

## SPELLBOUND 211

Chapter 211 - Just To Be Sure

Outside Evie's room, the men began to chat after just standing there quietly for a long while.

"I guess I'll go check on our cooks, shall I?" Levy said. It was obvious the man just wanted to go and see the light fae and Zolan could already tell that he must be planning to flirt with her. So Zolan was quick to grab onto his collar the moment Levy took a step to leave.

"Read the atmosphere here, Levy," he said with a sigh, "the fae is obviously wary of us. Remember, our ancestors were one of the reasons why the faeries had been annihilated so her wariness against us is well and fully understandable."

"I'm not going to do anything!!" the man pursed his lips, sulkily turning his head away.

"She's already uncomfortable with the way you look at her, you bumbling idiot."

"Well, how could you guys blame me? She's so damned beautiful! I can't help but stare. It's you guys who are having a problem, really. How could you not stare at such a beauty?"

With a sigh, Zolan pinched the skin between his brows. They all know that Levy was truly annoying when it comes to women but sometimes, they really just want to smack him up the head. And now is one of those times.

Ignoring him, Zolan looked at Reed. "Go and see if they needed help, Reed." He told Reed and the young man blinked, his dark eyes gleaming with hesitation. But eventually, he nodded and left as Zolan had ordered while Levy groaned comically in frustration.

When Reed reached the kitchens where Elias was cooking, he saw that the fae seemed quite relaxed with Elias' presence now. Reed remembered that the very first vampire Princess Evie got comfortable with aside from their prince was Elias. Was it because Elias brought himself as being quite harmless?

The young man approached quietly but as expected, Zanya noticed him. Reed scratched the back of his neck sheepishly as he spoke. "I was wondering if you two needed any help." He had already prepared this excuse in the event that his presence was discovered.

"Yes," Zanya immediately replied, "I'd like to go outside for a while, so I'd appreciate if you could please help Elias in my stead while I'm gone for a bit."

Reed blinked as he glanced at Elias, but the butler was busy with his preparations, so Reed could only nod at her request.

The light fae flashed a small smile. He watched her stand by the large window and then her ethereal butterfly wings spread out behind her before she flew off.

"Don't just watch there, come over here and help me." Elias' voice echoed through the kitchens.

"Where is she going?" he asked but Elias shrugged. "She's not uncomfortable with you anymore?" Reed continued asking.

"Hmm... I'm not sure but I guess so. She's not wary of me. We were having quite a fun time just before you arrived."

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Outside the castle, Samuel and Leon were watching at the gate. Both of them were quietly crouching at the top of the massive gate and looking down at the dark and empty bridge.

They have not seen any moving objects at all, not even a stray animal. After a moment, they saw something white flying past above them. It was the light faery, and she was leaving the castle.

Leon and Samuel looked at each other.

"Is it safe for her to go out there alone?" Samuel asked and Leon just tilted his head a little, uncertain about the answer too. "I am guessing she's strong but..." Samuel paused and stared at the faery now entering the forest beyond the castle's bridge. "Go follow her, Leon. The princess is asleep right now so I'm certain she does not know Zanya's leaving the castle. She doesn't look like she's going to get into any trouble but... just to be sure."

There was hesitation in Leon's eyes but since Samuel was their leader and had already issued his orders, he could only nod and then he disappeared.

He followed after Zanya secretly, hoping that the fae would not notice him. Leon lost her traces as she picked up her pace the moment they were out of the dense forest of dead trees, causing him to pick up his pace as well. Where was she going? Was she actually trying to escape?

Deep lines appeared on Leon's forehead as he run as fast as he could, trying to find the light faery again. He got passed Onyx who was still in the exact spot where they left him.

To Leon's relief, the dragon did not do anything. It simply stared at him.

Looking around at the vast desolate land, Leon caught his lower lip between his teeth. His tussled hair now soaked from the rain and his purple eyes had already turned red so he could see as far as he could. But he could not find her! There was absolutely no trace of her anywhere that he looked.

His jaw clenched. Now worried that the fae might be really escaping. It would be bad if she had escaped, right? He thought then he immediately rushed towards the entrance gate of Crescia knowing that that was the only place she might be headed for in order that she could leave.

Upon reaching the gate, he went past the dragons. He was wary at first but somehow, the dragon did not attack him. Did they already recognize him as their ally? Leon was awed but his mind was focused on that little fae he thought was now escaping now that the princess had released her.

Leon could not help but feel angry at the fae if she really was going to escape and betray the princess' trust. No, he could not let her escape!

At last, Leon had spotted her light as soon as he was out of the gate. His red eyes gleamed intensely, and he moved as fast as he could straight towards the faery who had just landed on a branch of a tree.

As if she finally felt his presence, the light fae turned to look behind her but at that very moment, Leon had already caught up to her and seized her.

Chapter 212 - Fruits

Zanya's eyes grew wide as the vampire that she remembered who was named Leon suddenly seized her by the arms and pinned her against the tree trunk behind her. In his rush, Leon's action of

pinning Zanya down as he pushed her against the tree was a little rougher than he had intended, thus she winced as she was held down.

She had early on noticed his presence since she crossed the castle's bridge, but she had ignored it since she understood that the vampires might have decided to send this one as a scout to follow after her to make sure she did not escape. And that was why Zanya did not try to do anything and even acted as though she had not felt his presence at all.

However, she decided to turn around for a look when she felt him suddenly coming too close, too fast. And now, she was shocked that the vampire had suddenly seized her. The most shocking thing was that he even looked quite angry, his eyes dangerously blood red, and his grip on her arms were strong and firmer than necessary.

"If you're trying to escape..." he said in a firm and deep voice, "pardon me, but I won't let you."

Zanya immediately made a face, her forest green eyes gleamed defiantly as well. "Let go, vampire." She hissed, narrowing her beautiful eyes at him. She tried tugging at her arms to free herself, but to no avail. Leon had his hands locked around her securely and was not allowing her any leeway to escape.

"No, I'm bringing you back to Her Highness." Leon said and as he was about to pull her close to him, Zanya instinctively used her magic. That sudden burst of magic took Leon by surprise, and he loosened his hold on Zanya for a second. But that one second was all Zanya needed as she was waiting for that opportunity. Her eyes flashed as her hands came up and slammed into Leon's sturdy chest, causing his eyes to widen at the very unexpected move from Zanya.

The vampire was immediately pushed back due to his short moment of inattention, and he then fell on the ground with a loud thud. Zanya gasped at what she did. She did not mean to attack with her magic. It was just that this vampire had acted so presumptuously in assuming that she was trying to run away that she lost her temper for a short while. She was aware on how this vampire was important to Princess Evie. Thus, she was feeling a little concerned if he was hurt by the accidental attack.

Zanya worriedly rushed over towards him, knowing that she had used too much magic power and that the vampire did not even block her sudden attack. Why did he not block? She was certain he was a very strong one! So, it did not quite make sense in her mind that her attack could have thrown him back until he had crashed to the ground.

Realizing that this was the very first time the vampire had been attacked by a fae, Zanya pressed her lips tight as she crouched down to help him sit up. Her face was a mixture of regret and worry as he blinked while sitting up with her help. Her magic was still lingering in his body as he tried to rise.

"Are you okay? I'm sorry... I didn't mean to..." she trailed off as the man grabbed her wrist again and it was only then that she realized how close their faces were. Zanya had a clear view of his attractive purple eyes which she thought was a strange eye colour for a vampire. She had never seen a vampire's eyes with such a colour before.

She backed away and glared at him as she tried to pull her hand out from his strong grip. "Let go or I'll hurt you again." She threatened though she just felt bad for using her magic on him just a few minutes ago. Despite knowing that this man was the princess' ally, she could not help but feel wary

and defensive knowing full well that he was a vampire. And to top it off, he is currently touching her without her express permission and what is more, looking angrily at her.

"That won't be happening again," he replied, "I told you, I'm not going to let you escape. The princess took so much energy to free you, so –" Leon stubbornly continued in his speech.

"Who said I'm escaping?" Zanya's eyes flashed in irritation as she stared directly into Leon's eyes, challenging him.

Leon blinked a couple of times, obviously confused for a moment as he did not expect her to deny his claims. But he immediately became serious again as he thought that the little fae might be tricking him to lower his guard before slinking off to escape again.

"If you think I'll let you trick me –" Leon growled lowly as he was more alert, in the case where Zanya might run off if he took his eyes off her.

"You're mistaken," she cut him off again firmly this time, as she finally realized this vampire was fully convinced that she was trying to escape. "I'm not escaping. I am out here to look for fresh fruits." Zanya explained, barely keeping herself from rolling her eyes at the dense vampire before her.

"F-fruits?" he stuttered as he tilted his head slightly, then he looked at her with doubt. Leon wondered if she was truly out here looking for fruits or was it another feint that she is using to trick him, causing him to narrow his eyes at her after a few seconds.

Zanya could only sigh as she could see his clear hesitation at her explanation. It seems that just like her, this vampire could not quite trust her fully too. Just like how she was still unable to trust them fully as well, except for the princess. She decided on the spot that she would not resent them anymore but trusting them was a whole different issue altogether.

"Yes, fruits." She repeated as she swung her arms in a wide arc, pointing out the area that was around him. As Leon looked about and then at the pink-coloured object in her hand that indeed looked like a fruit. "I came here to forage since Crescia doesn't have any living trees anymore. I know I could only find these outside the gates."

Chapter 213 - Promise?

Slowly, Leon loosened his grip on her wrist and finally he let her go. He cleared his throat as he apologetically averted his gaze away. His angry expression softened. "Forgive me, I thought you were trying to run away." His voice was gentle and apologetic as well.

Zanya loosened up after hearing his apology and she stepped a few steps away. "It's alright, I guessed I'm to blame too for not letting anyone know where I'm going."

Leon watched her flew up and then she started picking fruits. The vampire felt his cheeks grew warm as he felt embarrassed at what he did.

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Back in the castle, Evie was deep asleep and was still immersed in her dream.

Evie started to move about and make soft sounds in her sleep that the vampires who were on guard outside of her door were immediately silenced. Though the sounds she was making were barely audible, vampires with their enhanced hearing had no issues picking it up clearly.

They could hear her uttering the prince's name and all their faces became sullen. In all the past nights that had passed without prince Gavriel, they always hear the princess sleep talking and calling out his name. At first, the men were so worried that they had to send Elias to wake her up, but the princess just would not wake up until her dream was deemed to be over. They had found it quite strange but then, Zolan remembered about what the princess had told him about her dreams. That in their family, dreams are not just dreams.

So, the men could only wait and just watch over her closely. And somehow, when they stopped trying to wake her up, she eventually woke up on her own.

They were worried every time they hear her calling for the prince in her dreams because it seemed as though her dream was not truly a dream but a nightmare. However, when the princess assured them that the prince was well and alive, they were relieved. But still, they could not help but wonder about what the princess was actually seeing in her dreams and why did she always sound so distressed whenever she calls out the prince name.

"I wonder where's prince Gavriel right now," Levy asked in a quiet voice. Since they met their prince, they were almost inseparable. Wherever Gavriel goes, they were always there except when he goes into his confinement inside the dungeon. And that was why all of them had been quite shaken when their prince was not with them anymore. If the princess was not there, they could not even imagine what would have happened to them now or where they would be. Though they were certain that without the princess, they would have already returned without hesitation and no matter how dangerous it was that very same night to look for their prince when he did not arrive at the agreed time.

Zolan did not speak. He had all sort of theories in his head already as he could not help but think about all the possibilities on why he did not follow them. He even thought about how he even managed to stay alive and where the hell was he right now. But he could not come up with a satisfying theory so he could not say a thing about this. It was better for them to just believe in the princess, that the prince was somewhere out there, and he is alive and was doing well. It was better than trying to think about the hows and whys.

Realizing that Zolan would not say a thing about this matter as usual, Levy could only zip his mouth again. Zolan liked to express whatever theory he had but about the prince's whereabouts and why he did not follow them, he was unusually refusing to say what he thought, and Levy could not help but feel a little bothered by this man's unusual silence.

As Levy leaned against the wall, he heard the princess' voice again and he could not help but feel bad for the princess. He guessed that she must be missing her husband really badly now and that was why she kept on dreaming about him.

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Inside the room, Evie was still unable to break free from her dream.

Her body was paralyzed as she looked at Gavriel. Her lips trembled, her heart threatening to burst in happiness as she was finally seeing him again. She had missed him so much. She swept her eyes over his tall and lean form as she breathed with gladness upon seeing that he was alright. As she looked closer, she noticed his eyes were not red nor silvery grey. It was that vivid blue that seemed to be holding the devil's fire inside them.

"G-gavriel!" she called out and he flashed her that devastating smile. Evie dropped her weapons and was about to run to him, but he suddenly disappeared.

"No, don't disappear on me again, please. I've missed you so much! Where are you?" she cried out, frantically searching for him.

Her eyes filled with longing and every intense emotion as her heart sank when she could not find him. "Gavriel!?" she weakly called his name as she was about to fall to her knees.

Then everything turned dark before she found herself inside a room lit up by candles and she was... being pinned on the wall. Before her was the man she was looking for just a while ago. He was staring hard at her and his eyes filled with desire and lust and hunger... he looked even more wicked than ever. Was it because his eyes were blue that he looked much more dangerous?

"Evielyn..." Gavriel called her name with that deep and seductive voice she had missed so much and for so long. And he was looming so closely to her as if he was going to kiss her. Then his whisper came. "Tell me. Why you didn't keep your promise?"

And everything turned dark again.

#### Chapter 214 - Way Too Long

Evie woke up from that dream and she immediately buried her face into her palms.

She stayed sitting in that position for a long while as she breathed in and out many times and tried to calm herself. These dreams again! Every time she had them, it always threw her heart into havoc and her plans would waver as she would be so very tempted to drop everything and go chasing after him. However, she knew better than to do that. Thus, after calming herself down, she would be able to reorientate her mind and focus on what she needed to do instead of what she wanted to do.

Seeing Gavriel in her dreams made her heart feel better a little but troubled at the same time. She did not understand a lot of things in that dream, like the strange feeling she got when he was with her in that room. She also did not understand what he even meant about those last few sentences he had said. Promise? What promise? Evie had cracked her head over that issue every time she woke up from the dream, trying to remember just what the details about the promise were that he was talking about. And the worse thing was that no matter how she tried, she just could not figure out what it was.

From what she remembered from the dream, the look in his eyes as he told her those words haunted her. Because she saw what seemed like anger or pain – or perhaps both – flashing in his wicked devil blue eyes. It was something Evie had never seen before. He had never looked at her with that kind of gaze before. So why? What promise did she make that she had failed to fulfil? Or could it be that she had yet to make that promise?

For some reason, Evie felt that it was not the case. She did not know why but she felt like the promise he was talking about had already happened. But then, how could she not remember?

Evie tugged on her hair in frustration as she buried her face on her knees. There were just too many questions! And her desire and longing to see him again began to swallow her entire being. She just wanted to see him and touch him and talk to him again and more importantly to ask him about the promise he was talking about. She wanted to know if he was truly fine. And if he was, then why were his eyes still looking like that – in their flaming blue state.

Taking a deep breath, Evie gathered herself, knowing that thinking about this further would not help her at all. She knew that all she could do now was to train here with Zanya as much as she could so she would finally be able to leave and start looking for him. She knew that her men were as anxious to go on the search for her husband with her as well. They too were worried as there had been no news on him for quite some time.

Her eyes gleamed with determination again. Tonight, she was going to make sure to rest up fully so she could throw herself into training tomorrow as much as she could take it. She told herself and then she rose from her bed as she heard her stomach rumbling as it was begging for food.

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Outside Crescia's gate, the forest for some reason was no longer as ominous as Leon remembered when they had passed it on their way into the heart of the land. But perhaps it was because of the light fae's humming. Her beautiful voice somehow lifted the gloomy atmosphere and made the entire dark forest feel more alive now. And small animals began to show up as if they felt like they were in a safe place. Leon wondered if this was one of light fae's magic as well. Or perhaps it was just a natural attraction of light faes to lure in creatures with their out-of-this-world voice and appearance.

Leaning against a tree trunk, Leon's gaze was just moving back and forth from the pile of fruits on the ground to the faery who was still happily focussed on her work of picking fruits and seemed to be enjoying herself.

The half-blood understood she must be having the best day in a very long time since she was finally freed from her confinement in the crystal but... Leon's eyes fell on the small mountain of fruits again and after a long while of thinking on whether he should talk to Zanya or not, he finally made up his mind and opened his mouth to speak.

"Don't you think you should leave some fruits on the trees for others like..." he cocked his head and paused before he continued, "...the birds that are looking for food in this area?" he asked as Zanya put down the fruits she had picked.

She paused then lifted her face at him and then she looked down and finally, she realized that she had already created a small mountain of different fruits. She had forgotten herself in her joy because of her excitement that she could finally physically do something with her own body after so many years. It really has been too long. Way too long – thousands of years too long, in fact... and she was also excited to get every kind of fruit she could find because she wanted the princess to taste them. She knew that growing up in the human realm, the princess had never tasted the succulent fruits of the faeries yet!

But she realised that Leon was right. Looking down at the mountain of fruits at her feet, she suddenly felt that it was already too much. She also remembered that the vampires do not really enjoy eating fruits. So, who would be eating all of these now? Even though she wanted to eat and stuff herself as much as she could tonight, there was no way she would be able to finish all these even if the princess were to eat as much as she could.

"You're right," was all she could say, as a light blush tainted her cheeks in embarrassment.

Chapter 215 - Good Advices

Zanya stopped talking and started collecting the fruits and Leon crouched down as he too, started piling the fruits in his arms to help her carry them all back to the castle.

Zanya then really looked at him properly for the first time and she realized that his brows were thick and dark, his hair were even darker than his brows as it was wet.

As if he noticed her eyes scrutinizing him closely, Leon spoke without averting his gaze away from the fruits he was picking. "Apologies for what I did earlier," he said in a gentle tone and then he lifted his head and looked directly into her eyes.

Their eyes met. Zanya looked a little surprised at what he said but before she could respond, the man rose and turned his back from her. "You fly back to the castle first and I'll follow after you." He said and Zanya creased her brows a little as she stared at the back of this vampire with the strange but beautiful purple eyes.

Without a word, Zanya then spread out her wings and finally, the two of them left the forest in silence and returned to the castle with their arms full of the fruits that Zanya had picked.

When they entered into the castle, the vampires were all staring at Leon with curious and intense eyes, most especially Levy, who looked a little upset that he was not the one who had accompanied the light fae. He had been looking for the opportunity to get close and better acquainted with Zanya.

"What happened, hmm, Leon?" he asked as he circled Leon, staring at Leon with meaningful eyes, as if he was dying to interrogate the half-blood on what had taken them so long to go out and come back to the castle.

But Leon simply brushed him off and quietly put the fruits the fae had picked onto the kitchen table. There were all sorts of fruits in different colours none of them had ever thought were actually edible. The half-blood was expressionless, and Levy just could not read anything interesting as he scrutinized his face closely.

"Geez... at least tell us something will you?" Levy could only sigh, giving up quickly on Leon, knowing that it was never easy to make Leon talk, unless it was something involved with his duty and very important matters. "And here we thought we're now as close as brothers with you." He complained with his dramatic voice and Leon was forced to look at him.

He looked at the others as if curious if all of them, the original members of Prince Gavriel's men, were actually telling each other everything. But the others told him to ignore Levy. "Don't mind him. He just wants to hear some gossip." Reed said.

However, Leon faced Levy and spoke. "You want to know what happened?" he started talking and Levy's eyes twinkled, and he furiously nodded his head, "she picked fruits from the trees while I waited on the ground."

Levy waited for what comes next but when Leon did not say anything anymore, Levy could no longer hold his mouth. "And? And? Come on, don't leave me hanging!"

"And after she was done picking the fruits, we gathered them up and returned here immediately." Leon's voice was bland and his face as blank as a sheet of paper.

Levy blinked. "Come on, man. Don't leave the interesting part out, will you? Something certainly would have happened on your way here, right? Right?" Levy pushed and prodded like an irritating child.



Leon's brows creased as if he could not understand what Levy was trying to say. "We only travelled back in silence. That was all. There were no other interesting things that happened on our way back."

Silence reigned as Levy fell speechless, his mouth opening and closing like that of a goldfish. Seeing Leon's expression, the man was certain that he was only telling the truth and it frustrated him to no end. "Seriously, Leon?! Don't tell me you didn't even try to start a conversation with that beauty?"

When the half-blood remained silent, Levy ran his fingers through his hair, looking frustrated that he almost pulled his hair out. "Geez, man. I can already imagine the awkward silence. Must have been so uncomfortable..." He muttered as he shook his head and pulled a long face at Leon.

Leon's eyes narrowed a little. On their way back, she was flying above him in the sky while he was running on the ground. He knew he could have tried speaking with her as she did not try to hasten her pace as they were travelling back. But Leon did not find the talking at all necessary. And the silence was not awkward at all, at least for him. He also thought the little fae was not uncomfortable with the silence too. All in all, they had quite a comfortable journey back to the castle.

Suddenly, Levy tapped on Leon's shoulder. "Next time, you should remember not to treat a lady the way you treat us, man. It's not a problem when it comes to us but when it comes to the ladies, especially a fair lady like Zanya, you must do your best to entertain her... I guess I'll be giving you lessons on how to entertain a lady –" Levy rambled on and on as Leon's face stayed blank as he stared at him.

"Quit with your 'good advices' Levy." Zolan's voice echoed out and they all looked towards the source of the voice. Zolan was escorting the princess as they headed to the dining hall.

"I'm just giving wonderful words of wisdom to our dear brother here. Since it seems as though he doesn't have much experience with girls like our little Reed right here." Levy smirked as he jabbed his elbow into Reed's side. That only caused Zolan to let out a heavy sigh. Levy was the two most flirtatious ones amongst all of them. It would not be wrong to say that he would change the women beside him as often as a person changes clothes.

"Words of wisdom, your ass..." he replied through telepathy, "we don't need another hardcore womanizer like you, so stop preaching and spreading your teachings to others – at least not right here and right now."

Chapter 216 - Colour

"What's wrong?" Levy replied. "I am simply going to teach them how to treat a lady nicely – as how they deserved to be treated."

"You're going to teach them how to flirt and become a creep like you." Zolan quickly replied with a snort.

"Geez, sir Zolan... here we go again, didn't I tell you many times before? We handsome men should not be called creeps. We should be called seductive –"

"You're the only one thinking that way. Now shut up and go call Samuel to come over. It's time for dinner." Zolan put an end to Levy's nonsense and gave him an order to send him away for a while.

When everyone was gathered around the table with Evie sitting at head seat as it was the seat Zanya led her to, everyone started on their dinner.

For the first time in a long time, they all finally ate at a decent table, under a roof. And now, with an addition of a new member to the group too.

Evie's attention immediately fell on all the fresh fruits piled into a few bowls and eyed it with much interest. Seeing where the princess' focus fell on the table, Zanya merrily rattled off each name of the fairy's fruits and passed them to Evie to have a taste of each one of them. After tasting every one of the fruits that Zanya held out to her, Evie found them to be incredibly delicious and even encouraged her men to try it. Though she knew that the men favoured red meats more than anything else, she still urged them to try with sparkling eyes. Looking at the princess, the men could not bear to let her down thus, they all stretched out their hands to grab any random fruit that were placed in the fruit bowls.

The vampires could only bring the fruits to their mouths to have a taste too. But they were not as pleased with the taste of the fruits as Evie was. Though, for them, these fruits tasted way better than fish! The thought of fish just gives them the shivers. Though all fruits just do not taste that great to them, they still could at least make themselves eat them.

After trying the fruits that the princess had offered, the men then went back and feasted on the various styles of meat dishes that Elias had cooked up while Evie and Zanya feasted on the different fruits. The men guessed that as both the princess and Zanya were of fae descent, that could be a main factor on why they would prefer feasting on fruits rather than on meats.

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The next morning, Evie woke up early, even before the sun had risen and was already started on her training. Zanya was next to her, and the vampires were there too watching intently and just being available just in case there was anything untoward happens.

Evie had called on Crimson again as she wanted to make sure she would be able to fully control her. She had managed to call the same dragon with her intense concentration at once.

Then they were up in the sky again, circling the immediate area.

The next moment, everyone on the ground saw the dragon breathe out fire in the sky, lighting up the gloomy clouds for a moment.

"She's controlling it! The princess did it!" Levy exclaimed, seeing that the dragon breathed fire towards the sky to avoid hurting them who were gathered right below.

"Yes, I think the princess already learned how to control the dragons. Just remember when she came and saved us from the savage orcs..." Zolan said, not taking his eyes off her.

"Right. I guess, there is nothing else left for her to learn?" Luc replied, wondering. Then his eyes twinkled in excitement. "Damn! I'm hella excited now to go back and kick Caius' ass. I can't wait to see how those assholes will end up looking like when they finally see our very own princess calling her dragon to fight! Most especially, I can't wait to see His Highness' reaction once we find him!"

The men looked like they all had the same thought and were pumped up with excitement. They could not wait to meet their prince again and see his reaction once he learns all about what his treasured and beloved wife had become and accomplished.

That very same day, after Evie managed to take full control of Crimson, she tried to call on another dragon.

The next dragon that had responded to Evie's call was of the exact same size as Crimson. Seeing that its chest did not show the same reddish colour as Crimson, Evie now could tell it was a male dragon even without Zanya informing her.

Evie noticed the edges of the dragon's spikes had a colour between blue and yellow. "Alright, your name will be Fir." She declared and then after that she rode on Fir as well. Evie had quite a hard time in controlling Fir. Much more than she had with Crimson.

So in the end, Evie gave up trying to control him for now. She knew she would eventually be able control Fir but since she did not have much time to spare, she decided to attempt in controlling the other dragons first. She thought that she would call the dragons that were a little more tame so she need not exhaust her magic and energy too much from trying hard in controlling them.

It was already night when she attempted calling on her third dragon. Another male dragon with orange brownish colour on its spikes flew above her before landing right in front of Evie in response to her summons.

Evie approached it and caressed its snout before she spoke.

"Titian." Evie declared with a satisfied smile, "Your name will be Titian."

#### Chapter 217 - Just Wait

Once again, Evie had another hard time in controlling Titian. This dragon was just as wild as Fir, if not even more so. Though Evie had to smile as she thought of how Titian's temper was as similar as his colour. As Evie reflected on her experiences so far, even though the dragons responded to her call and allowed her to touch them and even let her ride on their backs, they seemed to be refusing her orders no matter how much she tried to concentrate on giving the instructions and attempt to control them when they fight back and object against her orders.

Evie could not even make Titian land on the ground when she had already given the command multiple times, that Zanya had no choice but to fly over and take Evie off from its back.

When Evie and Zanya finally landed on the ground, Evie felt a sudden wave of exhaustion hit her. She then realised that it had been a long day of nonstop training.

"Princess, you've done really well today. This kind of achievement is already beyond my expectations! For now, you must take a rest. It would be no good to overexert and not be able to continue with your training tomorrow. We'll continue this again bright and early tomorrow morning." Zanya advised her and the vampires all nodded, their faces filled with concern for the princess. They could see how she was really pushing herself to train and absorb as much as she could.

Everyone had been watching over the princess the entire day. So, they knew how hard she had been working. The princess is always trying her very best and never wasting a moment to relax and laze around. In fact, they were extremely impressed and their respect and awe for the princess had just gone above and beyond. They were awed at how diligent and persistent she was.

Thankfully, the princess nodded at Zanya's suggestion, and they finally entered into the dark castle. As they were all walking in, the men were observing Evie carefully and saw that though she was

smiling and talking to Zanya seemingly as usual, they were quite certain she was feeling down for failing to control Fir and Titian. It was obvious in her smile that was less bright and the slight dimness in her eyes.

...

Zanya had then brought Evie to a special area behind the castle after they had separated from the men. There was a small and beautiful lagoon Zanya told Evie about that was her favourite bathing place back then.

When Evie took off her outer clothing and dipped herself into the waters, she was surprised to find that it was warm. Zanya smile at her, and Evie realized that the light fae had done something to the waters for it to turn out this way with her magic.

After some time, Zanya excused herself and left Evie to soak in the lagoon alone, realizing that the princess wanted to spend more time on her own in the waters to relax and just enjoy time to herself.

Looking up the sky as she leaned her head back along the edge of a slab of the smooth stone surrounding the small lagoon, Evie let out a long and deep sigh. She was starting to feel worried. What if she could not control the other dragons within the limited time that they had? What if it was only Crimson that she could manage to control? She really needed the cooperation and strength of all the dragons here if she wanted to successfully achieve her lofty goals.

It was then that negative thoughts began to flood Evie's mind. She wanted all the dragons. She wanted to control all of them. Crimson alone was not enough.

Evie had seen from the example of the dragon summoned at the battle in Dacria, that a lone dragon can be defeated if given enough time and the appropriate tools and manpower was available. If she wanted to stand against an enemy like the dark fae, she must be able to control more than just one lone dragon – and such a small one at that. If possible, she was aiming for the lot of them, most especially Onyx – the ancient dragon itself. When she was able to do that, it was only then that she would possess the means for her to defeat the enemy.

But it seems as though everything was not going as smoothly as she had thought and planned. Her experience with Fir and Titian made her feel anxious and worried as well as scared that she might end up failing. Especially since she didn't have much time to spare.

What should she do? Zanya had already taught her everything she knew about the way to control the dragons. Zanya told her that it was only natural for the young dragons to have quite a hard time in being tamed and it will definitely take time. But was there really no way to hasten the process? Evie had hoped that it would not take that long, nor would it be more challenging than it actually was.

She buried her face into her palms and stayed like that for a long while. And when she dropped her hands into the water and looked down, the water that was initially crystal clear was now glowing and the face of the man she had been missing for so long appeared immediately in her head. She remembered their intimate moments that night that felt so long ago in the magical lake and her face flushed as it heated up in embarrassment.

Biting her lower lip, she looked up with a smile even as her eyes shone with loneliness. "What are you doing right now? Are you missing me as badly as I am missing you?" she threw out her questions into the sky with a soft and longing voice.

It was strange but the longer this separation between her and Gavriel went on, Evie felt like her love for him was getting deeper and deeper each day. She had thought that her love for him was already far deeper beyond anything she had known, but as days without him went by one after another, her feelings for him still kept growing and growing to a degree she thought was not possible. And it seems that this growing feeling was the very thing that is constantly driving her to never give up and keep going on even though there were failures along the way.

A bitter smile curved on Evie's beautiful lips. "Alright, I will keep going... I will never give up." She muttered as if she were talking to someone. She then took in a deep cleansing breath before her bitter smile turned into something hopeful. "I will show you, Gavriel. When we see each other again, I won't be the same old Evie you had seen the last time. I won't be that helpless princess... who could do nothing but get into trouble and just watch by the side lines. When we see each other again, I won't be standing far behind, but I'll be right by your side ... I'll be fighting alongside you, Gavriel. I promise. Just wait for me."

#### Chapter 218 - Faerie's Dress

A dawn of a new day saw Evie heading out from the dark castle with renewed determination on her clear and beautiful face.

Clad in a faerie's dress that Zanya had brought over the night before for her to change into, Evie did not look quite so human anymore. It was a silken white gauzy material that hugged her figure beautifully from her chest to her hips before flaring out in a stunning twirl, as though she were walking amidst the frothy sea waves instead of just the flat ground. The sleeves were of the same material and was fitted from her midarms to her elbows before spreading out into bell-like sleeves that fluttered her with every movement she took as she walked. There were gold threads sewn delicately and tastefully to enhance the simplicity of the whole dress. The gold threads that were selectively embroidered into both sides of her sleeves in a butterfly wing motif only added to her elegance and made it seem as though she could float off the ground and fly off like a wind goddess. With her long silvery tresses unbound and floating in the slight breeze behind her as she took each step, it was hard not to mistakenly assume that Evie was a divine goddess that had descended to the mortal realm. As she reached the main door, Evie threw a royal blue cloak over this eye-catching and stunning dress she was wearing to keep off the chill.

Though the cloak had covered most of her dress and only showing the hems of her skirt and her sleeves, the men still were stunned to speechlessness from the initial sight of her. That image of her all in white and gold had all but seared itself into their minds and would be one that even time could not remove it. To them, their princess seemed to have transformed into a real goddess. She was always such a beauty but now that she had change her outfit, she certainly became even more ethereal.

And once again, the men had one thought buzzing through their minds. All of them only thought that what an unfortunate thing it was that their prince and the princess' husband was not blessed enough to catch a glimpse of this vision who was his very own beloved wife! They could only imagine that if he did see the princess in these garments, their prince would be perfectly frozen still and paralyzed at the sight of his wife.

Meanwhile, Evie paid no attention to the dazed gazes of her men and continued walking off and headed straight towards the training area. Once she was there, she walked straight up and halted in the middle of the bridge before taking a breath and closing her eyes. Somehow, she felt much better

compared to her previous condition yesterday. Perhaps it was due to her deal with herself last night? Or was it because of this dress that Zanya had made her wear?

Evie felt the dress draped ever so lightly on her body. Initially she thought she would feel the cold as well as the fabric really seemed too thin and airy. However, to her pleasant surprise, she was wrong. She was not feeling a slight bit cold at all. The cloak that she had put on to ward off the chill was quite redundant. But she just left it on as she was still a little conscious of how thin and revealing the material was. But she told herself to get used to it as this was the type of clothing the faes wore.

Whatever the reason of her improved constitution, she told herself to focus and do her very best today. Every single step she took forward in improving herself would take her a step closer to where Gavriel was. A small smile curved over her cherry red lips as she relaxed her entire body. She was going to do everything she could today.

In the next moment, a new dragon landed before her. The dragon was a little bigger than the three previous ones.

Seeing that it was another male, and the colour of its spikes were also a vivid red but instead of brown, it was tinted with orange. Thus, after thinking for a couple of seconds, Evie then uttered the word, "Vermillion".

"Your name will be Vermillion." She called out before confidently jumping onto the dragon's back. But as how Fir and Titian had responded, Vermillion too, followed in their footsteps.

However, Evie refused to allow herself to fail again. She tried and tried until she managed to make Vermillion bring her back to the ground. She was upset that she did not manage to make him breathe out fire, but she could only hope for the last three dragons that were left to be like Crimson.

As she walked away as Vermillion flew off into the air again, her men and Zanya complimented her on her achievements, and she could only smile at them. Then after taking a short break, she stood up again and called out for the next dragon.

This time, a male dragon that she named Khaki due to the yellowish brown colour of his spikes was also another failure. As it was with Titian, she could not even manage to force him to bring her to land back on the ground.

Everyone cheered her up, but Evie was becoming more and more agitated. There were only two dragons left and Evie could not help but fear if these two will also be hard to control and she would fail again.

The day was ending when she called for the next dragon. It was yet another male with spikes that were as green as hillside grass. "Verdant," Evie said, and she spent the rest of the day trying to control it.

The men and Zanya could see her struggling in her efforts. They had been giving each other looks for a while now. All of them had wanted to tell her that she must not push herself too much. But none of them could speak out as they could see how hard she was trying and how desperate she looked. They did not have the heart to interrupt her and tell her to rest. At the same time, they did not know their princess could be this incredibly

persistent and stubborn. She truly reminded them of someone. Their prince.

## Chapter 219 - Pressure

Evie was biting her lower lip in frustration as she and Zanya landed on the bridge. Another fail!

All could see that her eyes were red rimmed, and she was trying to control her tears from spilling over.

"What am I doing wrong?" she said, looking on the ground. "Why are they not listening to me? Was it because they think I am not worthy? Crimson listened to me, but why are all these male ones not doing the same?" she complained, trying not to burst out in frustration. She had realized now that the only dragon she had managed to control was the only female one for now, Crimson.

She also remembered now that the dragon she controlled back in Dacia also had a reddish coloured hue on its chest, meaning, it was a female dragon. Does this mean she was only capable of controlling the female ones? Or do the male dragons only listen to a male summoner? But that cannot be right for the dragon summoned by her possessed father was female too!

Also, that was not the case as well when she remembered Onyx. Onyx was a male dragon, but the last Queen of Middle Land was accepted as his master. Then why? What was she doing wrong? Is it just her that was the problem?!

"Princess," Zanya's voice was soft, "male dragons have always been harder to control. Female dragons learn much faster than them and are easier to control. The female ones were also easier to form a strong bond with. And that was why back in the days, most faeries loved the female ones than the male dragons. Very few actually managed to control the male ones. I remember it was the late queen who was the only one so fond of the male dragons. I remembered she once told me that the male dragons were more challenging. But the challenge was very worth it."

Evie looked at Zanya, curious what she meant by 'worth it'.

Understanding the question in Evie's eyes, Zanya continued. "The late queen told me male dragons are more powerful and more destructive. They are definitely harder to tame but once one manages to tame it, it will give its full loyalty to you. That's why back then, a faery must be able to control a male dragon for them to be considered as one of the strongest fae. And that was why I also gave it a try."

"Did you managed to control one?" Evie's eyes widened.

Zanya shyly shook her head. "I've tried for a few days but before I could succeed, the war had started then. We didn't have much time to train and spent our magic so we opted for the dragons that we can already control well. My dragon was a female too. In fact, almost all of the dragon summoners had female dragons." Zanya's face became sullen. "That's why it was the female dragon population that were eradicated first throughout the very long war. As the war was nearing its end, it was the male dragons that had become one of the biggest threats to Crescia as the dark faeries used dark magic to possess the male dragons. And that just made things worse. Most female dragons were already killed off and the males were controlled by the dark faeries. That just pushed the dragons further into extinction. That is why there are so few of them left."

Evie was silenced as she listened to Zanya's story.

"That's why you must not get discouraged Princess, please believe me when I say you are already doing very great that the male dragons are responding to your summons at the very first try. Back

then, despite being a noble, it took me days to even manage to call a male dragon without draining almost all of my magic." Zanya smiled softly at her and somehow, Evie felt better.

"Thank you, Zanya." Evie could only utter her gratitude. It seems she must quit thinking that she could force everything to work out just because she wanted it to and did not have much time to lose. She cannot deny her feelings of disappointment but perhaps, the reason why it was not working as smoothly as it should was because she was rushing. These male dragons must have felt her desperation to control them and perhaps that was why they were rejecting her?

"I think it's alright for you to take it easy, Princess." Zolan spoke as he brought over the bottle of water Elias had prepared for her. "Since they are already responding to your summons, I guess you can always call them and train with them wherever you are. Isn't that right?"

Evie and Zanya looked at him.

"I mean, since we don't have much time to stay here, and since you have already mastered summoning them, you can now practice your control over them as we continue on our travels out of this land." Zolan explained and Evie's face immediately lit up. That was right! Why did she not think of that?

"That's a very good suggestion, Princess." Zanya agreed.

"But will it be alright for me to train with them wherever I am? Even outside of the Middle Land?" Evie asked and Zolan responded.

"I guess it's alright Princess, since the enemy already knows that you are able to control a dragon. So, it's not something that we need to bother to hide. However, I think we must hide the fact that you can call so many of them or the fact that you are fine and aren't affected even after summoning so many of them."

"You're right," Evie nodded. "So, I'll just call on them one at a time."

And with that, Evie finally relaxed. She had realized she was too tensed from the pressure of needing to control them as soon as possible. And now that she had found out she still had time to tame them, she was utterly relieved.

"Thank you, Zolan." She had said. And that night, Evie and her men had another feast. Last night, they could not quite enjoy as much due to their princess being in a bad mood because of what she had thought to be her failures. But tonight, her mood was better, and she was enjoying her food so all of them were able to enjoy too.

## Chapter 220 - Him

As the group was finishing their dinner, Evie spoke up. "Tomorrow," she started as she looked at everyone, "after I call for the seventh dragon, I think we can prepare to leave this place."

The men fell silent for a moment but eventually they all nodded. They were all ready to leave now as well.

"Your wish is our command, Princess. We will abide with whatever your decision may be." Samuel said and Evie smiled slightly.

"Thank you." Evie felt relieved. Before dinner, while she was taking her bath, she had thought that she can no longer stay here. Her plans before she found out the truth was to immediately return but



they had taken days for her to train summoning and giving instructions to the dragons with Zanya's help. Apart from Gavriel, Evie was also worried about the vampires they had left waiting for them at the lake.

She could not help but worry, because she suddenly thought of the savage orcs. She only remembered that fact now that many of those orcs had survived Onyx's attack and ran off since she returned to her comrades before killing all of those that remained. What if those surviving orcs...

Evie had quickly shaken her head to dismiss the scary thought and told herself that the magical lake was protected.

She had talked to Zanya about this particular place and to Evie's surprise, the light fae did not know about such a place. And so, Evie began to worry even more. Thankfully, Zolan assured her that the orcs had never appeared outside of the misty forest and that those dark wolves and the other smaller beasts could not enter into the protected vicinity of the lake.

Remembering Gavriel's words, Evie was relieved. She believed in her husband's words more than in anyone else's. However, she still felt that it was time for them to leave now. They have tarried in this place long enough. Especially since now that they have found out the solution to her problems. And now they do not need to stay here to train with the dragons.

"Zanya is coming with us, right?" Levy's voice pulled Evie to reality.

Everyone's eyes were fixed on Evie as they waited for her answer.

"The truth is..." Evie started as she faced Zanya, "I had wondered and wanted to ask if it is safe for you to leave this place. I also don't want Thundrann finding out about your existence. Or that there are other faeries still alive and just stuck in their enchantment."

"Actually, I can turn myself to look like a human, Princess!" Zanya immediately exclaimed upon realizing that the princess had entertained thoughts of leaving her behind. She understood why the princess wanted her to stay behind, but she wanted to follow her wherever she goes from now on.

Evie was surprised. "You can turn yourself into a human?"

"Yes, I can temporarily block off all my magic then my ears and skin would become very similar to yours. I'll be just like you princess. My hair colour will also darken. And since the tree of light is dead, as soon as I step out of the Middle Land, I will lose my magic completely and there will be no discernible trace to hint on that I am a light faery." Zanya explained. It was obvious by the way she hurriedly explained and gave such clear explanations without Evie asking much that she did not want to be left behind.

"Please don't worry, princess, even if I don't have magic, I will still be very useful. My combat skill is top notch. I was one of the best close-range fighters among my peers back then." She added, trying her best to convince Evie to take her along. "If you doubt me, I can show you how good I am even without using any magic."

Evie looked at Zolan and Samuel and when the men looked like they do not mind at all, Evie smiled at Zanya. In fact, the men were trying very hard not to laugh at how adorable Zanya looked at the moment. As she was trying to convince Evie, her usually aloof attitude had all but dispersed and left what was an overly eager fae trying to be convincing in her use to the princess.

But before Evie could say anything, Levy spoke.

"Why don't we see her skills first, Princess?" the man said, and Evie immediately saw through his intention. The man just wanted to have a show for his viewing pleasure. However, Evie thought that it might also be best to do so. She also wanted to see how faeries fight without their magic.

"Are you alright with it, Zanya?" Evie asked and Zanya stood very confidently.

"Of course, Princess. I would love to show you and the men what I can do. It seems that some of your men might think I am useless without my magic." Zanya said in confidence, her eyes glaring a little aggressively at Levy. "I suggest that you choose the best swordsman in the group to face me, Princess. I'll show the men that I can be a threat as well!"

"The best swordsman is..." Evie looked at her men one by one and then her eyes stopped at the quiet purple eyed half-blood before shifting it to the youngest in the group. "I was told Leon and Reed are best in swordsmanship. Who among you want to volunteer to be Zanya's opponent?" Evie asked the two as she looked from one to the other.

"Uhm..." Reed rubbed the back of his neck. "The truth is Leon is better than me, Princess. But if Leon does not want to fight Zanya, then I'll do it."

Zanya stared at Reed for a while and one thought came to her mind. He looked too young. She might hold back if it was Reed, right?

Her eyes then fell to the purple-eyed half-blood vampire, and she did not know why but she felt like challenging him today. Perhaps, it was because of her impression on him that time when he had grabbed her quite roughly and had accused her of escaping.

"I am going to fight him." Zanya said looking intensely at Leon as she gestured with her head at him.