

SPELLBOUND 231

Chapter 231 - Nickname

Evie fought for calm as she stood resolutely before him, her eyes flashing, and her fists clenched tightly at her sides. It was such a rare sight to see Zanya actually cowered before anyone like this. She could feel Zanya's extreme fear that she could not even utter a word anymore nor even make a single move.

Thankfully, the rage and danger shining in his eyes softened the moment Evie walked in front and blocked Zanya. Evie remembered that Gavriel was always like this. Whenever he was raging, he would immediately mellow down whenever she steps in. This was definitely Gavriel as his responses were even the same, and therefore the confusion within Evie kept growing.

Tiredness also suddenly swept over her. She was tired of keeping up the pretences of being all tough and strong. Now that she had found him, she thought that she could finally lower her guard and confide in him and stop acting all tough even just for a while. But with him being this way, it seems as though she had to keep holding on and maintain her facade. But for how much longer? She did not know. All she knew now was that she did not have the time to relax yet. Because she had another important thing to do now and that is to find out what was going on with her husband and what had happened for him to be behaving this way. And those electric blue eyes of his, too.

Taking a deep breath, Evie set aside all the emotions threatening to burst out from inside of her.

"Why..." Evie tried her best to swallow the tears. She had to even clench her fists as hard as she could to stop herself from jumping on him and hugging him. "Why are you doing this?" she asked, unsure if that was the right thing for her to ask at this moment. She was not prepared for this. Even if he was indeed possessed, this person's body still belonged to her husband. She could not let her guard down just because she was afraid that she might lose herself and go to him before she even realised it.

"Why? Because they are trying to stop me from getting to you." he uttered in a low voice, now taking a step closer. But Evie took a step back in response. However, what she did made him halt in his steps. His icy gaze became even colder if possible and Evie shuddered slightly within as she locked eyes with him.

That one step back was all Evie could do to put distance between them. She must not let him touch her nor get close to her, not until he returned to his normal self. She must stop listening to her heart for now because no matter how much she reasoned out all the things she felt and observed, his actions right now, especially towards his men were solid evidence unto themselves. Her Gavriel would never, ever, harm these men he had spent so much time with. So, there was no way that he would ever threaten to kill them just because he thought they were useless.

"W-what do you want?" she asked again. Evie wished she could gather her wits or better still, able to just go a little way off to have a moment for herself, to think first on what she should do or say to him.

"You." He answered without any hesitation, causing her heart to skip a beat. The worse thing was that she could not see even a tinge of malice or evil intention in his eyes.

"So..." Evie clenched her fists even harder and bit down on her lips to keep her calm. "You want me... so you could use me?" she decided to test him.

But his eyes immediately sharpened and became cold again, he even looked furious now. "Who was it that told you that? Why would you think that I'm going to use you?" he asked in a still voice yet anyone listening could tell it was as hard as flint.

"No one." Evie answered and his face became a few shades darker.

His prominent jaws clenched and unclenched in quiet rage that confused Evie even more. Then he smirked. "So, was this how you had thought of me all these time Evie... and that's why you..." he trailed off as vampire soldiers began to appear in the scene.

Evie was once again dumbfounded at what she heard. He called her 'Evie'. That has got to be Gavirel as only he would address her with that shortened name. Did she hear it right? And what? What does he even mean by what he just said?

Questions filled her eyes but before she could open her mouth to ask, Gavriel already turned his back from her and looked down at the vampires who were still laying on the ground. His dark cloak gracefully swayed with the cold breeze. And as Evie looked at his back, she did not know why but she suddenly felt like a needle was piercing her heart.

"Take all of them back to the castle." He commanded the soldiers who were surrounding them below and they all bowed as one. They began to pick Leon and Samuel up from the ground and some other soldiers also came up to the wall and slowly approached Elias and Zanya. "Put them all into the cage." He added and Evie snapped at the slightly weird Gavriel again.

"Wait!" she yelled at him and threw out her arms and hands. Before she knew it, she had grabbed onto his arm so she could make him look at her.

The soldiers were all shocked at her brave actions and the man was as well. He then slowly turned to look back at Evie before taking the few steps and loomed over her. But Evie was too focused on her comrades' safety to notice the shock in his eyes at the apparently simple thing that Evie did like grabbing at his arm. It was as if he could not believe she had reached out her hands and touched him so willingly and casually.

Chapter 232 - I Would Never

"You... you said you only want me. What are you going to do with them? And where are my other men? You didn't do anything bad to them, did you?!" she asked, worried to death now for Zolan and the others.

Evie even shook him when he just looked at her and could not speak. She did not realise her hands that were clutching onto his arm were shaking his, even as she was questioning him so daringly. The soldiers were looking at her with widened eyes and even Zanya and Elias had their mouths opened in shock. How could the princess be so bold?!

"Answer me! They're alright, are they not?" she continued, her eyes now pleading with him to tell her that he did not just have them killed outright. Evie could not help but fear for the worst because of how his eyes looked like when he said he would kill Elias. She had felt right then that he was not even joking and would not hesitate to kill Elias at all!

His expression changed right at that moment. It was as if he hated it to his bones, the fact that she was so worried over her men. However, as his eyes landed and stared at her hands which were clinging onto his arm, all the rage in his eyes suddenly subsided and he was calm again.

"I didn't kill them." He responded to Evie's questions simply and Evie felt so relieved that her knees nearly gave way and she almost crumpled to the ground where she stood. "They're alive and in prison." Gavriel added after a pause.

"Free them." She demanded and his eyes now narrowed. His glorious face loomed over hers and Evie could not help but stiffen up. She felt that this Gavriel's moods were really and truly volatile. He swung so quickly between wrath and calmness. Honestly, this just made her more curious on what had happened to make him behave so bizzarely.

"You don't need them anymore, Evie." He responded with such an unfeeling tone, using her nickname again. And it was utterly strange that she did not feel any disgust or rage when he calls her that. Was he not supposed to be possessed? Then why did it sound so natural for him to call her that? Or was it just her imagination because his voice was a ringer for Gavriel's?

"They are my men. I need them." She argued, defying him – seemingly at every turn. To the soldiers around, it was a miracle she was still alive and not dead from angering him yet.

Evie also felt strange that despite the coldness in his eyes, she did not feel that much fear of him. If he was an enemy, why could she not feel the danger towards herself like how she feared for Zanya and her men? Was she instinctively believing in this person that he will never harm her?

"From now on, they're going to obey me and me alone." Gavriel intoned.

Evie's eyes widened. "What did you do to them?" she asked nervously, her fear for her men coming back again.

"Whoever loses to me will automatically become my puppet." He answered as what he had just told her was one of the most normal things to be said. "Those who are weaker than me will have no choice but to become my subject."

What he said and the look in his eyes as those words comes out of his lips made Evie bite down on her lips very hard. Because one glance at his face and she could tell that he meant every single word of it.

And this time, anger flashed in her eyes. Perhaps, she was truly tired now and had long reached her very limit. She could not help but feel angry because now that she had found him, she could not do what she had dreamt of doing for so long. She could not even hug him or call out his name. And now, this...

"Are you going to turn me into one of your puppets as well if I lose to you?" she hissed at him, brave and defiant. Her eyes were sparking fire in them as she stared into his eyes, challenging him wordlessly.

His eyes widened for a moment, as if shocked at what she had said. And then there it goes, that familiar offended and dangerous expression she had seen a few times before when they were still back in the vampire's capital. She could remember that when they were still newlyweds. Evie sighed internally, thinking to herself that that seemed to have happened so long ago. She suddenly wished that things were back to being as simple as before. But before she could start feeling sorry

for herself, she righted her thoughts and told herself that she would do whatever it takes to get Gavriel back to herself.

She didn't cower even at his darkened and dangerous expression.

But then again, he opted for calm like he always does.

"Oh, I won't, Evie..." he said in low voice, his eyes smouldering as he looked at her with hooded eyes. While Evie was still shocked still from his reply, his hands stretched forward, as his fingers carefully reached for the stray strands of her hair that were whipping about in the breeze and gently and deliberately tucked them behind her ears, one side after the other. Evie could only stare wide-eyed and swallowed hard as he did that, her heart thumping in her chest as it reminded her of how he used to do that to her before he went missing.

Then he leaned forward until his face was beside hers, and continued in a whisper, "... not you. I can turn anyone and everyone into my puppets when I want to. But never you. Even if you wanted to be one, I would never... I want you to be mine forever, but not as a damned brainless puppet that needed to be controlled. I want you to choose me, fall for me, become my queen and stay with me forever."

Chapter 233 - Prison

Evie was completely bewildered. She was so shocked that she simply stood there, looking at him in utter disbelief, mute and dumbfounded.

Those words... how could this man say such words to her? He's not her Gavriel, right? Then why? How? How could those words, spoken so softly, yet she felt it was somewhat cruel and heartless since he was saying all of these heart touching words after making a mention of turning others into his puppets, caused that familiar ripple of heat through her heart which then flowed through and threatened to consume her entire being? She was in such a dilemma. Every fibre of her being was just barely holding back and so close to throwing herself into his arms and accepting the suggestion that he had made – all because he looks and sounds so similar to her Gavriel. However, she told herself to endure. She had to be strong and patient. The truth needed to be found out before she can cave in.

Biting her trembling lips, Evie immediately pushed herself away from him. Only she herself knew how hard that seemingly simple action was, and it sent a pang of pain jolting right into her heart. Now Evie was looking very guarded and more warily at him.

"W-what are you..." she stammered, "I... I don't understand why you are saying this..." at the end of her sentence, she had to avert her eyes from his form. Seeing him was like looking at her own Gavriel himself. But having to steel herself from throwing her body, heart and soul at him was really tough.

His devil-blue eyes narrowed as he took one step toward her, closing the gap that she had made earlier when pushing away from him. He then stretched his hand out to touch her face, but Evie side-stepped it as she took a couple more strides back again, as if he was a plague that she must avoid contact with at all costs. And again, without warning, a wild fury burst forth in his eyes that scared Evie and she could not help but step back even farther away from him.

Her actions caused him to stop in his tracks before he retracted his hand and clenched it. Then suddenly, a wicked smile curved across his lips. "I will never let you go again, Evie. Never." He

said as though making her a promise and the next moment she knew, his strong arm was already wrapped around the small of her back and Evie was shocked again upon realizing that they were currently floating in mid-air.

With widened eyes, Evie struggled in his hold. "Let go of me! Right this instant!!" she yelled at him even as she continued struggling, but his grip on her was too strong.

"Don't you want to see your other men?" Evie immediately stopped struggling at his words and tilted her head to up at his face, wondering what he meant by that sentence. "If you don't want them dead, or be turned into my brainless puppets, then behave yourself." He threatened and Evie drew in a sharp breath at his words.

And before Evie could even open her mouth to snap a sharp back reply at him, everything suddenly blurred for a moment, turned dark and then in the blink of an eye, they were already standing in another dark place. Evie was so shocked that she could only gape at the new surroundings this Gavriel had brought her to. Just what on earth had happened? Did they just disappear from mid-air and then materialized in this place?

Evie's eyes fell towards a cell where she could see thick bars that seemed to be reinforced with some strong metal, and she then realized they were probably in an underground prison. As her eyes slowly adjusted to the dim lighting, she could then make out Zolan's form and also the others who were with him inside the cell. Evie gave a small cry of distress as she pushed away from him, not caring for the moment about the consequences if he got displeased but only worrying about her men.

She ran towards the cell and then held onto the bars as she looked unhappily at her men. They seemed to be looking back at her, but their eyes held that glazed sheen, looking for all the world as though they were dead. It was as if they were no longer themselves and had all been turned into brainless puppets.

Anger rose inside Evie's chest as she whipped around to glare at the man who had brought her here. Her eyes were dazzling and breath taking, he had that thought even as they flashed at him in such anger.

"Turn them back to themselves! Make them normal again!" she hissed at him. But he just leaned his broad shoulder against the wall. His vivid blue eyes, still gleaming in the dimly lit place.

"Tell me Evie..." he uttered, his deep and velvety voice echoing so sinfully in the closed space that despite Evie's anger, she still could not help but admire the familiar and pleasing sound of his voice. That voice of his was the stuff of dreams. It was akin to soaking yourself in a really warm spring that just turns your bones into a puddle. However, Evie mentally shook her head and drew herself back to the current situation that she was facing. "Why do you care about these men so much?" his face showed a slight trace of displeasure even as he quizzed Evie.

"Because without them, I wouldn't be here right now!" Evie answered with much heat in her tone, gritting her teeth as her grip on the bars tightened. "They took care of me... they were there for me when.... When..." Evie bit down hard on her lips to stop herself from continuing on any further. 'When you were not there to care and protect me.' She continued in her mind even as her eyes teared up.

How much had these men sacrificed for her! They who were the elites and cream of the crop, had given their best to protect an initially weak human like her until they were hurt. And now, they had been turned into these blank, unfeeling, and unthinking bodies, just to be used as tools for others' pleasure. No! She would not allow this to continue. She had to somehow get this effect reversed and return the men to their original states. She owed them that at the very least.

He stared at her for a long while and then his gaze fell to the men behind the bars.

"Fine," he said and then he stepped closer to her. Before she knew it, he had wiped her tears away delicately with his thumb. His touch was warm, and Evie could not resist revelling in it for a short moment, only to turn her face sideways a little with much effort. "I will release them, so stop crying now." His tone came out gentle and it surprised Evie.

However, his jaws worked as if he was angry again. Evie did not know if he was angry with her or with the fact that he had to release the men. But Evie was not too hung up on that because she was surprised again that he was going to release them from his control.

She watched him stretch his hand towards the inside of the cell. The entire space became heavy with something strong and terrifying which she could clearly feel but could not see. Then Evie saw a dark and smoke-like wisp come curling out from the men's bodies before returning into the opened palms of his hand.

When he closed his hand, the men all suddenly coughed out, as though trying to expel something from their lungs. Their eyes had thankfully returned to normal as they looked all around them before landing on her form outside of the cells, clearly confused and disoriented for a moment. They were puzzled on how their princess was standing there, a place that was supposed to serve as their prison.

Evie sighed in great relief, seeing that her men were back to their normal selves.

"P-princess!!!" all of them exclaimed. Their eyes filled with worry and then fear and wariness as they looked at the man next to Evie. "Are you alright? He didn't do anything bad to you, right?" they asked frantically as they grabbed onto the bars and pressed themselves to it, as if to get out of there.

However, Gavriel lifted his hand again, his palm facing them, and the men all found themselves suddenly not being able to speak nor move.

Evie glared at him.

"Let me speak with them." She demanded firmly and loudly, enough for her men to hear her standing up to him. And then there it goes again, the fury in his eyes. He suddenly slammed his hands against the bars and loomed over her, trapping her between his arms.

"There is no one else you should speak with here but me, Evie." He hissed. "I've waited for you for so long and you expect me to let you speak with other men?"

Evie swallowed at the intensity that was raging in his eyes. She could see the burning possessiveness and longing and desire that were way too strong it was almost scary.

"Not a chance, Evie. I have already told you... you are going to be mine." He whispered harshly, his voice even became so hoarse and seductive Evie could not help but remember those times earlier on when she was fighting off her feelings and desires towards Gavriel. That was still back when she

could not decide whether to give in to her feelings or keep strong and hold onto her promise with her people.

Before Evie could form any response or even ask about the words he had uttered, that he had waited for her for so long, she heard people coming.

When she turned, she saw the vampires bringing Leon, Samuel, Elias and Zanya into the area. The vampires also threw them inside the cell. They were all still held immobile and could not freely speak.

Evie hurriedly did a quick scan on everyone to see if anyone was hurt. To her relief all of them seemed fine and Elias was already healing.

She took a deep breath as she watched the blue-eyed man spoke to one of the soldiers who seemed to be one of Kirzan's general.

"How about the woman, Your Highness? You're not going to put her in the cell?" the general-looking man checked with his leader and another soldier butted in.

"Of course he won't be doing that, general. He'd definitely imprison her in his room tonight. Right, Your Highness?" he crowed as he eyed Evie like a maniac, causing Evie to flare in disgust and anger. "She's such a goddamn beauty, once you're done with her –"

Suddenly, something red splashed all across the walls, shocking Evie and everyone else present. He had blocked Evie's view, so she did not quite catch what had happened in that split second but the blood that flowed on the floor was enough for Evie to realize what the blue-eyed man just did.

Even the soldiers looked at him with terror.

"No one is allowed to look at my woman like that and talk about her in that manner... and is allowed to live." he said in a calm yet terrifying voice. Then he shoved the limp body of the mouthy soldier towards the general. The general took the body and after bowing at him, all of them left in haste.

When he turned towards Evie, he looked as though nothing big had happened at all. It was as if he had only killed off an annoying mosquito.

He walked closer to her, and Evie subconsciously stepped back. He halted and his jaws worked as if he was fighting something inside him.

"Fear not, Evie..." he uttered in a controlled voice, and then he loomed over her again, his gaze burning so sinfully intense. "I will not touch you without your consent... I already told you, I will make you choose me, and fall for me."

Chapter 235 - Don't Try

Evie swallowed that lump which had lodged at the back of her throat, looking up and staring at him, eyes wide. Her thoughts and feelings were racing like a whirlwind. She was barely stopping herself from confronting him and yelling at him all the questions that was driving her insane right now. The fear that if it turned out to be the one mistake that would trigger him, that could cause an even bigger problem instead of solving the issue was the only thing stopping her from doing it.

She needed to be careful of what to say or reveal to this man whom she still could not quite figure out to avoid more possible trouble, especially after she saw how dangerous he was. He kills without

even batting an eye, much less give others a warning. Though Evie was not fearful for herself at all, it was a whole different matter for her men since he was already looking at them with so much fury. She was afraid that the slightest displeasure would tick him off and deal harshly with her men's lives. So, it was imperative that she must think and plan first while figuring out the best way to deal with him.

But how? How could she even think properly and plan when he kept on lingering on her and talking like this to her? How was her mind to work straight when he stares at her like that and says words that kept throwing her mind disarray? He would not even let her speak privately with her men as he had turned them all mute.

As Evie desperately tried to think of something that she could do, she saw him avert his intense gaze from her. She followed the line of his sight, curious on what would draw his overbearing attention away from her. It must be something of great importance. If she could get a handle on it, perhaps she could use it as a distraction later on? That is, if she could even listen in.

A vampire soldier came over and approached him respectfully before they moved away from Evie, seemingly to have some private communication between them. Evie watched his gaze become deadly as he looked at the soldier who was now cowering with fear. Did something happen? Evie could only wonder even as she tried to listen in to the conversation. However, try as she might, she could not pick up a single sound from the exchange. She could only guess what was going on from the actions and body language – which did not tell her much at all, other than the soldier was deathly afraid of the man who was scowling at him. That man then turned around and walked back to where she was standing.

He then stopped before Evie and offered his hand to her, his palms outstretched and waiting.

"Come with me, I'll bring you to a better place where you can rest. While, in the meantime I will need some time to deal with some matters that had cropped up." He intoned.

"Did... something happen outside?" she asked, knowing that she was probing but hoping that he would not get upset. He just stared at her in silence for a moment, as though considering to answer her question or not.

"Yes." He answered, surprising Evie. "But worry not. I'll deal with it very quickly."

"Then go ahead. I'll stay here with my comrades." Evie replied lightly, hoping that the matter was important enough for him to rush off and forget about her for a while.

He narrowed his eyes again. Severely displeased.

"You said you're going to make me fall for you..." Evie did her very best not to stammer. "If you are truly serious about that, don't scare and force me. You know that you can never make someone you are controlling like a damn puppet fall for you, right?" Evie challenged him with his own words.

He seemed to freeze for a moment at what she said. Then his eyes calmed and became expressionless.

"I'm not going to ask you to free us, I just want you to let me stay and speak with my men." Evie continued, trying her best. She already knew that he could somewhat teleport. If he grabbed her like

what he did at the wall and brought her away to somewhere or anywhere else he wanted, she would not even be able to struggle.

He stared hard at her as if weighing out and considering her demands. His eyes narrowed as he looked at her, then at the men in the cell, before returning his gaze back on her again. Evie noticed that he stopped frowning and realised he had made a decision.

"Fine," he finally gave in to her demands. "However, in exchange, you will come with me after I am back. I will be taking you out of here once I return." He negotiated and it was Evie's turn to weigh out his demand.

In the end, Evie could only nod.

"I will give you an hour." He told her, and after seemingly struggling to take his eyes off hers, he flicked his fingers before he walked away. Evie's men and Zanya found their voice again and it was then that Evie realised that he had removed the restriction of speech from her company.

"Also," his voice echoed around the area without turning his face to look back. "Don't try to escape. Don't try to call a dragon here as well. Or your men will die." Evie was shocked even as she felt a chill run up her spine. How did he know about her abilities to call on the dragons?

He disappeared before the echo of his voice would even fade off.

Then she heard the sounds of a series of bars closing ahead of the dark and narrow path. After the noise subsided, she could no longer feel his presence or anyone else's. Finally able to relax a little, Evie looked around to take note of the cells and the rest of the area. It definitely was built to be a dungeon. It even felt like they were deep under the earth.

Chapter 236 - What If

"Princess!" Zolan called out and Evie immediately ran forward to approach the bars.

"What are we going to do?" Evie asked. Now that the man was gone, all the tenseness and panic in Evie burst out like a dam. "I don't know what is even going on. I don't even know if I should act like I do not know him! I am so confused, Zolan. You guys heard all the things he had said right? I don't know what to do... he's... he's Gavriel but... but he's not. Tell me, what should I do? He even knows that I can call a dragon!" Evie was unable to stay calm now that she had let loose on her worries. Seeing the princess so distraught, Zanya reached out her hands from behind the bars to touch the princess' hands.

The light fae had released her powers and her body returned to normal, causing Evie to look at her in shock. When had Zanya reversed her lockdown on her powers? She was curious and slightly worried as to why the light fae suddenly revealed herself and used magic. As Zanya had mentioned that she would keep herself looking human while travelling with them and would keep her powers locked up.

"W-what are you doing Zanya! You Can't –"

"It's okay, Princess." Zanya told her gently, "he already knows that I am a light fae." A delicate and warm light came from Zanya's body and wrapped around Evie's, stopping her from arguing with her more.

Evie started to feel all the tenseness and panic slowly subside and she closed her eyes as she took a slow and deep breath under the influence of the calming magic that Zanya had casted on her. That was right, back on the walls, that Gavriel had already known that Zanya was a light fae.

Slowly, Evie relaxed. Zanya's magic had finally calmed her down. When the light finally dimmed and dispersed, Evie's panic was gone, and her mind and body did not feel as exhausted and utterly overwhelmed anymore. She felt like the chaos in her mind and heart had somewhat settled down for now and the feeling of relief was incredible. It had been a while since she had felt this relaxed.

"Thank you," she said to Zanya and the light fae smiled.

"Princess," Zolan then spoke, "I know this doesn't seem to make sense, but I don't think Prince Gavriel is possessed." Zolan spoke of his observations to Evie softly.

Evie creased her brows after hearing that.

"I also think the same, princess." Zanya agreed. "He's not possessed by any dark fae. It is easy for us faes to identify a possessed person because we can basically see the soul that does not originally belong to a person. If a person is not possessed, we would not be able to see anything but if they are possessed, we can see the soul that had forcefully taken over the host and it would be painted in pure black. That man... I could not see someone else's soul present inside of him. That's why I don't think he is being possessed."

Evie stayed still for a while longer, lost in her thoughts as the men and Zanya kept silent, allowing her to deal with her own thoughts. Then she started to pace back and forth before the bars.

"So, if he's not possessed. What's going on with him? Does this mean... he had just forgotten about us?" Evie asked as she halted and looked at them in dismay.

"Seems like it, since he could not recognize any of us anymore." Samuel was the one who replied.

"Except for you, Princess." Reed butted in. "When he caught me, the first thing he asked me was about you. He asked about a woman with hair as silver as the moonlight and amber eyes. He was looking for you and he also called you by your nickname."

"No..." Evie shook her head. "He does not remember me. He doesn't even know I'm already his wife. That's why I kept on thinking he's possessed. I don't know what he is talking about..."

"Princess..." Zolan cut her off. "What if you and prince Gavriel had met each other before? What I'm saying is... way before you two got married, could you have already met with each other, and you just had forgotten about him?"

Evie was speechless. Her eyes rounded and blinked a few times at Zolan's suggestion.

"That's the only explanation I could come up with on His Hihgness' behaviour towards you. It's obvious he knows you and remembers you but not as the Evie that he had married. I believe what he knows and remember was the you that he met before... long before you both got married." Zolan continued and Evie felt like her head was starting to spin again.

Thankfully, Zanya reached out and laid her hands on her again, calming her as the magic of her lights covered her again.

"I don't know. I am certain I have never met him before our wedding." Evie uttered when Elias joined in the talk as well.

"So, if the prince is not possessed and had just forgotten about us, how can you explain his powers and those eyes and his cruel and merciless character? We all know our prince does not have such abilities before and he's not a cruel man. Our prince is always such a reasonable man... that person he is now, is the complete opposite of our prince except for his behaviour towards the princess." The butler burst out, looking heartbroken that Gavriel had nearly killed him and even went to the extent of calling him useless.

"My theory is..." Zolan started, "that monster within our prince had taken over his body. That explains why his eyes is permanently blue right now. The reason why Zanya can't see someone else's soul within him might be because of the fact that the monster within our prince could very well be our prince himself."

"H-huh?!" Levy immediately voiced out his frustration, "I don't get it. Are you saying that our prince and that man is the same person and that the prince somehow has two uh... whatever it is called within him... and the other one had taken over his body right now?"

Chapter 237 - For Now

"Yes, that's what I am saying." Zolan nodded at Levy. And the frustrated man then slowly backed off and leaned his back against the bars and let out a long and heavy sigh. "Though this is just my theory, I still think it's the most probable explanation on why the prince is somewhat himself but not at the same time. Also, let us not eliminate the possibility that we could be totally wrong and there is another reason altogether that things are happening this way."

"Zolan is right. We might have missed out on something important." Samuel said, and the look on his face was hard. "I know all of us have fought with him before being caught. His abilities this time are very uncanny... it's something all of us had never seen or experienced before. Even during those time when he had lost himself and was lost to the influence of the monster within him, he had never had these very strange and deadly powers."

"Now that you mention that... damn, I thought that he was going to kill us." Levy chimed in again, remembering the gruesome fight that even sent shivers down his spine. "You guys felt it too, didn't you? Right at that moment, he felt as though he were something else... what I meant is... like he did not feel anything like a vampire at all!" Levy then shivered that it was visibly noticeable to the rest of them.

The men all agreed silently as they all nodded. Zanya nodded as well. Then she looked at Evie as though there was something that she had wanted to say but was not that certain if it was alright for her to say it out loud or not.

Leon who had noticed the peculiar look on Zanya's face and the way she was hesitating for a while now then looked around at the others. But when he saw that they did not notice anything out of the particular with the light fae's expression, and neither were they giving her the chance to speak, Leon was then forced to join in the chat.

"I think..." Leon piped in, and everyone's heads turned to looked at him. He blinked a couple of times before he continued after clearing his throat, "I think, Zanya has something important to say."

Zanya's eyes widened slightly as she looked at him. She could not believe that this man had noticed her hesitation in wanting to say out what was on her mind.

"What is it, Zanya?" Evie pulled her attention back to her and Zanya faced Evie again. She smiled at Zanya's slightly shocked face. "Don't hesitate to speak up. This might be the only chance that we are able to speak openly like this right now so please don't hold back."

The light fae nodded after she heard Evie's reasoning. "I also think the man is different." Zanya started. "But what I can assure you is that he has been using dark magic." Zanya's statement dropped on all of them like a massive boulder, rendering all of them silent for a few seconds. Everyone's mind was ringing with the word 'dark' magic' that had been brought up.

"D-dark magic?" Evie stammered, being the first one to break the silence. "You mean the same dark magic that Thundrann has?"

Zanya nodded. "Yes, and only the dark faes are able to access and use dark magic." This statement caused another explosion in the minds of those who heard it. The implications of this were huge! It was almost unacceptable to the minds of Evie and the men who were loyal to Gavriel.

Evie was so shocked her mouth opened and closed a few times, but no words nor sound came out of it.

"Wait... didn't you say, our prince isn't possessed?" Levy blurted out.

"That's right." Zanya nodded at him. "That's why I said he is different. He is... something else."

"You're saying that our prince or that monster inside him is a dark fae?!" Levy exclaimed, utterly shocked.

"That... I cannot say that I am certain of." Zanya creased her brows, hard in thought before raising her eyes to everyone looking at her. "All I can confidently say is that what he had used earlier was a form of dark magic. But the strangest thing to me is that his dark magic is somehow different from the ones typically used by the dark fae. Dark faes usually produce a combination of black and greenish lights when using their magic, but his was... pitch dark. And it's something I have never seen before even in the thousands of years I have been around."

Zanya even felt the chills that crawled over her entire being when she stood before him. She remembered that she did not even cower that way when she had faced Thundrann back in the past. She was not certain if it was because she had suppressed her powers when facing him but all she knew was that she had never feared anyone like how she had feared him then even though he did not even hurt her at all.

"It seems we need to figure that out too." Zolan's voice broke the silence. "But for now," he looked at Evie, "Princess, what do you want to do?" Zolan looked at Evie's pensive face, wondering what was on the princess' mind. He felt bad for her as he knew how much she had wanted to meet up with His Highness. And now that this issue had crept up, it not only put more strain on her, but she had to think on how best to move forward if that person really was Prince Gavriel. The responsibility on her shoulders have only increased rather than decreased.

Evie was silent, realizing that it was time for her to make a decision for their next move. Now that they had found Gavriel, what next? It seems to be about 80 percent sure that the person was Gavriel, just that they needed to figure out why he was behaving differently. She already knew what she needed and wanted to do and that was to bring back the Gavriel she knew and had fallen in love with, the Gavriel she had married, and the Gavriel who cared for his men and his people.

Chapter 238 - Name

"Do you think it would help if I revealed it to him that we are already married? Or should I hide that fact for now and try to figure him out and find out the truth first?" Evie asked and everyone fell silent. They were as unsure as her it seems.

"I think we will leave the decision to you, Princess." Zolan answered. "However, I think, its better if you don't mention anything about the both of you being married yet. Because he might not believe it since he said he had already waited for you for such a long time. I think for now, you must focus on finding out about what had happened and what he meant by what he said that he had waited for you and how and when did he even met you. But if you encounter a chance that you think it's the right time for you to tell him about your marriage, then don't hesitate to go ahead and do it."

The man smiled at her with encouragement. "I think you are the only one here who is able to deal with him, Princess. And thankfully, even our Prince's other self is obviously madly in love with you. So, I am confident that he will never raise his hand to harm you. I also think that you have the power to tame him and then make him reveal all his secrets. Once we find out about the truth, I believe you will also find a way to bring the prince we know back to us."

Everyone was excited at the plan and looked at her with encouragement. The men were just like Evie, they just wanted their master back. Though the Gavriel right now was extremely powerful, they still preferred their reasonable prince. He was the person they respected the most. And they genuinely believed that this princess of theirs will be the key to unlocking the mystery that was surrounding their prince and his bizarre behaviour now. They had seen it before, the power that she wields over him in that dungeon. Though they knew it might be harder this time, but they do believe that their prince and princess loved each other very much that they would be able to overcome whatever challenges that come their way. Their love would conquer it all.

However, Zanya was still a little worried. She was surprised at how much the men all trusted that that blue-eyed man would never hurt the princess. Did they not feel the darkness and danger he was exuding in his aura? Could they truly trust that the princess would be safe in the arms of such a dangerous and unpredictable creature? And one that wields such powerful and lethal dark magic to boot.

Realizing the look in Zanya's eyes, Evie was about to reach out and touch the light fae when she noticed that her translucent skin had already started to dim. And her ears too had started to round out, resembling those of a human again.

"That's right, I think it's better if you hide your magic again for now, Zanya." Evie said approvingly and Zanya lifted her hands and stared at herself, eyes flickering with complex emotions.

"I am not hiding my magic, princess. I think it's slowly dying out now on its own." Zanya explained. "Since we're not in the Middle Land anymore. I guess this is all my magic could do when I'm outside of the land."

Before Evie could respond to her, they all heard the sounds of the locks clanging and metal door opening.

All of them became silent as Evie prepared herself. But to her surprise, it was not Gavriel who came through the doors. Vampire soldiers with dead looking eyes like how her men's eyes looked like before Gavriel released them from his control, appeared.

There were three women dressed in maid outfits. They did not look like they were controlled puppets but to Evie's surprise, they were humans. It had been a while since she last saw a female human. And now there were three of them!

"Please come with us Milady. Lord Gavrael said that if you don't come with us, he'll punish one of your men if you force him to come over to get you himself." One of the maids said and Evie's face immediately darkened at the threat accompanying his order. It was hard to believe that such a tyrant lives inside her husband. More importantly... that name... Gavrael? Did she hear it right? He has a different name for the other personality that lives inside of him?

Shocked, Evie could only look at them.

"Please follow us now. The lord does not like delays, My Lady." The other maid added on softly, already looking terrified. When Evie looked closely at her, she could see that the maid was pale with what she assumed to be fright of her Lord and Master.

Evie looked back at her comrades and nodded at them, and then to Zanya.

"Please take care of her." Evie told the men and then she eyed Leon. "Leon, don't let anyone bully her - especially Levy." Evie smirked after saying that.

"Oh princess, why would you think I'd bully –" Levy moaned and exclaimed innocently.

"Shut up Levy!" Samuel cut him off before he could make a whole scene on his own.

Evie smiled at them. "I'll make sure that you will get out of this place too. And as soon as possible if I can help it." She stated confidently and everyone proudly smiled back at her as if cheering her on to do her best in her new task, just the way they had encouraged her when she was trying to tame the dragons back in Crescia.

With a determined gaze, Evie then turned around, straightened her back and followed the maids out of the dungeon. When they reached what seemed to be the final door of the underground prison, Evie took a deep breath as the door opened before her.

Chapter 239 - Normal Occurrence

Evie was led by the three maids into a long, straight corridor. She immediately realized that they were inside a massive castle, and she could tell that this was the famed castle of the duke of Kirzan Zolan had told her about. It was exactly just as how Zolan had described it.

Everywhere she looked, she saw nothing but lavish luxury. Marble tiles edged with pure gold covered the walls and floors as intricate chandeliers hung from the high ceilings that dazzled anyone's eyes who would walk through this place. Also, another thing that really caught her eyes were the myriads of colourful paintings that were hung tastefully along the long walls of the castle. Evie could only smile and shake her head when she remembered what Zolan had said, that this place was really too extravagant and one's eyes would tire just from looking at the splendours it contains within its walls and would not be able to even appreciate anything inside it anymore.

They soon approached a door and the maids then opened it for her. Evie took a glance within the room and then entered with them, walking in though with calm measured steps, but she was on full alert for any sudden surprises. The soldiers that had escorted them all the way from the dungeons had remained stationed right outside of the room she had entered.

"This room had been prepared specially for you, milady." The maid informed and Evie looked around the rather tastefully decorated room. However, she did think that it was another extravagant room that might be a little too large just for her use alone. And she also did wonder how could this room be prepared and decorated so quickly? There was no way that he had prepared all of this for her just within the span of that few hours from meeting her, right? Or was this place all ready to receive guests and the words 'prepared especially for you' was just niceties that were said to please her? Well, whatever the case was, Evie was still very much on guard and did not allow herself to relax even though on the outside, she still looked every bit the princess she was and conducted herself with impeccable manners.

"Why did you bring me here? Didn't you say Gav... I mean the Lord is waiting for me?" Evie asked. She was expecting that they would have brought her to him and not to a room – specifically hers.

"He ordered us to take care of you first, milady. Please rest for a while, we will prepare a bath for you." Without waiting for her response, the maids quickly moved away and got started on their tasks. Two of them entered into the bath chambers to prepare her bath water, while one was moving about in the room, gathering the bath materials, setting out the clothes she was to change into and turning down the covers of her bed.

Evie clenched her fists. How can she bathe and rest with a clear conscience when her men and Zanya were locked in that dark, dank, and dirty prison?

She stubbornly followed after the maids who were now preparing for her bath. "Where is he? Bring me to him first." She demanded but the maids ignored her. "Fine, I'll go look for him myself!" Evie hissed and she turned to march to the door when one of them blocked her way.

"Please milady," she fell on the floor kneeling before her which shocked Evie, "don't make this hard for us... w-we don't want to die yet, please." Her voice was shaking so badly that Evie did not have to look to know that she was trembling so much.

As she looked down, seeing the pale human girl kneeling before her and even trembling in fear, Evie's heart ached for them. Why were they so terrified? She had also noticed that the three of them were quite pale and not as healthy looking like her own maids were, back in Gavriel's castle in the capital.

Bending over, Evie reached out to help her stand, and that was when she noticed the marks on her neck. She knew then without a doubt that those marks were due to the maid being bitten, more specifically a vampire's bite.

Without a word, she strode over to the other two maids and pulled their collars away from their necks as well and as she had expected, there were vampire bite marks on their necks as well. The marks even seemed to be fresh.

"Who did these to you?" Evie asked as she looked from one maid to the other, feeling angry.

"This is a normal occurrence here, milady. Any hungry vampire can bite us whenever and wherever they want," one of them explained and Evie bit her lips. Now she understood what Zolan meant when he told her that this place was the worse place for humans to be found in. He had told her that this was one of the dukedoms in the vampire empire where human slavery was very rampant and

accepted widely by the citizens here. Therefore, the treatment of slaves was even worse off compared to other places.

Evie felt pained for them. No wonder they looked so frail and weak. She even wondered if they did get enough food to eat for that matter. Anger rose within her as she sat aside silently stewing in her own thoughts as she let the maids go about their tasks.

When she was in the tub, she continued asking them. "Are all humans in this place being treated as badly as you three are?"

The maids looked at each other as if they were confused. But eventually they all nodded. "Yes, milady. But the truth is we are already much better off than many of the others are. The male humans have it worse because the vampires do not care at all even if they died. They only held back on mistreating the female humans because they said our blood tasted so much better compared to the males."

Clenching her fists, Evie tried her best not to burst out in anger. "Are the three of you also born right here in this city?"

"Yes, milady. We were all born and raised in a small town called Ervas just a short distance outside of Kirzan. It's a place for humans only and the designated place where humans are expected to reproduce."

"What?!! What do you mean by 'expected to reproduce'?" Evie's voice had come out so shrill it almost was a shriek. She managed to hold back her outburst, but her heart was so jittery that she could almost not bear sitting still and wanted to jump up in indignation.

Chapter 240 - That Word

"My mother said she was from the human empire. The vampires caught her and brought her in Ervas. Women are forced to bear children. If they can't, they'll be sold off as slaves to the palace. The vampires also come to Ervas every three years to pick young ladies and men to be sold. When we reach fourteen years old, we were sold off and ended up here. The three of us have been serving here in this castle and serving the Duke for four years now."

Evie felt her blood boil within her veins. She had never thought something as appalling as this was even happening, much less encouraged and practiced state wide. No wonder Zolan had warned her to prepare herself mentally about the situations of humans in this place. This was just unacceptable!

"Is Ervas being guarded by vampires?" Evie asked again after a long moment of fighting for calm.

"Yes, milady. The town is guarded and that's why none of us can leave voluntarily and that is also why we have never seen what the outside of the town looked like until the vampires came to pick us to be sold."

"How dare they treat humans like livestock!" Evie could no longer stop herself from exploding – damn her conduct and ladylike manners – and she hissed those words out angrily.

The maids were surprised at her outburst and at the fury blazing from her eyes. In fact, Evie felt even angrier that the maids looked confused at why she was this angry. The fact was that these girls did not even seem to realise that they were not meant to be the vampire's livestock – nor anyone's livestock for that matter.

After her bath, Evie's thoughts were filled with nothing but the information she had found out from her maids. She was still so angry that she did not even realise that her maids were already gone until she felt a familiar overbearing presence behind her as she stood by the window overlooking the city, trying to locate the possible direction where the town of Ervas was.

"I hope you are not thinking about calling your dragon to help you escape from me, Evie." A deep, familiar, and alluring voice rumbled near her and echoed inside the room and Evie jerked her head to look over her shoulder. And there he was standing there, the very man she was waiting for. His dark hair was damp. It seems he had just had his own bath and was currently looking incredibly handsome as usual. The only difference was in his eyes which were so fierce and wicked and cold.

"I am not going to escape." Evie huffed and he slowly approached her. His movement was as graceful as she remembered and the closer he came while fixing those intense gaze on her, Evie could not help but feel her heart beat faster.

When he stopped before her, his presence felt incredibly overbearing.

"Really?" his voice turned into a hoarse whisper. He was exuding that intense tension again that made Evie step back only to find that she was already trapped between him and the wall behind her. When did she back herself into the wall?! She did not even realise that had happened.

She could only lift her face and bravely meet his fierce gaze straight on. "Yes. I will promise to stay with you as long as you want. However, in exchange..."

Evie trailed off when he suddenly smirked. That very same smirk that she always found was as seductive as sin nearly made her catch her breath. But she furrowed her brows at him in the end because she felt as though he did not quite believe the words that she said.

His smile faded and his gaze became icy and sharp, making Evie feel the chills again. He was as hot as fire just a while ago and now cold as glacier again. This man was going to driving her insane with his extreme mood swings!

"Promise..." he uttered the word like he hated it, "I don't want you saying that word again. This is a warning, Evie. If I hear that word from you ever again..." he trailed off and his hand reached out and threaded his fingers through her hair, "there will be consequences you have to bear, understand?"

Her eyes narrowed and then she glared at him. She could not help it. She could not believe he was threatening her in everything she does and even say.

"I wonder why you seem to hate that word so much." She still tried to stay calm.

"I only hate it if it's you who is saying it."

Evie immediately felt a painful pang hit her in the heart at his words. "Hah," she could not help but scoff, and a tinge of anger also rose within her. And even though she knew this was not the Gavriel she had married, she still could not help but feel angry because he was treating her this way.

"Fine... but I can't promise my tongue wont slip." She even emphasized the word 'promise' as if to taunt him.

And suddenly, he pinned her against the wall, his wicked eyes raging as he gripped her shoulders hard.

"Don't provoke me, Evie." He hissed with gritted teeth.

"What." Evie lifted her face and glared at him in defiance. Maybe because she had felt hurt therefore, she wanted to hurt him as well. "Are you going to hurt me? Just because I mentioned a freaking word you hate? Aren't you acting like a child now, My Lord?"

The fiery devil-blue eyes flared brightly, and she saw hurt flashing in them for a moment. Then all of a sudden, she experienced that strange feeling again before her vision turned black. The next moment she felt herself falling backwards.

And the next thing she knew, she was already on the bed, and he was looming over her, looking down at her as his strong hands pinned her hands against the soft bed.

Evie's eyes were wide with shock as she looked up at him.