch himself at the oncoming orc.

Zolan and Luc were not having a better off time compared to Samuel, just because there were two of them against one orc. Zolan had launched himself at the orc despite his one broken foot. He knew his speed was lacking but he was hoping that Luc would follow up with an attack of his own behind his. As he swung his sword at the orc, he knew it was lacking. It felt too sluggish even to his own eyes. The orc, though large and lumbering, was a quick in its response to his attack and dodged his attack. Before Zolan could register the orc's sidestep, he was welcomed with a large orc fist into the side of his body, slamming him into the ground.

Luc was ready and followed up from that move. He went in for another slash at the orc's extended arm. Because of the unexpected attack, Luc's sword managed to hack into the orc's right arm and sliced it off just above the wrist. The orc howled and bellowed out in rage as green blood splattered over both Luc and Zolan. Luc grabbed Zolan before retreating a few feet from the raging orc. They looked at each other before nodding. Both understood with years fighting alongside the other how they wanted to commence attack. This was going to be a long and painful fight. Zolan smirked as he felt the ripples of pain through his torso. That was a good smash the orc had landed on him. He then growled before propelling himself along ground level, aiming for the feet of that lumbering oaf, knowing that Luc would be following up on his next strike.

As the vampires fought at their best, all three leaping above and coming down alternatingly through the poisonous fog, they finally managed to take down the other two orcs. Finally, there were rid of these pesky damned orcs.

However, before they could even smirk, the ground trembled violently again, making them exchange dismayed glances at each other. They only knew too well what that rumbling of the ground meant. More orcs were coming. The trio could only stand there, watching helplessly as more of the ferocious giants headed their way.

"Damn..." Zolan could only laugh helplessly. "It seems there's no way out of this mess for us, I see..."

"Well, we might as well kill as many as we can rather than letting them trample over us like this." Samuel's hard voice echoed as he brandished his sword and Zolan laughed again, this time bright and cheery.

"I really admire that spirit of yours Samuel." Zolan grinned as he looked at Samuel.

"Geez..." Luc sighed in regret. "Here I thought I am going to be so lucky to be able to see the heart of this land and brag off to everyone including the prince about it once we see him again." He lamented as he smiled. "I also thought I am going to find out the truth about the princess as well. I kinda wanted to witness her command a whole bunch of dragons... just imagining when it happens gave me a thrill and chills both at once. But yeah..." he sighed again, "it's too bad...but seems like we won't be living long enough to see it happen."

"Well, at least we did become a part of her journey. We did our best. It's indeed such a shame because I truly want to know who she truly is too..." Zolan said as he gripped his sword with his

bloody and trembling hand that had long lost its ability to feel due to repeated injuries he suffered from the orcs. "I'd like to see what she is capable of doing and who will she become once she gets out of this place... I guess, this is one of my biggest regrets now. Including the fact that I can't be there when the prince takes back his throne as well. But... oh well, this is inevitable. All I want now is for the princess to achieve her goals for this journey." Zolan shrugged nonchalantly, accepting his fate of dying at the hands of the orcs.

"Lift your heads, men..." Samuel suddenly said as he took a step before Zolan and Luc. "This is not over yet," he added, not unfeelingly, as he lifted his sword.

Zolan smiled, seeing the back of their silent leader. This man was their leader for a reason.

"Alright... might as well give a good fight until the end..." Zolan sighed as the orcs finally emerged right before them while the trio crouched to leap and fight probably for the last time. They were not fools to believe that they would come out alive in a fight with so many orcs, and in their current state. Unless... somehow a miracle happens.

"For our Prince and Princess! We'll fight till the end!!" Samuel roared and as the orcs were upon them, and right as they were about to leap, a bright light suddenly flared from above them, piercing through the thick fog above them. No, that was no light. It is fire?!!! D-dragons??!! The dragons have arrived??!!

Chapter 187 - Memo To The God Of Death

Holding their breaths, the vampires who had already come to terms and accepted that they were about to be killed off could only stand there frozen, not knowing how to feel right at that moment.

Their mouths were agape as they watched the dragon's flame spread out from above the canopy like a fiery blanket – though fiery, but a very welcomed one. This fiery blanket selectively reached out at opportune times to envelope the savage murderous orcs from their sight. And once it withdrew, no orc remained standing. What was left was either a large burning lump of flesh or even a pile of dark ash on the ground.

The scenario was so incredible and mind-boggling that they literally forgot to breathe for a long while before choking and gasping as their bodies struggled to drag in air before they blacked out. It was not until the majestic dragon landed right before them and continued breathing fire at all and any other incoming orcs who tried to attack the already exhausted men.

They could see the orcs writhing around desperately as they were burned by the dragon's fire. But the thing was, dragon's fire did not stop shooting out at them whenever they came close to the perimeter that the dragon was guarding – which was where Samuel, Zolan, and Luc were at.

Then the vampires felt the earth shook again and they knew that the orcs must be retreating now. The dragon continued to advance until all the remaining orcs were reduced to ashes. Only then did the dragon went catapulting off the ground.

Its power was so strong that the vampires were involuntarily knocked back to the ground from the force of it taking off into the sky.

Then again, they saw flames of its fire as it continued to give chase to the orcs that had already fled. It was obvious that the dragon was there to fully ensure that those horrible orcs would think twice... even thrice before coming back to attack them.

"Holy hell!" Luc uttered as he swallowed.

Zolan laughed a deep belly shaking laughter as he let himself fall back to the ground and sighed as he stared up into the sky.

"Can you believe it? We were just talking and regretting about how we were not going to be there to experience something like this... being rescued by a majestic dragon..." Luc added as he too followed in laughter and fell on the ground in exhaustion. Though unlike Zolan, he was smiling and laughing as though he could hardly believe what had just happened and he did not know how else to react but to laugh out softly.

"It's not the dragon who had rescued us... well, it was the dragon... but," Samuel's statement petered off as they saw the dragon already returning towards them. "I think it was the princess who had actually saved us." Samuel finished his sentence in a quiet reverential tone.

The dragon landed before them with its powerful wings flapping and stirring little whirlwinds on the ground. It caused the vampires to helplessly hold onto their breaths again in awe at the inspiring sight. Even though the majestic creature had just saved their lives, they were still feeling incredibly intimidated being before it, especially when it was literally standing imposingly right before their faces. Luc even gulped as he saw the dragon lowered its head to direct its intense gaze on them.

It was huge and so very dark. As dark as an onyx stone. Compared to the dragons they had encountered in Dacia, this dragon was much, much larger in stature. And they could tell it was even more dangerous and deadlier than the dragons they had seen previously. It was majestic but absolutely terrifying that they could feel their very bones shiver slightly!

Then they saw something small and silvery emerging from the dragon's back. It really was the princess!!! Their eyes rounded in surprise even though Samuel had already told them a while ago that it was the princess who had actually saved them.

She had just pushed the heavy hood of her dark cloak back over her head, exposing the thick silvery mane of hers. She smiled as she lifted her face and looked at them.

The sight of her sitting so easily on the back of a terrifyingly large dragon, looking quite calm and even cheerful, made the men break into smiles of pure pride. Here they were, being intimidated by the dragon but there she was, their princess looking quite fine and regal and incredible as she sat on that very same fearsome dragon that they were trembling at just looking at it.

"F*ck! I absolutely refuse to die now!" Luc put his hand on the large wound on his stomach, smirking, "Send a memo to the God of Death that he needs to take a rain check on collecting my soul. I need to live on longer to see more of these... I want to see the future of this princess of ours!"

"You're not the only one needing to send that memo, Luc..." Zolan said as he coughed up blood yet still, he was grinning away.

Seeing that the men were so badly injured, Evie was about to jump down and get to them, but the dragon was so tall and her seat so high up that she could not possibly jump down all on her own. She still did not know how to give it the command for it to crouch so she could climb down.

Recalling from before, when she had seen this dragon in the dark gate a while ago, Evie had tried to communicate with it. But the dragon did not seem to be able to understand her. It had just stayed

there and looked at her, its fiery eyes so focused on her as if it were trying to identify and recognize her. Her necklace was shining again right at that moment, but Evie did not have the luxury of time to even notice it. All she knew was that the necklace was her source of light in that dark space where the dragon was waiting.

Due to her panic that her men might be dying if she delayed any longer, Evie frantically and thoughtlessly approached the dragon, throwing caution into the wind and gambling on the possibility that it would not attack her. Despite realizing that it was so huge and definitely very dangerous, Evie was fearless. There was not a single ounce of fear in her heart as she ran towards it. Thankfully her gamble paid off.

Then without wasting a moment further, she somehow climbed into it. She could not think of any words to use on how to have it move. The dragon was resting on the ground so she was able to climb on its back all the while talking to him in her language that the dragon might never understand.

However, the moment Evie sat on its back, the majestic dragon instinctively rose, lifted its massive head, and roared. After getting over her shock, Evie patted its inky black scales and the dragon stopped roaring. Her necklace shone again and this time, her body also began to glow like how it did before during the war in Dacia.

And just like what had happened that time, an unknown word came to her mind, and she spoke it out of reflex as she lifted her hands and pointed towards where she came from.

Chapter 188 - Burn

"Hazyehr!!!" she had confidently yelled out, and the dragon crouched lower. Instinctively, she held onto its back as tightly as she could as she anticipated the dragon to fly.

It really did so in the next second and Evie was so terrified she would fall off its back! But she forced herself to calm down and when she finally opened her eyes, she was awed and thrilled at the same time, seeing that she was already soaring in the sky, seated on a magnificent ebony dragon.

At that moment, she could not quite explain what she felt. All she knew was that her nervousness dissolved instantly, and she was very calm again. She was even amazed at herself!

But she did not have time to ponder long about her feelings anymore. Her mind was immediately pulled towards her men, and she looked down. It was hard to see because of the fog covering the tops of the trees but thanks to the leaping orcs, Evie managed to pinpoint exactly where her men were.

She pointed at that spot and yelled the word 'hazhyer' again. And the dragon obeyed. She could understand the word now and knew that it means 'go'.

As the dragon dove towards the orcs, Evie felt the need to order it to breathe out fire from its mouth. But then she realised she did not know the command word for it! She waited for the word to come out voluntarily like previously, but it did not work.

Evie reflexively grabbed on her necklace and closed her eyes. It glowed even brighter when she gripped it hard in her palm. In her mind, she spoke. 'Please... save my men... burn those savage orcs...' she uttered as if praying and just like that, the dragon breathed fire and cleared the fog that were blocking their view.

She held her breath as the dragon breathed more fire and she was a little scared at the inferno that appeared before in the next moment. Instinctively, Evie hid her face but a moment later, she bravely lifted it again. She knew in her heart that the dragon would not bring harm to her.

She looked back the moment the dragon landed on the ground and when she saw her men, her grip on the dragon tightened. Seeing them all bloodied and battered to the extreme angered her and bravely, she pointed at the orcs in anger.

"Ryehza hinn!" she screamed, not realising she had once again uttered a command in a foreign language in her rage. And the dragon flew again and sprayed fire on all the fleeing orcs.

Evie was breathless as she watched her dragon burn the orcs down. Those new words came to her all of a sudden again as her anger somehow triggered the words to come to her. Those words that meant 'burn them'.

Feeling the anger in her heart, Evie took a deep breath and her heart calmed again. She looked down and saw that the forest was on fire now and that most of the orcs now were burned to ashes.

She remembered her men and she closed her eyes again. And as if it was suddenly so natural for her, as if she already knew this was the right thing for her to do, she uttered words in her mind as she held onto her necklace. 'That's enough, let's go back.' She said and the dragon circled around, heading to the place where her men were.

...

"Zolan! Samuel! Luc!" Evie called at them. "Climb up here, I will bring you all to the nearest water source!"

Evie had realized that her men needed healing now or their life might be in danger. She could see that their injuries were severe. Even though vampires were supposed to heal fast, the orcs had poisonous claws and fangs and it seems that her men might have inhaled the poisonous fumes from the fog as well.

Zolan had told her, their skin would turn greenish if they were exposed to the poisonous fog in this forest and would make them go numb and would eventually kill them after a few hours. She was not exposed to it because her dragon had cleared the fog first before diving towards the ground as if the dragon knew about it.

"Hurry!" Evie yelled again and Samuel hauled Zolan with him. They climbed onto the back of the dragon and the dragon immediately took off into the sky.

The men immediately smelled Evie's blood and they felt as though they would go mad. Thankfully, they were using the very last of their strength and all they could do at that moment was hold onto the dragon's spikes as to not fall off.

Evie immediately spotted a nearby stream past the foggy dark forest she believed was right before the gate.

She pointed at it and the dragon landed before the water.

Leon, Elias, Reed and Levy were already there to. It seems Leon had guided the three vampires there in the hopes that the small stream would heal them.

When Evie turned to order the men to go to the water, she froze. It was because she could see them looking at her with hunger now. Oh, no!

But suddenly, she was grabbed by someone and then the next thing she knew, she was already immersed in the water.

"Your blood is driving them mad, princess. I hope this water heals you first." Leon whispered into her ear as he soaked her in the water that had already turned golden.

Both of them breathed out a sigh of relief when her small wounds and scrapes began to close up and heal.

"Is the smell gone?" Evie asked and when Leon looked at the vampires who were now in the water themselves, he nodded with a small smile.

"Yes princess, they are back to normal now." He said and the vampires too, slumped over weakly in the water that was now starting to heal their wounds.

Chapter 189 - Feeling

While the vampires were all just sitting around in the stream, allowing the magical properties of the water to heal their wounds – both major and minor ones – Evie looked at the dragon who was still crouching down next to the stream. It looked as though it was purposely waiting right at that spot to stay and guard them, allowing them to heal without needing to worry about anticipating any attacks.

She smiled at it when all the adrenaline from all the things that had happened settled. Knowing that most of her men would have perished without this dark dragon's aid, Evie's eyes gloss over in gratitude as she approached it. Her heart felt full and was overflowing in thankfulness.

Since Evie could not leave the water until her men were fully healed, she had walked in the stream until she stood before it. She made sure she was still standing by the edge of the stream, her feet still fully immersed in the water.

The men who were still a little weak and tired out from their exertion watched her as she stood so close right in front of the dragon. Then she stretched out her hand towards it.

As though it was a domestic giant pet, the dragon lowered its head until Evie touched its tusk. And when the princess caressed its spikes as if she were petting it, the large dragon let out a purring growl.

The men were all startled and they all felt alarmed at the dragon's sound that they quickly scrambled from their sitting positions and leapt to their feet. Their body seemed to react instinctively from that deep and dangerous sounding growl. However, when they saw that their princess was smiling and still petting the dragon, they blinked and fell back into the water again. It seemed that they need to train their bodies soon to not react negatively towards every sound and movement their princess' dragon makes. Because from here on, there was no doubt now that their princess was the absolute master of this dragon. Perhaps, she might be even greater than that. They were excited and could not wait to see what else the princess would be surprising them with. She seems to have secrets like multiple layers which are slowly opening, revealing more and more startling things each time.

They could only think so because they have not even reached their destination and their princess was already doing wonders that had rendered them all speechless.

Looking at her in wonder, the men suddenly thought of their prince. And they wished he was here too to witness all these wondrous things the princess is doing all on her own. How mind-blown would he be to find that his beloved wife was now such an incredible dragon warrior, and most probably an unparalleled one. Somehow, they had a feeling that she would continue to grow into one.

"Thank you for helping us," Evie whispered to the dragon. The feeling she had towards the creature was just the same as what she had felt towards the first ever dragon that she had encountered in Dacia... no, for some reason, Evie felt stranger towards this one. The feeling was somehow... much more. It was as if she was already attached to it. And that attachment was not something that was newly formed but as if it was already there a long time ago. As if she met this very dragon once before and had formed that bond since then.

Her smile faded as she creased her brows in deep thought. Why was she feeling all these emotions? There was no way she had seen this dragon before! So, what was with all these emotions she is bombarded with?

Evie thought hard and long on it, but she could not come up with a sensible answer. In the end, she decided to stop trying to figure it out and thought that she might get an answer about this too once she reached her destination. That was right... she must be patient. Besides, she had the feeling that she was very close to her goal now.

When the men were finally fully healed and were once again energetic, Evie sighed out in relief. She was so thankful for this magical water too. Since without it, she would not know what to do at all to help the wounded men heal up.

"We're totally fine now, Princess!" Levy grinned at her as he bounced around on the ground as though to feel out his newly repaired body and testing it. "It's really amazing! I feel like I have already rested for weeks and now am back to my full vigour! I'm speechless!" he exclaimed, looking beyond impressed. They were literally bleeding out and poisoned to death just nearly an hour ago but now, their bodies had recovered as if nothing had happened!

Evie just smiled back with a small smile, not knowing how to even respond to the man's exultation. She was not even sure if they were fully healed because of her since there would not be any healing if this magical water did not exist.

Elias then took her hand and helped her out of the water before letting go. The butler was about to lead her to a hidden spot where she could change her clothes when all of a sudden, the scent of her blood quickly filled the air.

Leon was quick to stand before her as the other vampires immediately covered their nose.

Their eyes widened in shock and the pure blooded vampires eyes started to turn red in hunger! What was going on? They all saw that the princess' wounds healed up the moment she soaked herself in the healing waters?! How come her wounds reappeared?!

With a worried look on his face, Leon checked over Evie and saw that her wounds that had healed when she was in the water had since reopened. They even started to bleed as though they were once again fresh cuts.

Chapter 190 - Weakness

Evie's brows knotted in confusion as she stared at her now bleeding arms. She had suffered small cuts and bruises, there was even a small cut on her cheek. She then felt her knees weaken, as if she was suddenly beyond tired.

"Princess, I think you should go back into the water for now." Leon said in haste and upon seeing the other men struggling to keep themselves from approaching the source of the tantalising scent, Evie quickly turned and soaked herself into the waters again. She was more concerned for the men's struggles in withholding themselves. Because she was well aware it must be torturous for them.

Her wounds healed and the scent was gone again. The vampires all let out a deep shaky and very much relieved breath. That was close!

Then they all looked at each other. Worry was now filling their eyes. They didn't understand what was going on with the princess.

"It seems the healing water only works on us and not on the princess." Zolan said, his face grave. "Do you still have the herbs you used before on the princess?" he asked as he turned to Leon.

The purple eyed half-blood shook his head. "I think I must have lost the medicine I brought during the fight with that orc. I'll backtrack our steps and try to look for it." Leon said and without wasting a moment, he disappeared before them.

Zolan motioned with his head at Samuel and Reed to follow Leon and the men immediately disappeared as well. They must find the princess' medicine as soon as possible because they were not certain if that plant could even be found growing in this land. As Zolan looked around, he actually doubted it since this place have not seem to have seen the sun for a very long time. That particular plant would not be able to survive here!

Glancing back at the princess, Zolan could not help but feel a little worried, realizing that despite their princess' powers, she was still very much vulnerable. It was really very strange that the water's healing magic was not working on her. Was it because of her human body?

That reason did not sound quite right to him, though. It did not make sense that she could heal others and not herself. But then again, perhaps, every powerful being always have their weakness. Perhaps, their princess' weakness was her vulnerable and fragile human body...

After some time, the men finally returned and to their relief, they had found the medicine that Leon had brought along with him. It was still safely wrapped up in a leather pouch.

"Alright, we'll leave the rest to you. We'll move away from this area for now so the princess can come out of the water," Zolan said, and Leon nodded.

"Don't go away too far." Evie said right before the men left. "My dragon sent those orcs far away... but just in case."

"Yes, Your Highness," they smiled, "don't worry about us."

When the men were gone, Evie waited for a long while before she finally stepped out of the water. She felt weak again and ended up swaying where she stood.

Leon caught her arm and helped her towards a colourful rock where her clothes were placed there by Elias.

"I'm fine now, I'll call you once I'm done." Evie told him and Leon quietly turned away and sat behind the rock. He brought out the medicine and spread it on a clear flat stone.

The dragon was right behind him, quiet and immobile. But its large amber eyes were opened and observing his moves closely. Leon would never have thought he would one day walk and work right in front of a massive and dangerous dragon as if it was only a docile harmless pet. It was still quite hard to believe every time he glanced at the dragon.

"I'm done," the princess voice was weaker than before, so Leon immediately rushed towards her. She was holding on to the rock in order not to fall over.

Worried, Leon gathered her in his arms before settling her on the makeshift bed Elias had prepared for her next to the cackling fire. She should not be catching a chill as she was already weakened from her blood loss.

The man did not waste a moment longer and treated her wounds as quick as possible. Her legs and knees suffered the most and her palms too.

"You didn't get exposed to the poisonous fog, did you, Your Highness?" Leon asked while treating her knees.

"I don't think so. My dragon cleared up the fog with its fire before diving through it." Evie explained. "Don't worry, I don't think I feel anything wrong inwardly. I just feel very exhausted. Like I had run for hours and now I'm feeling like I'm about to collapse. My knees are actually shaking." She laughed, now realizing that she had actually run from that stone blocking the path to where the dragon was. She had run so fast and for what seemed to be so long as though it had consumed her entire life.

Her eyes dropped slowly as she watched the wound on her palms Leon was treating. "I think I'm going to sleep now..." she murmured and dozed off almost immediately and swayed before looking as though she would tumble over. Before Leon could grab her, the dragon's tail was suddenly there, serving as a support that she could lean back on.

Leon blinked then looked at the dragon's eyes. He did not know why but he suddenly felt the same chill he experienced from the prince before. Though the chill he had experienced from the prince was definitely more intense, Leon felt that this dragon seemed to be quite protective of the princess too. Leon innocently tilted his head as if trying to figure out a puzzle, and then shook his head as if to shake away some silly thought. He needed to focus on healing the princess as his top priority.

"Thank you," he only said to the dragon, thinking that it was only trying to help, and then he continued with his task being more at ease now.

When he was certain that there was no more scent leaking out, he went and called for his comrades.

The vampires all looked at the scenario before them in wonder. Their princess sleeping and leaning against her dragon as if a little girl and her massive pet.

"Somehow..." Luc muttered, "I'm glad our prince is not here because I am certain he'd be jealous of a dragon too."

All the men agreed without any hesitation. Reed and Zolan even rolled their eyes and Samuel only huffed while a smirk flashed across his lips.

"I can totally imagine him being so petty and then end up competing with the dragon to get all of his wife's attention." Zolan commented.

"He'll definitely do that." Luc responded with a nod.

"Agreed. He might even join the princess and shamelessly treat the dragon as his pet too."

"Most definitely!!" The men chorused as they were happily brushing off their prince since he was not there to berate them.