

SPELLBOUND 191

Chapter 191 - Unknown Reason

Evie had slept peacefully the entire night while the vampires took turns to go out and hunt for food. To their relief, there were many non-magical animals roaming around the forest near the dragon's gate. Thus, there was no problem for them in hunting down game to stock up on their food supply.

In the past, the vampires had to bring blood along with them during their journey to the forbidden land because they had found out that there were almost no normal animals around. They had seen orcs and other beasts eating the normal animals, so they knew they had to compete with the beasts to get food.

But by the gate, the animals were quite aplenty. It seems that the dragons were not touching them and that was why they took refuge within this area.

The entire night, the men had been worrying. Their princess' wounds were considered quite minor, but they were worried that she might be exerting herself too much and overusing her newfound powers lately. They also cannot help but think that it might be the reason why the princess had passed out and was unable to heal herself even when using her own magic.

Thankfully, the princess woke up at the normal time like she usually does. She did not oversleep like how the men were anticipating. And she looked quite fine too! Giving her a once over, they noticed she was fresh faced, and her eyes were clear.

Elias immediately helped her up and then brought her over to where the food had been prepared. Once she was seated and Elias handed her a plate of food, the men started too and ate together with her. Well, the princess' food was not a fish this time, but red meat that they had hunted. With Elias as the cook, the food was sure to be delicious, so they all sat down for breakfast. They now have a quiet but incredibly dangerous and large guard with them now, so the men were relaxed while having their meal for the first time in a long while.

"Please eat more, Princess..." Elias said as he went on to give all the most delicious and juiciest parts of the meat to Evie.

Evie gladly accepted the offers knowing that they were already worrying about her well-being. She did not want to make them worry so she must eat a little more than usual to ease their worries.

"Thank you," she said then they continued with their merry breakfast.

As she was finishing her food, Evie glanced at the quiet dragon who was sitting silently but attentively behind them. It had not moved from that exact same spot since last night. In fact, it had been protecting the princess with its wing extended over her prone sleeping form, serving as her tent the entire night.

It was a relief for Elias because the orcs had torn the princess' tent to pieces during the fight and he was worrying last night where to get something to replace the destroyed tent. The men had discussed with him, and they had planned and were about to go and built a makeshift tent, but the dragon had beaten them to it. It simply spread out its wing and thus, giving the princess a good enough covering to replace the function of the ripped-up tent.

The dragon's action made everyone wonder if all dragons were like this with their masters. Because it was just so damned amazing. How this dragon behaved was as though it truly understood what

the princess needed! Whatever it was, their problem was easily resolved with that one movement from the dragon.

"Princess," Zolan pulled Evie's attention once all of them had polished off their food and Elias was now tidying up. "I think we should stay here for another night before continuing on our journey..."

Evie blinked at him. "Why?" she asked, not understanding why they needed to delay for another day now that they were finally so close to their destination. "Is there someone who is still injured and needs more rest?"

The men glanced at each other for a moment. They did not know whether to cry or laugh. How could the princess not realise it?

"You're still injured, princess." Zolan replied to her question and Evie fell silent. She stared at her arms that were covered in bandages.

"No... we're not going to delay anymore." She spoke after a few moments of silence. Before anyone could say anything, Evie lifted her face and looked at Zolan with serious gaze.

"But... princess –" Zolan started to speak.

"I am alright," she cut him off and then she stood before them. "I don't feel any pain or tiredness anymore. And these cuts are really very minor. Leon's medicine will help them all heal by tomorrow so there is really no need for us to stay here and waste time."

Her words rendered the men speechless. They just could not argue with her even though a part of them still thought that it was better for her to take more rest while they were still in a safe place. They did not know what would be waiting for them once they set out of this area. However, they were quite certain that the final phase of their journey will be even more challenging, even more dangerous, and they absolutely had no idea what was beyond the dragon's gate.

Sensing that the men were still sceptical, Evie looked at her dragon again. She understood why these men wanted her to rest more. If Gavriel was here, she already knew he would be insisting on it, and she was almost a hundred percent sure that he would do anything to persuade her to stay. And she who does not have any tolerance against him, would soften her heart and surely give in.

But the thing is, he was not here. That man who was the only one able to deal with her stubbornness and turn her mind into mush with just his smile and touch, was currently absent and still missing in action. And this same man was one of the biggest reason why she didn't want to delay any longer!

Last night, she had dreamt about him again. It was that same dream that had been haunting her now every night. And as time went by, her desire to see him again grew larger inside her and it was driving her more than anything else. Not only because she missed him so much, but because there was something strange in her dream she could not quite point out.

In her dreams, she was seeing him, alive and well, but for some unknown reason, her heart just felt that there was something wrong.

Everytime she woke up from that dream, her heart was thudding hard with unease even though it wasn't supposed to be a nightmare. She was relieved because she had seen him again even if it's just in her dream but the inexplicable unease she felt every time she woke up was making her worry.

Evie had realized that the only way for her to feel at ease again would be the moment she can touch him again in the flesh and not just in her dreams. That's why no matter what, she's not going to delay any longer.

Chapter 192 - Onyx

Evie really did not feel anything that was wrong in her body at all. Leon's medicine was always very effective. And more importantly, it never gave the side effects that makes her feel uncomfortable as the human medications do.

"We are going to continue our journey... without delay," she said decisively again, then she turned and approached the dragon.

Zolan sighed. "Oh well, it seems that we can only obey and follow the princess' wishes."

"Somehow, I just realized she's almost no different from His Highness." Reed commented and all of them could only agree.

"Yeah, stubborn and decisive and impossible to persuade." Luc commented with an exaggerated eyeroll.

"It seems to be that all powerful creatures are the same." Levy chimed in.

"Agreed... but Leon," Luc stared at the half-blood. "You're the doctor here, speak up."

"I'm no doctor." The half-blood innocently replied, "but I do not doubt she is telling the truth. I think she'll be alright as well."

"You think..." Levy raised a brow.

"Her wound is healing faster than the first time I treated her back when she got wounded in the dungeons. So, I believe she's really fine." Leon explained when Zolan stood as well.

"Well," the man started, "though the princess' body is vulnerable and fragile, her spirit and willpower are the total opposite. It truly is nothing to scoff at. No matter what we say, we cannot stop her. After all, we are only here to support and take care of her, so we'll do what we can and just believe in her. However, whenever we see that she is endangering herself, we can always intervene again and speak out. She's stubborn but not naive. So, I think we shouldn't worry too much." Zolan's lengthy explanation had everyone ruminating on his words.

Everyone was silent with what Zolan said as they all could only agree to his comments. Once they were united in their decision, they stood and started preparing to leave while Evie was caressing the dragon's snout, all the while trying to mentally communicate with it.

"Do you have a name?" she asked in her mind as she closed her eyes and grabbed her necklace. The dragon made that purring growl, as though it were responding to her question.

"Is that a 'yes'?" Evie's eyes flew open in excitement. Her eyes quickly closed again as she put more focus in her mental communication with the dragon.

It made that sound again. Somehow, Evie was starting to feel a little more relaxed, just like that feeling you get when your pet is behaving as such an adorable stress reliever.

"Hmm... what could it? Is it Black?" she asked, and the dragon gave out a very deep and long rumble. The men even looked up for an instant from their tasks because they knew it was not that

purring growl they had heard before. This particular rumble did not sound as positive as the earlier sound. And yet they saw their princess chuckled shortly while her eyes were still closed.

They could not help but wonder what she was doing. Was she talking to the dragon?

"So that's a no. Huh..." Evie said, and the dragon again made that purring growl. It seems the dragon will purr if it was a 'yes' and growl if it was a 'no'. She found its responses quite adorable. And she was glad that even though the dragon could not talk to her, it was still trying to communicate at least.

"Then I wonder what it is... Hmm..." she brainstormed quickly but all she could think about were names that was related to its appearance. "Dark?"

The dragon growled as it gave a little shake of its head and Evie chuckled again. Then suddenly, something came out of her mouth.

"Onyx?"

To Evie's surprise, the dragon purred.

"Oh, so it's Onyx!" she exclaimed. She never thought she would actually guess it right! But was she the one who actually guessed it? She was certain she had not thought about Onyx...

The dragon purred again, and Evie could only smile in gladness. She was happy to actually discover the dragon's name!

After that, when Evie saw that her men were ready, she began to tell Onyx about the journey. The dragon seemed to be listening to her, and it rose when she told him where she wanted to go beyond the dragon's gate and that she wanted it to show them the way.

It lowered its head right before Evie and she immediately realized it wanted her to climb up its back.

Without wasting a moment, Evie carefully climbed on the dragon and settled herself on its back. She looked at her men and nodded at them before they too, all lightly jumped and carefully landed on the back of the dragon too.

Evie had thought that the dragon would fly off immediately, but it did not. It only walked slowly towards that dark path she had run into and where she had previously met the dragon.

The vampires were quiet. This was the place they had encountered the two dragons before with prince Gavriel but now, they could not see any other dragons apart from this large one they were with. Could it be that those dragons were scared of this black one?

As Onyx moved forward, they could now see darkness before them. This was the darkness no one had ever crossed before.

The darkness was so deep that it felt almost solid – like a thick wall that was there to prevent entry. But entry to what, exactly?? When the dragon finally stepped through it, the vampires could not see anything even with their enhanced eyesight. It was as if the power of their eyes to see in the dark were being disabled in here. They were shocked.

But then they saw a single glow of light before them, it was the princess. She was literally glowing like a beacon!

Her light began to illuminate their surroundings and the vampires realized that they were inside a cave-like path. The dragon continued on this path, walking fluidly ahead.

Everyone, including Evie were brimming over in anticipation as the dragon moved deeper and deeper into this cave. The little they could see from the path seemed winding and it was as if they were entering into a large labyrinth.

The path that does not reflect any sound or light, it only gave anyone going through it the feeling of despondency and despair. Even the light emitted by their princess could not light up the area around them but seemed to have been suppressed, only allowing them to see within a radius of a couple of feet.

The dragon continued walking on in the darkness, with only their princess as their lone source of light. It was not until at long last that they saw another source of light ahead. Their eyes were all fixed ahead as they knew they were finally coming out of that all-encompassing darkness. What was it that lie ahead?

They swallowed in both expectation and apprehension as the dragon finally stepped out of the darkness along with them.

Chapter 193 - Final Arch

Evie and the men all held their breaths as the dragon slowly moved towards the bright exit. They could not really see much as their eyes were already adjusted to the intense darkness for so long that the sudden brightness became extremely blinding to them. It was more so for Evie, as her eyes were not as enhanced as the vampires. Onyx halted just as it stepped out of the darkness.

Evie and her men sat frozen as they blinked to allow their eyes to adjust to the new environment. Once their eyes were adjusted, their gaze were fixed ahead of them, utterly speechless. What greeted their eyes were absolutely shocking and unexpected that it took their breath away.

They had been thinking of another magical place, a place so out of this world. All of them had no doubts that it would be something mind blowing because the dragons were guarding this particular place with their lives for god knows how many millennia now.

However, the place before them was nothing like what they were expecting. It was desolate and gloomy. Yes, it truly took their breath away – in shock that was bordering on horror. It seemed to be a very massive crater and in the middle of it lies another dark and lonely mountain. They could not even get a glimpse of the peak as thick and gloomy clouds were covering the upper half of it, making it visibly impossible.

Not only the mountain, but the entire massive crater-like place was covered entirely with clouds so thick that the place looked like the twilight zone. It was raining too, though it was not that heavy.

Evie's eyes roved about, looking all around the place before her and she felt a peculiar feeling of loss and sadness. There was nothing worthy to note in the vast land, but just blackish grey stones and dead trees. The dead trees seemed to be covered with some sort of black crystals and nothing more. The wide path before them that was made of stones and the large arches standing tall like crescent moons on each side of the path were untouched, but no life seemed to be left in the area that they laid eyes on. There was one word that reverberated within everyone's mind at that moment – bleak.

The feelings welling up inside Evie's heart right now made her draw in a deep shaky breath. She did not even know why she was feeling this way. Her longing to find out everything now surged even more within her insides. What had happened to this place? Was it hit by some pestilence or perhaps some natural disaster that caused it to look this way now? However, it must have been one hell of a disaster for it to remain like this for so long. Evie felt her heart squeeze and throb in pain as she continued to survey the area and her eyes suspiciously burned a little, as though she were about to cry. But she held it back as she thought that it was somehow weird. This was definitely the first time she had ever stepped foot into this place. So why is it resonating so strongly within her?

Suddenly, Onyx released a spine-chilling growl. It did not move from its spot at all – if possible, it froze up even more – as it breathed out a sound that seemed to be a call. Evie and the men did not know why but they seemed to have that feeling that it was a call.

Evie and her men held their breaths in anticipation. Then a group of dragons suddenly appeared in the sky. They circled around over them in an awe-inspiring display of power and splendour, injecting more than a little fear into the men as they looked on, some with mouths hanging open. Only Evie managed to maintain her calm facade, though she was as stunned as the men on the inside. As they were still frozen in shock and amazement, the dragons started landing before Onyx one by one. There were seven of them and three of them were as large as that dragon the dark fae had possessed while the other four were about the same size as the one Evie had commanded in Dacia.

Before Evie and the seven vampires could snap out of their reverie from the surprising appearance of seven other additional dragons before them, Onyx then proceeded to spread out its own jet-black wings before propelling itself from the ground and flying into the sky.

Everyone immediately reacted and held on for dear life as the dragon flew just above the large arches, narrowly missing its own clawed feet. When Evie looked back, she saw those other seven dragons entering the dark cave where they came from. Was Onyx the one who called out to them to stay and guard the entrance to this realm in his place? That must be it! And she was awed, more convinced that Onyx was an intelligent being in his own right. She had already known that dragons were smart beings even before she interacted with any of them. But now with Onyx's actions, she was only more certain of the fact.

Returning her gaze ahead, Evie looked down and saw once again how massive the place was. The path they were following seemed endless. And she did not know why but she suddenly pictured this desolate place as once beautiful and full of life and captivating colours. She could even imagine that everything here would have been enchanting and magical.

As they looked down, they saw that glimmering stream flowing across the desolate land before then disappearing into the wall of darkness that seems to surround the entire place. As they traced the stream with their eyes from this height, they could see that the stream's source was coming from that mountain which they were heading towards right now.

The arches of the path below them were getting larger as they approached closer to the mountain in the middle.

Onyx continued flying straight ahead until at last, it slowly dove to the ground the moment they reached the largest and final arch. The dragon gracefully executed its landing right before the massive arch, without having anyone of the people on its back experience any turbulence.

Chapter 194 - Hidden

Fogs of clouds had covered whatever it was that was behind this seemingly other gate they were looking at. Realizing that Onyx was not going to move anymore, Evie closed her eyes and spoke to the dragon.

"Are we supposed to climb off you now?" she asked and when the dragon made a purring sound, Evie looked at her men and nodded at them.

Once everyone was on the ground except for Evie, Onyx then crouched down as if to guard or wait for them there.

Evie stared at the foggy path before them and then closed her eyes. "You're not going to come along with us?" she asked, and the dragon purred again.

"It seems Onyx is not going to accompany us anymore." Evie told her men.

"O-onyx?" Reed tilted his head as he asked, and Evie realized she had not told them about her dragon's name yet.

"Yes. This dragon's name is Onyx." Evie said with a smile and the men blinked, totally taken aback. Holy crap! The dragon can talk back to her?! They exclaimed within themselves.

"I don't know why but it seems he can't come with us." Evie added as she looked beyond the large arch. Then after caressing Onyx's spikes fondly, Evie spoke to the dragon through her mind communication that they would return soon.

The dragon purred as it nudged its snout into Evie's palm gently. And its response made Evie's heart swell. Leon then came to her at Zolan's order before he helped Evie stand up from atop the dragon's back. He did not bother putting her down, instead he carried her on his back immediately.

Evie just obeyed because she was also trying to be careful about the bandages on her feet. It would be less of a hassle for her and everyone if she did not walk.

When everything was ready, Evie nodded at her men and the group then entered the foggy path beyond the largest arch. She looked back at Onyx one last time and smiled at it until the fog rolled back in, covering her view of her dragon.

Breathing in deeply, Evie turned and looked ahead. As she looked around, the men started to be alert now. The dragon was no longer with them anymore so they can no longer relax as they had been doing since it had been around them. What are they going to see next? This was finally the last leg of their journey, right?

The surrounding had changed significantly. It was more desolate than as before that last large arch. They could see more dead trees that were now pretty cramped, making it look even darker and lifeless. It was also only drizzling at this area now.

They followed the path silently as it climbed higher and higher. And still, they could not spot a single sign of life.

None of them spoke as they all knew that none of them knew what lies ahead. All they could do was to look forward in anticipation and thrill all the while staying alert in case trouble was waiting for them up ahead.

Until at long last, the mists were gone, and the dead and cramped trees seem to have ended. And what they saw next made them stand there frozen for a long while as they looked before them.

A dark, massive castle stood majestically before their eyes. It was so massive and all of them had never seen such a castle as steep as this one before. Who would have thought that a castle so large and tall could be sitting at the top of this steep hill and was being hidden behind the clouds?!

Moreover, the castle seemed to be so strangely dark that it could be the darkest building they have ever seen before. It was as though the whole building were made of the same black stones of the princess' necklace.

This part seemed drier, and the drizzle was gone despite the fact that the sky was just as dark.

There was another path connected to the path they had just come from which is now leading to a bridge made of the same dark as night stone.

Below the bridge, they could see the glimmering magical water. One glance and they knew this was the very source of that magical stream and lake. Somehow, they were quite shocked after the desolate place they have seen before this. How could something so bright and magical come from a place so dead and dreary like this?

Furthermore, what was the deal with this castle? Did that light fae the princess talked about was inside this place?

"Please put me down now, Leon." Evie requested and Leon immediately put her down.

Evie took a step forward. Again, her emotions were getting more and more strange. It was getting overwhelming. She could no longer wait to know what was waiting for her here. Why she was called here and where were the answers she was looking for.

"Let's go," she then said, and they all moved ahead, walking forward and following at the pace the princess was going at. The moment they crossed the bridge, another gate blocked their way forward.

The vampires tried to push it open, but the massive dark gate did not budge a single crack.

"Maybe we should leap over the gate?" Samuel suggested and they all looked up. The gate was so big, and the ends of the gate was very high as well.

Evie walked past them, and the men cleared the way, letting her stand just right at the gate. They watched her reach out and the moment her hands touched the gate, just like what happened to her necklace, the part she touched glowed. The amber glow then slowly started spreading out from where her hand was laid!

Shocked, Evie pulled her hand off, and it turned black again. But she recovered quick and this time she used both her hands and touched the gate. It glowed again and Evie did not take her hands off this time until the entire massive gate was glowing.

Then at last, the gate swung open on its own.

Chapter 195 - Light Fae

When the massive double-doored gate swung open noiselessly, Evie and her men stood there for a few seconds to catch their breath from the sudden unexpectedness of how it happened. After taking that few seconds to adjust their emotions and thoughts, they stepped through the opening of the massive gate.

Since the princess had taken her hands off the gate's surface, the previously glowing amber sheen that had enveloped the whole gate was slowly fading as they all walked into the area just further past the gate.

There was a dead silence as the men all looked at the same darkness and emptiness before them. They had thought they would finally see someone or something since the gate had opened on its own to allow them admittance. But again, their expectations were once again not met. And they could not help but crease their brows, a little disappointed. Would they really find something here? What if, there was actually no one inside this castle? And with the way things have been turning out so far, it did not seem as though the answers would be forthcoming from this place either.

They shook their heads inwardly. And at that moment, they realized that their princess was looking at one particular spot, right in the middle of the vast and dark space beyond the gate. Wait! Could it be that she actually is seeing something there?! Even when none of them can?!

The expression on Evie's face made the men realize that their princess was seeing something they could not see. What was it she is seeing, they had absolutely no idea.

"Princess," Zolan carefully and softly called out as he looked at Evie, "are you seeing something?"

Evie glanced at them, and the moment Evie nodded, they all immediately gripped their weapons tight. They all thought this would be bad if their enemy was invisible. How could they protect the princess against an enemy they could not see?!

"It's alright... she's not an enemy." Evie told them and the men somewhat relaxed a little. "It's the light fae I saw in Dacia." Evie continued and she returned her attention towards the light fae before them.

She could see her face much clearer now. When she first saw this woman in Dacia, she could not even see her face clearly because she already looked so translucent, as if like she was already halfway through the process of fading at that time.

Now looking at her properly and without any blurriness, Evie noted that the light fae was very beautiful. Like a creature forged in the light. Her long hair was white like snow and her eyes a deep forest green. She was clad in a white silk dress.

"You're finally here, Princess... we've been waiting for you." The light fae said and Evie took a few steps closer to her.

"We?" Evie looked around expectantly, but she could not see anyone else beside her.

"They are inside the castle, princess," she said with a soft smile then she turned, "please, follow me."

"Wait!" Evie stopped her and the light fae faced her again. As though she realized Evie's hesitation, she smiled again. "Please do not worry, princess. I know you still don't trust me. But be rest assured because no one in this castle could harm you, not even me. Because as you can see, I am like this... I cannot touch you. The same is true for everyone else inside."

The light fae's explanation made Evie furrow her brows. "Are you saying they're all invisible too?" Evie asked and the light fae's face became sullen for a split second before resuming her lightly smiling face.

"Please follow me, princess," she said instead of answering and she turned and walked away.

Evie looked at her men and nodded at them. She was a little wary. She would not know if it was truly safe inside, but they do not really have a choice now do they? She had come all the way here just to find her answers so, there was no way she was going back now without getting some! Evie then squared her shoulders and set her jaw before looking up resolutely.

After taking a deep breath, she finally moved forward and followed the light fae, with her men following closely behind her. All of them were on high alert and gripping their weapons tightly, attentive to their princess' actions. The moment she shows any signs of fear or danger, they would need to take action quickly.

They went pass through a series of arches – not unlike the previous ones they have seen – as they move deeper, towards the door of the castle. The place was so massive and the designs of everything they are seeing around them were just incredibly intricate. Even in the vampire kingdom, their decorations and sense of artistry were a notch above the best of the humans. However, even then they were amazed at what was presented before them. They could not even imagine how beautiful this place would look like under the sun.

All the inner, smaller gates they passed through were opened. And it seemed they were just kept opened and were never closed for a very, very long time.

By the time they all stood before the castle's massive doors, the men were already fully in their battle mode. They were more than prepared to fight all out at a moment's notice. Their eyes were darting around them and kept going back to the princess to look at her for cues.

The castle's door was also opened. And there was absolutely no light inside. The darkness inside was absolute. It was as if it would even absorb any light that was to be shone into it.

Everyone was silent as the night as they entered hesitantly. It was very dark, and Evie had to halt for a moment to use her necklace as a source of light to help illuminate the immediate area around her so she could see enough to walk forward.

They passed through series of massive pillars and spacious corridors as the light fae continued to lead them towards what they later recognised as the throne hall.

Chapter 196 - Throne

When they finally reached the huge and dark hall, they entered and before any of them could even reach the throne that Evie could not yet make out due to the extreme darkness and the massiveness of the place, the light fae stopped walking and turned around to face her.

"Please take off your shoes, princess." She said as she gestured elegantly to Evie's feet. And then she glanced at the men behind her. "The vampires must not come any closer. This is the closest they are allowed to proceed." Her voice was neutral and had no inflections of hostility nor friendliness.

Evie stilled for a moment before she moved again and began taking her shoes off. She could almost feel the curios gazes of her men at what she was doing. She knew they were nervous about being told to stop going forward with her.

The moment Evie's bare feet touched the floor, the same amber glow appeared again – similar to what occurred at the main gate. The glow then began to spread out, slowly lighting up the hall with its warm glow.

A gentle smile filled with relief flashed on the light fae's face. She then gestured Evie to come towards to where she was standing.

"All of you stay here," Evie told her men and before any of them could protest, she turned and walked forward. Then there were steps that seemingly appeared out of nowhere before her feet, she climbed on the first step and the steps began to glow too. The lights spreading wider and wider over the steps. But once she walked on, the place where she was standing previously right next to the vampires darkened again.

The men nervously watched the princess climb the steps towards the obsidian throne that was situated high above the ground level. The sight of the amber glow spreading out before disappearing again was extremely mesmerizing to watch.

Evie could not quite explain the feelings inside her at the moment. The mix of strange emotions she could not even understand why she was feeling were distracting her. So, she forced herself to ignore her emotions for now and just focused her mind on what was going on before her.

Fighting to keep her calm, Evie looked at the light fae who had finally halted right before her. She smiled at Evie once again in an attempt to reassure her. Then she bowed her head and gestured her snow-white hands towards the throne that was before her.

"Please seat on the throne, Princess." The light fae said and Evie creased her brows. She was taken aback at the request. What was happening now?

"Why?" she could no longer keep her mouth shut. "Why do I need to sit here?"

"You wanted to get your answers, right? Princess?" the light fae asked instead of answering. "I wanted to show you something... but you can only see them once you are seated on the throne, princess."

There was another period of silence as Evie looked at the light fae with suspicion in her eyes. She could not help it. The light fae was definitely asking her to seat on a majestic throne so dark and imposing and mysterious like this? Moreover, it was not even hers. How could she so simply plop down on a throne that did not belong to her? That could be said to be the utmost action of disrespect to the owner of this throne. No way would she do something as silly and dangerous as that! But...!!

But then again, she had no choice. She wanted her answers! Evie wanted... No, needed to see what the light fae was talking about. She came all the way here for that, risking everything.

Taking another deep breath, Evie decided to throw caution to the wind. She would just go ahead and do what was necessary for now and would deal with the consequences later. Evie then faced the throne and again she felt another strong and peculiar emotion churning inside of her. She closed her eyes and somehow managed to identify that the emotion she felt now does not seem to be related to fear.

Then she opened her eyes and holding her breath, she finally took the last few steps to sit on the throne. Evie squeezed her eyes shut as she did so, expecting something bad to happen to her. But after a couple of seconds, nothing happened, and she opened her eyes in relief.

Suddenly, the amber lights burst out from Evie's body then her light spread out in all directions very fast. In the next moment, the entire massive hall was glowing. It was literally shimmering with the amber glow that came from her! What on earth was happening?!

The vampires, including Evie stayed still and could only look on in a daze as if they were all enchanted. What just happened?! Was there some magic involved?

Even Evie could not quite believe her eyes. The hall which was once draped in depressing heavy darkness was now so glowing brightly that it could even vie the sun. The obsidian throne had also turned into a golden amber colour. Suddenly the darkness that seemed to be there to stay, was gone in a twinkling of an eye and everything turned magical. Holy hell!

But Evie and her men could not even stay awed and dumbstruck long enough as they suddenly snapped to attention at the sight of something strange.

The surprise and awestruck look on Evie's face slowly faded as she looked down at the things scattered all over the massive hall's floor.

Evie's eyes narrowed as she focused her gaze on the human-sized black crystals rising from the foot of the steps until it reached right by the door, except on the path leading towards the throne.

Suddenly, her heart thudded wildly. She subconsciously gripped the armrest of the throne before turning her inquisitive gaze at the light fae before her.

"W-what are these black crystals?" Evie asked even though in her heart she realised that somehow, she already knew the answer.

Chapter 197 - Crescia

The light fae's eyes gleamed with sadness as she looked solemnly at Evie.

It was as if she had already known that Evie had somehow figured out what was inside the crystals, and she nodded curtly. "You're right, Princess..." she said in soft, enchanting voice. "They are light faes and they've been trapped inside the dark crystal for thousands of years."

Evie was taken aback at what she heard. For thousands of years? That long?

"What..." Evie paused and then composed herself before asking again, "what happened in this place? And why are these light faes trapped like this?"

The light fae turned her face towards the numerous dark crystals on the throne hall's floor. Her expression was filled with lost and regret and long suffering. "Long time ago," she started as nostalgia crept into her beautiful deep green eyes, "this land was lively and enchantingly beautiful. Its beauty was unparalleled... there was no other place that could be compared. And due to that, this place came to be known as the paradise of Lirea."

She smiled as her gaze seemed to have blurred as she stared ahead, most probably seeing the place now overlapping with what it was during its glorious days in the past. "And it was true most especially for Crescia."

"Crescia?" Evie questioned interestedly. 'Was that another city that is within the forbidden land?' Evie wondered and was highly curious after hearing the name of this place.

"This place was called the city of Crescia, the capital of the Middle Empire. This was once the most beautiful city in the entire land." The light fae replied with a pleasant gleam in her eyes but all too soon, the light faded, and her eyes became bleak again. "But everything was destroyed and now this place that was once a paradise is now reduced to nothing but a dark and desolate land. All because

of that wretched war." There was a hint of sharpness and anger in the voice of the light fae at the end.

"War? Did other races unite to attack the Middle Empire?" Evie hazarded a guess.

"Sadly, it was the faes themselves that fought against each other. The Light Faes and Dark Faes attacked each other in a war that lasted for hundreds of years and ended up destroying both parties." She said then she looked at Evie.

"Once upon a time, Light Faes and Dark Faes lived in harmony until one day, the Fae Queen fell in love with a Dark Fae. Everything was fine for a long time until the Queen gave birth to a pair of twins. One was a Light Fae and the other one a Dark Fae. That was the very first time such a thing had happened in the long-standing history of the Faeries."

"You mean... that a Queen gave birth to a pair of twins?" Evie's brows knotted in curiosity.

"No, princess. Female light faes will always give birth to a light fae even if their mate was a dark fae. The same was true to the female dark faes, their children will always be a dark fae as well even if their mate was a light fae. All offspring always follows the fae type of the maternal side. So, the queen giving birth to one twin which was a dark fae was truly shocking. This aberration happened the very first time and no one knew what to think of it for a while."

Evie had not seen a dark fae as of yet. Since that dark fae that possessed her father had never showed his true appearance, thus Evie had no idea how they looked like. What was the difference between dark and light faes?

"How did they find out the other child was a dark fae?" Evie asked, her curiosity to know everything about the faes were so intense that she could not stop herself from blurting out the question almost the moment the light fae stopped talking.

"The appearance is obvious because all dark faes have black hair. They also naturally wield dark magic, and their blood turns dark as the night when they bleed." The light fae explained then she continued telling the story again.

"Everything was fine at first until the time for the queen to pass her crown to her successor came. The dark faes wanted the dark fae prince to be king instead of the light fae princess. The Middle Empire had always been ruled by the royal family which are the light faes since the beginning of time. But the dark faes began to desire for one of their kind to rule too, saying that the queen giving birth to a dark fae was the sign that it was now time for a change. But the light faes, the queen included, dismissed the dark faes' plea because the queen had found out that her dark fae husband had changed as well. He too, began to desire the throne for himself. It was then that everything started. The dark faes began a rebellion. The dark fae prince wanted the throne as well, just like his father. So, he and his father collaborated and joined in the rebellion, abandoning the royal family and Crescia. They went to Gehhena, the second biggest city in the Middle Empire called the city of the Dark Faes located in the far north. The dark faes made the queen's husband king and the queen's son their crown prince. And since then, the Middle Empire was divided between the two sub-races and war commenced amongst the dark faes and light faes."

"It lasted for hundreds of years. The wars grew more horrific and got so bad to the point where both group of fae began to use the dragons to kill each other, ruining the empire, killing off countless of faeries on both sides. Until the dark faes began to drag the vampires into their battles as well. The

dark faes had the ability to manipulate anyone using their dark magic. And topping it with the help of the vampires' strength and numbers, the dark faes managed to invade Crescia."

Chapter 198 - Tragic Tale

"Due to the very long and nonstop battle in the past hundreds of years, the light faes have already been reduced to only a few thousands. The same was true with the dark faes but the light faes did not expect the vampires to aid the dark faes in this war." The light fae continued in her recollection and Evie subconsciously looked at her men.

She never expected to hear that the vampires were actually actively involved in the fall of this empire. It seemed that they played quite a significant role in it too!

Evie found that her heart was aching as she listened to this painful tale. Who would have thought that the faes actually ended up destroying themselves all for the sake of the throne? And the most painful thing was that the queen's enemy was her own husband and child that she bore. Evie could not even imagine what she had to go through going to a war against the one she once loved and even her very own child.

The story made Evie's eyes sting and her throat hurt for the queen and all the faes.

"Did the light faes not seek outside help?" Evie asked and the light fae shook her head.

"Light faes can enchant other races but the queen had refused the idea to seek out the humans to help them. The vampires were already on the dark faes' side, leaving the humans the only race left. But the queen refused to involve the humans in the war. She knew humans were strong in their own right but they could not stand against dark faes and vampires together. The queen knew she would only end up sacrificing many other innocent lives by doing that. So, she stood her ground and fought on without seeking any help. The light faes stood and fought by her side with everything they had." The light fae looked up smiling bitterly as if recalling a very painful memory and Evie was rendered speechless as she waited for her to continue with this tragic tale.

"The queen had sworn that day that she herself would end the war that started because she was the one who had fallen for a man who ended up betraying her. She vowed with her very life in this same place that we are standing in right now. She had ordered the remaining young ones to stay in this hall, including me, before she set out with the remaining faes for what she had called the last battle. We had refused to stay, all of us... we had wanted to fight together with the rest of them until the end. But the queen forcefully made us stay using her strong magic. All of us had been frozen still in our spot and could not move." She said as she looked at the first dark coloured crystal closest to the throne.

Evie immediately realized that this light fae's body must be encased in that particular crystal. Rising from the throne, Evie stood to approach it. As she stood before the black crystal, she stared intently into it before looking at the light fae next to her.

"This... Is this you?" Evie hesitantly asked the light fae, lifting her finger and pointing to the blurry outline of a figure that could barely be seen within the dark crystal.

"Yes." She nodded before she too, turned to look at the crystal Evie was pointing at. "I was the only one who managed to break free from our bondage. I suspect it was because I am a noble faery and am more powerful than everyone in this hall. So, I left my body to follow the queen and saw everything that happened after that."

Evie faced her, her face grave and serious as she listened intently to the story, even though she could already tell the ending of the war. Because she had seen it, with her own two eyes, the desolate land they passed through on their way here. There was literally nothing left to this once majestic and noble realm. There were no animals, no faes... not even a single living plant. Everything was just dead and deathly still in this dark and sombre land.

"The queen lost herself during that war. The sight of her empire being reduced to ashes, and her people all dying in an unfair fight... until her dragon, Onyx, was the only one left... made her burst out and lost all control, and she unleashed everything that she had. All her magic was used up. She even went to the extent of burning her soul to increase to potency of her magic. Her heart had been dead many years ago and had darkened that she fought without mercy by herself, killing both vampires and dark faes even her own husband. She killed him so mercilessly without batting even an eye. However, she was already dying too as she had spent herself out. But the queen was determined to kill her son as well. She had vowed she'll take both of them with her. So even though the prince was powerful, being a royal blooded dark fae, he was still unable to escape the very last powerful attack the queen had unleashed upon himself."

"I saw the queen got surrounded with a balls of lights as she knelt on the ground, her body being pierced through with all sorts of weapons. The dark faes and the vampires were fleeing, including the dragons. I saw her crying and then she screamed as the lights all merged into one massive ball of light surrounding her before exploding in an enormous blast. Every living being that had been touched by the queen's light disappeared as if they were eaten by the light. All the dragons suffered the same fate except for Onyx as the queen had forcefully sent it far up into the sky. The lights had covered the entire land, and there was no place the light did not reach. And when the light was gone, the queen had disappeared as well. Her clothes, her crown, and personal sword was the only thing left lying in that spot where she had sat."

Chapter 199 - Descendants

Silence filled the vast throne hall as Evie's heart shivered from everything she heard. Her heart ached so much for the queen, for her people and this land. And she knew what she was feeling was not just mere sympathy and pity. It was much more than that, as if everyone and everything in this land has something to do with her. The emotions running through her is more than just on the surface. She could feel real pain in her heart and the sadness was similar to what she had felt when she lost her grandmother when she was a little girl. Though she was confused at why she was feeling this way, but she did not try to avoid these newfound affections that were flowing within her.

Trying to swallow the lump in her throat, Evie's eyes flickered towards the now empty throne. "Did the dark fae prince die?" she asked, her voice nearly a whisper. She somehow had a bad premonition even when asking that question.

"After the outburst of the queen's last attack," the light fae started, getting back into her story, "I found out that the everyone that was touched by the queen's light perished and disappeared, but there were a few of them who survive. The surviving powerful dark faes who had tried to escape and used their dark magic to block the queen's light had managed to stay alive, but they eventually turned into all sorts of ferocious animals. I've observed them in the past countless years, and I found out that they have become true animals. They behave and respond like how animals do, and I believe they would never return to their original forms ever again as I saw them reproduce and their

offspring are also pure beasts like them. As for the dark fae prince..." she trailed off and her bleak eyes stared unseeingly towards the entrance of the great throne hall.

"Just like what the queen did to us, the dark fae prince also trapped himself inside this dark crystal so he would not perish nor get turned into a beast. Only the royals were strong enough to cast that magic on themselves. So just like us, the dark fae prince is still alive too and..." she paused as she looked Evie with grave eyes, "and he's going to break free from the crystal's entrapment very soon... no, I believe he must have already been freed by now."

Evie's eyes widened. "How did you know and how could he be freed?"

"He had been trying to get freed all these years. Thousands of years after the fall of the Middle empire, curious vampire hunters began to enter the land again and they found the dark fae's crystal. They took his crystal and brought it to the vampire empire. A vampire king had taken an interest in the figure which was within the crystal, and they had tried to break into it in the hopes of getting to the figure, but no one managed to. They kept the crystal in their castle and after thousands more years, the fae prince awakened and he started then to manipulate the vampires. That was the start of wars between the vampires and humans especially since he found out about the existence of human dragon keepers. The fae prince knew that the only way for him to be freed was by using the powers of the blood of light faes. He knew that only light faes could call upon the dragons. And that was why he had made the vampires hunt every dragon guardian that had ever appeared and got them to extract their blood."

Utterly speechless and shocked, Evie could not speak for a long while. Her brows knotted so tightly as she processed the things she heard.

"D-dragon guardians..." she stammered, "you're saying the dragon keepers are light faes?" Evie's eyes were wide as saucers as she stared at the light fae before her.

The light fae silently stared at her for a while before responding. "They are not light faes. However, it would be more accurate to say that dragon guardians are partly the descendants of the light fae. They carry the blood of the light faes in them. And that's why they have the ability to call upon the dragons."

"Descendants? H-how?" Evie wondered loudly as shock still filled her entire being, then suddenly, the fae princess came to her mind. The light fae had not mentioned anything about her yet! What had happened to her? Could it be that... no, the princess must be inside one of these crystals, right?

"And the... fae princess," Evie added immediately before the light fae could speak as her eyes wandered towards the crystals, "she's here, right?" Evie turned back to the light fae, expecting her to nod or give a positive answer to her question.

But the light fae shook her head. "She's not here, princess." She shook her head, sadness shining in her eyes. "Her Majesty the queen had banished her from the Middle Empire to save her life. The princess had been a target of assassinations ever since she was young and as the wars only got worse, the queen had made the decision to send her away. But years later, the princess returned as dark faes had found out that she had been hiding out in the human lands. So, she returned despite the queen's order. The princess had died the day that Crescia fell..." the light fae trailed off and drew in a shaky breath as if to compose herself. The pain in her eyes were even more vivid as she talked about the princess.

"I was with her when she died saving us... as she took her last breath, the princess told me she had left a child in the human realm. She had left him and her lover for fear that the dark faes would kill them. The princess told me, her son was a human and does not have any magic, so she chose to leave him... all for the sake of his safety." She paused again and stared at Evie intently. "The princess' son, the half fae is the first member of the now infamous Ylvia family who are the ones to produce the dragon guardians, your family..."

Chapter 200 - Daughter Of The Light

Evie could only stand there, being rendered completely immobile from the latest information that was fed to her by the light fae. Her mind was still having some trouble processing the information she had heard. That was truly so far-fetched and unbelievable!

However, after thinking through things and recalling on certain facts from her own family history, she realised that it finally all fell into place. It made perfect sense now that she thought about it.

Looking at all the signs, from the strange language only they knew about, their silvery hair, their ability to call upon the dragons and all the other mind-boggling things Evie managed to pull off since that day she found the necklace... everything fell into place. It just went to solidify the one thing that seemed unbelievable – that the Ylvia family was indeed related to the light faeries. There was no other explanation. Not to mention all the strange and intense emotions she had been feeling since she first stepped into this land.

Now all of it made perfect sense and fell nicely in place. It was all because this place was once the home of her ancestors! She was even totally flabbergasted to find out that she had such close blood relations to the light faes!

"And you, my princess," the light fae's call pulled her attention back to the present again and she bowed at her, "you are the one we've been waiting for. I have patiently anticipated your arrival for countless of years. I believe you are the chosen one. The one who will bring the light and life back into this dead and desolate land. After so long, things would live and flourish in this place once again. Our city will once again return to being a lively and beautiful place as how it was before when our beloved queen was still with us."

Blinking in confusion, Evie stammered. "W-wait... what do you mean I'm the chosen one?"

The light fae flashed a gentle and hopeful smile. "There was an ancient song that had been sung by the light faes ever since the beginning of time. Back then we didn't pay much attention to the message that was in the song itself. But for the many years that I have been just wandering endlessly... almost aimlessly, I found and understood so many things. It was then that I had realized that ancient song we had always sung without much thought was actually a prophecy." She said and then she began to sing a beautiful and mystical song that had sent gooseflesh all over Evie's skin.

And to Evie's shocked surprise, she could understand the song even and knew it was clearly the same language of the Ylvia song. She had felt something incredibly strange when she sat on the throne a while ago but because of the flurry of surprises and everything that the light fae had told her, she had temporarily forgotten about it.

But now she remembered again, that when she was sitting on that throne, something seemed to have ignited within her. She knew something changed in her body the moment she sat there, and she was almost certain that the sudden ability to understand the Faeries' language was one of them.

'Darkness will descend
Death and sorrow
Grief and pain
Blood pouring down
Like endless tears of the angels
Washing away everything
Mourning the fallen
The great sun it won't
No, never will it shine again
Till the daughter of the light
Return she would and rise again
Reclaiming her throne
Coming home
Coming home
Ending the rain of sorrow
Drying the heaven's tears
The desolate land shall see
It shall set their longing eyes
Their desire of the light
At last would come true
And that shadow
That darkness will be no more
No more, no more
That dark of night
Would then turn into light'

When the song ended, Evie's eyes were blurry with tears. The light fae's hauntingly melodious voice truly gave life and soul to the words that were sung. Evie felt each word pierce her deeply and cause something within her to resonate so familiarly with her surroundings. She had struggled to keep her composure. The song had truly affected her body, spirit, and soul.

"This song is a prophecy the light faes had not realized before. But I've seen everything since that day the darkness came. That day the queen died and taking everyone with her, it started raining in Crescia. It had never rained like this in our lands. There were only light mists and gentle drizzles that were responsible to water the land and the plants within. However, after that fateful day, that turned into a downpour and this heavy rain had never stopped ever since. I watched the plants and

trees suffer and bow over under the harsh deluge of the rain. Their roots were suffocated. The ground never dried up. And that caused the roots to rot and eventually die... I watched everything got washed away little by little in the past thousands of years until there was nothing left but stones and crystals.

"When you and your men travelled here, you have seen the dismal state our city had been reduced to. This slow death and deterioration of our land continued until nothing was left but the things that were lifeless. The sun too, had never shone again past the thick clouds and fogginess that constantly covered the skies above Crescia." She elaborated with such pain and sorrow in her voice.

However, the next moment, she looked up and Evie saw the light fae's eyes shining with so much hope and faith, causing her to feel quite a bit of nervousness as she had no idea how to be the answer to their prophecy.

"Till the daughter of the light, Return she would and rise again... coming home... Ending the rain of sorrow, Drying the heaven's tears..." the light fae repeated a few lines of the song. "When you arrived at the castle, the rain had already stopped. And that had never happened. This was the very first time in the thousands of years I had been here. You are the daughter of the light in the prophecy, Princess. And only you will be the one able to bring back the light into this land. You are the one to bring back precious life to this land as well."