

SPELLBOUND 271

Chapter 271 - Gavrael (Part XXVIII)

But with her response, now he was beyond glad that she did catch that little phrase. It just went on to confirm that like him, she feared that he would leave her. And it just gave him the extra boost of confidence and assurance that he desperately needed right now.

He took her hands in his and brought it to his lips and kissed it gently with all the love in the world.

"That's right, Evie. I'm going to have to leave you... but this is only just for a while." His voice was earnest as he reassured her.

"A while?"

"Yes."

"How long is a while?" Evie, Gavrael noted – similar to himself, when he had this same discussion with his father – had also zoomed in on the main point that is the exact duration of this phrase 'a while'.

"It would take a quite a few days..."

"So, you're going to be away for days..."

He nodded and Evie took a while before she could speak another word.

"Why? Is there something wrong? Did something happen that would need you to stay away that long?" she asked weakly.

Gavrael shook his head and caressed her cheeks with his thumbs. "Don't worry, everything will be alright. I have decided to leave the Under Land for good so I can finally be with you, not just during the nights but every day... forever..."

Evie was overjoyed at his words. She had wished many times before, that one day, he would not need to leave her every time day light comes. That he would not be just there with her during the night like he was just a dream. That was why hearing him say this made her heart swell so much it felt like bursting with so much joy.

However, her smile did not last that long as she was reminded of the matter that he brought up about what might happen to a dark fae when they decide to stay on the surface.

"But... you will..."

"I forgot to tell you about this. But I found a way to keep my memories and powers even if I leave the Under Land for good. However, I would need some time to prepare for it to happen. I need to stay there for a period of time. During this time, I cannot leave and come to the surface." He explained. "That's why... I wanted to tell you to wait for me, Evie. I will do everything to make it happen and the next time I see you again, I will never leave your side again. For now, all I am asking is for you to wait for me. Can you promise me that?"

"I promise." She answered him without hesitation, making him smile and he hugged her as tight as he could. "I will always... always wait for you. I've always been waiting for you every night for the past two months. Of course, I could. I will wait for you Gavrael... I promise."

As soon as Evie said those words, Gavrael kissed her. Evie kissed him back and they shared a kiss so passionate, so fiery... as they sealed their promises with each other.

"I won't make you wait too long, Evie. I promise." He vowed and that night, they spent their first night together, becoming one, body and soul for the first time.

That night, Gavrael felt like he was the happiest creature in the world and so did Evie. Both of them were filled with so much happiness and love and hope that very soon, they would be together and there was no need for them to be separated from the other.

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Time passed and Gavrael finally achieved his goal. It was only days for him in the Under Land. However, on the surface, it had already been weeks.

He finally emerged from the portal. It was daylight and when he stepped out under the sun, he was thrilled that he did not feel the burning sensation he had experienced the last time. His eyes gleamed, and all he could think about was Evie. With a wide happy smile, Gavrael did not waste a second longer and went to look for Evie.

But his smile faded, and his bright face darkened when he saw that Evie wasn't there, waiting for him.

Zanya had told him, Evie left weeks ago and promised her she would return but she did not even after weeks had passed. The light fae could not tell him what happened because Gavrael immediately disappeared, and she knew he was going to look for her. Zanya could not tell him that Evie's father had arrived at Crescia's gate. Because Evie could not possibly fight her father nor allow him to enter Crescia and see the faes she awakened, Evie decided to leave with her father even though Zanya had told her that her father was possessed. Evie did not have a choice because apart from the fact that she could not bear to kill her own father, she also could not let anyone else know about the light faes. At least not right now. Moreover, Evie believed that Gavrael will definitely arrive soon enough and come to her rescue. Evie also did not choose to fight because she knew she was not strong enough. She would need someone to win against the enemy and that someone would be Gavrael.

Zanya tried to chase after him so she could explain what had happened but because she could not go any further and because of Gavrael's speed and tremendous power, Zanya could not catch up to him at all.

And thus, Gavrael went and looked for Evie thinking that she did not keep her promise and could not wait for him. Darkness, rage, and fear gripped Gavrael's heart in a violent vortex. At first, he thought that something must have happened like what happened that day when she was taken away by force.

But when Gavrael found out a devastating news that Evie was already married to a vampire prince, his world crumbled down. Darkness and rage began to consume him. Hatred quickly corrupted him, and he began to seize cities using his tremendous power. The first city he captured was Dacia and then followed by Kirzan.

He quickly became that ruthless being who controlled the vampires and turned them into his puppets. He prepared for war, aiming to destroy that fake royal family and then to kill that prince who had stolen Evie from him and then get Evie back. These were his goals for now.

A great war then happened. The fighting got more intense and bloodier until Gavrael finally reached the Vampire's imperial palace. The bloody war had wiped out countless of lives and even the dragons involved were killed by him as well.

But when he finally found her, she was already dead.

Chapter 272 - Gavrael (Part XXIX)

Gavrael's legs gave out as he crumpled to the ground on his knees at the sight of his beloved's lifeless form slumped on the ground. Her throat and wrists were slit, and looking from the cut made, he could tell that it was done very neatly and with one vicious slash right across from right to left. It was obvious that they had drained her of her blood.

There was the sound of his sword falling on the floor and Gavrael fell over her body. His entire being was shaking and the moment he held her in his arms, he wailed in utter agony, calling out her name, begging for her to wake up – over and over, each time getting louder as though in the hopes that he could shout out loud enough to wake her, literally from the dead.

But sadly, she did not open her eyes again. Her warm body had already turned icy cold in his warm embrace.

His world came crashing down all over again and this time, there was nothing left, no hope... there was nothing good remaining in his life... it was all just pain and suffering and regret. He regretted leaving her behind. He should not have desired to live with her on the surface. He should have just taken her back to live with him in the Under Land. But it was too late. It was just all too late. He was late! If only he had arrived sooner. Maybe then he would have been able to fight back what had attacked her. Even if he could not, he would just take her and escape first while thinking of other solutions. That way, she would still have been alive! He roared out his grief and frustrations to the sky.

However, he could never accept it. Losing her was something he could and would never ever accept.

Brokenly, Gavrael loosened his grip on Evie's lifeless body. Then he slowly and gently laid her on the ground.

His eyes then ignited, burning with all the fury from the fires of hell itself. That was right, he could still do something. What was the use of the magic he had learned after all the sufferings he had gone through if it was not for him to use it now? Was this not exactly the reason why he desperately learned all these forbidden spells? It was all so that he could be with her. Only she could bring meaning into his life. She was his life itself!

He knew he had made that promise to his teacher never to turn back time. Claudius had told him that he would have to pay a very steep price if he did that and that was why he only dared to stop time just so he could stay with her longer. It had never crossed his mind to use the time manipulation spell to turn back time itself! But now, he did not care any longer. He was willing to pay any price, whatever it was, as long as he managed to turn back time. He was determined to reverse the hours and days right to the moment of that night when he had left her.

That was all he wanted right now. He just wants to return to that night, and he would never make the same mistake again. He would never leave her ever again.

Kneeling before Evie's lifeless body, Gavrael closed his eyes and threw his head back and faced the ceiling. He spread his hands out and began to call forth the powers of darkness.

Dark magic began to crawl from the ground, and it continued growing, getting bigger and bigger as Gavrael's eyes and body blazed, enveloped thickly by the devil-blue flames he had summoned. The dark magic made the entire land of Lirea tremble, and it was then that shadows emerged from the ground in every place, crawling upwards until the entire great land was covered in deep darkness.

Gavrael was howling inside the deepest part of the dungeon. His flesh was ripping apart from the supernatural forces being called forth. Blood began to pour from his eyes, mouth, and nose. But he ignored all that and did not stop and continued calling forth the darkness, not caring about his life.

His tremendous, never before seen powers shook the entire surface that even the dark faes in the Under Land felt the aftershocks of the tremors that travelled all across the land of Lirea. However, none of the dark faes knew what was happening, not even the queen mother, except for Gavrael's father and mentor – King Belial and Claudius themselves.

The moment the entire land turned dark, a shadowy and bluish light burst out from the vampire's imperial palace.

A smile suddenly spread across Gavrael's thin, pale lips – one that is serene, peaceful, and full of joy. He could feel it in his bones and knew for sure that he had succeeded in carrying out the spell before realising his vision was blurring at the edges and abruptly, everything turned dark.

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When Gavrael opened his eyes again, he found himself back at that moment when he had just stepped out of the portal to finally return to Evie. He could not remember anything else that had happened. Everything – from the time since he had left the tunnel when he finally succeeded to leave the Under Land without losing his magic and memories, all the way up until that moment he had decided to turn back time – all the memories bound within those torturous days, since he found out she left and didn't wait for him until he found her dead, were all gone.

He left the tunnel with wide smile, thrilled to be setting out to find Evie and tell her that he could now stay under the sun and he was now more than ready to live on the surface with her forever. But he could not find her no matter where he went, crushing his heart.

Chapter 273 - Gavrael (Part XXX)

Gavrael did not know that his soul had been stuck in a world without Evie, a fake world created to make him suffer. This was his greatest fear, a world without her, a place where she does not exist. And this was the price he had to pay. He was going to continue living in suffering, always looking for her, forever. He would be stuck living in this world without her. And he would suffer and be tormented endlessly, continually looking for someone that he would never ever find.

He was not aware that his soul had been trapped in an illusionary world inside his own body. He was also unaware that he had turned back time not just for a matter of days or weeks as he had intended to, but in fact, for many years into the past.

Instead of just days, to return to that night he decided to leave Evie, had he returned many years prior. He had reversed time up till when he was still a little boy.

He woke up alone inside the deepest part of the dungeon under the Northern Empire's imperial palace. Because he had been asleep for a long while, he had lost the little dark magic he had as well as his memories before he could even wake up and remember anything about the Under Land.

The little boy lost all characteristics that made him recognisable as a half-dark fae. His body had become just like any other vampire's body, and he had no memories at all.

The little boy could only wonder what he was doing there in the darkness. He followed the tunnel he found and ran and ran until he reached the end of the tunnel. But he arrived in the Middle Land and was forced to fight against many wild and vicious beasts for a long time, somehow managing to survive all on his own.

And then, he entered another cave and coincidentally, it had led him to arrive in Dacia.

The duchess' daughter found him inside the dungeon.

"What's your name, young one?" the duchess had asked him, and the boy simply uttered one word. "Gav..." that was all he could remember. Apart from that, there was nothing more no matter how hard he squeezed his mind for any wisp of memories. Though he was disappointed on not being able to remember anything else aside from that one syllable of his name, he kept his feelings within himself and just looked at the duchess with a placid and blank expression. One glance at him and the duchess already knew that this child was one was someone special. Those black hair and grey eyes... that's the feature of the real vampire royals!

Basing just from that one syllable of his name that the boy could remember, the duchess named him Gavriel.

And since then, Gavriel began to live and grew up as a vampire.

However, when he grew up, Gavriel had begun to have nightmares. He always kept seeing himself in his dreams, running around frantically, suffering, looking for someone he could feel was very important to him and he could feel the pain and great agony even through the dreams. It was as if he was experiencing it himself.

And when he was sent to the Middle Lands for the first time and saw the place and the dragons, Gavriel began to see someone else's memories.

He began to see a girl's face. It seemed that she was someone familiar, but he could not place where he had seen her. But what he could tell was she is a very beautiful girl. Even not being able to recognise her, his heart skipped a beat when he saw that face in the other person's memories. And he then experienced the feeling of déjà vu whenever he stumbled upon certain places from time to time.

Unbeknownst to him, his father, King Belial had been visiting him on the surface. He knew that something tragic had happened to him. When Gavrael turned back time, only the timing on the surface was affected. The time in the Under Land was not affected at all. And that was why King Belial could deduce and guess everything that had happened to his son.

However, the king was not aware about Gavrael's punishment or the price he had to pay for turning back time. All the king knew was that his son simply returned to the past and lost not only his powers but also his memories.

Thinking that the same tragic event will happen to his son again in the future, King Belial tried to meddle with some events to change the future of his son. This, he thought was the last and only thing he could do for his son. This was because he knew that there was no way his son would ever remember them ever again. All he wanted was for him to not have the same tragic end as he promised his wife.

And thus, the first thing Belial did was to stop his son and that girl's meeting. He thought that if his son does not meet the girl like what was supposed to happen, his future would definitely change.

So secretly, the king ventured out into the southern empire before Evie's coming of age ceremony. And a few nights before her ceremony, he used his dark magic to suppress her natural awakening. This was the reason why Evie did not experience her faery wings growing and the glow that came with it when her coming of age ceremony finally arrived.

What the king did changed the course of a series of events. If he did not, Evie would have been sent to the citadel as she had been as previously and since Gavriel was sent to the Middle Land at that same time to search for the dragon's nest, the two would have definitely met in the Middle Lands.

Unbeknownst to Belial, the two still met with each other. Gavriel ventured out to the Southern empire out of curiosity and meet Evie there. He had coincidentally saved her from some vampire's attack and fell in love with her at first sight. He did not understand what he had felt when he first saw her. He just knew that he wanted her to be his that very moment he saw her. Though he did not show up before her, knowing that she fears vampires more than anything else, Gavriel sneaked up into her room quite a few times before leaving the Southern Empire and going back to the North.

And then after some time, Gavriel had heard Lorcan talking about giving Prince Caius a human second wife. When he overheard Lorcan mentioning that the bride-to-be was Evie, the dragon guardian's daughter, Gavriel immediately did everything to ensure that he was the one to marry her instead. In exchange for that privilege, Gavriel had to kill a dragon and give the credit of that kill all to Caius, allowing him to gain the much-coveted fame as a dragon slayer.

Gavriel immediately did as the emperor had demanded and that was how he was chosen to be the candidate for the marriage alliance with the humans by taking Evie as his wife, instead of Caius.

Chapter 274 - Monster

Back to the present...

Gavrael clenched his fists tight as he stared at the portal. He knew he could not go back to the Under Lands anymore. This was one of the prices that he had to pay when he had managed to leave the lands of the dark faes without having the set side effects of losing his memories and magic. However, there is always a negative to a positive. There is always a give and take. Since he had taken the benefit of keeping his memories and magic, he had to give up something – and that was to never be able to return to his birthland. He looked on at the portal in silence, but his stormy eyes belied the calmness that was shown on the outside.

After a long while staring and standing there, he managed to calm down a little from the rage churning inside of him. Gavrael then felt like wanting to go back even just for a while. It was an irony as he could not wait to leave that place previously and never wanted to return. However, now here he was wanting to go back even for just a while. He wanted to speak with his father and hug

his mother. Because right now, he could feel his heart darkening. He was losing himself to this intense desire within him to do everything evil.

The rage and sufferings he had to endure all these while had hardened and darkened his heart completely. And he had somehow developed the desire to destroy the world. He had this intense thirst of wanting to shed blood and paint this land red. He knew this was the result of his sufferings for so long. He had hated everything, always wondering why he was being tortured. Why did the world had to take her away from him, too? How could she have broken her promise and married someone else? Why was he not able to find her for such a long time?

And now that he had finally found her, she could no longer remember him. Worse off is, she even feared him like he was some kind of monster. It was as if they had returned to that time, long ago, when he had first abducted her. The only difference now was that Gavrael believed he has actually turned into a real monster now. Since that night he woke up inside that dungeon and then found out that Evie had been married off to someone else, something vital within him just shrivelled up and died.

When he seized Kirzan, he had swept in and killed mercilessly. He shed blood without batting an eye and there was not a single twinge of regret that surfaced within him. In fact, he found himself enjoying the battles, especially the killings as if these deeds were something that could fulfil that void within him, and he could not stop himself. He had turned into a monster, and he knew it.

In fact, he had to leave Evie immediately when he felt his darkness pulsating within him, threatening to surge and overpower his rational self. This was all due to his rage as he was afraid that he would really have harmed her. His power, his dark magic had become so strong. It had grown to a point even stronger than that he could handle, and he was afraid of losing whatever little shred of control he already had. He did not actually mind at all. He did not care if he lost control. Just as long as Evie was not there to be accidentally caught up in the maelstrom.

Because despite everything, even though he had turned into a monster now, he was still that fool who was... no, is still madly in love with her and everything about her. He was still that chump who wanted no one else but her and would do anything to get her and keep her, no matter how he suffers or no matter what the method used.

Retracting his hand from against the wall, Gavrael's eyes blazed intensely before he disappeared. It was nearly dawn when he finally reappeared in his room back in Kirzan, where he had left Evie.

She was still there, curled up on his bed, hugging herself as though trying to keep herself warm.

Gavrael took off his robes and then approached the bed.

He sat quietly next to her, looking down at her sleeping face. He could not help but feel his heart ache with such longing for this person. She looked so lonely and sad. As his eyes trailed over her, he noticed that her eyelashes were damp and clumped up together, Gavrael's gaze sharpened, and his jaws worked.

"Forgive me, Evie..." he whispered, "but this monster can never let you go. Even if you are in love with someone else now, he doesn't care..." he finished the rest of his thoughts silently. 'he just needs you here with him. If not, he might be as good as dead...'

His eyes gleamed with intense emotions. "Now that I have finally found you, I will never let you go even if you beg me, even if you hate me – not that you don't already." He said helplessly and he laid next to her, pulling her into his embrace.

Closing his eyes, Gavrael finally felt his body relaxed. He could not remember when the last time was that he was actually able to rest like this. It seems, she is the only one who could soothe him. The storm of darkness within him calmed and the turmoil quietened. As long as he could remember, he only felt such relief when he was on his killing spree, but it did not surprise him anymore that she could relieve him so effortlessly like this and on such an incredible degree as well.

That night, that was the first time ever that Gavrael managed to fall asleep since his torment started.

Chapter 275 - Fear

When Evie opened her eyes the next day, she was shocked to find the pair of strong arms that were securely wrapped around her. However, she did not panic at all because of the familiarity of that embrace. This was her Gavriel's embrace. She could recognise this even if she was blind. This was the embrace she had missed so much. And she could not help but revel in it. She happily burrowed herself into the warm embrace and enjoyed the feeling of being calm and relaxed. It truly has been a while since she could enjoy it like this. She sighed out in contentment as she laid there, just allowing herself to drowse and not be rushing off anywhere.

The room was already getting a little bright due to the morning light streaming through the thick curtains. So, she could see his face when she lifted her gaze to check on him.

His face looked so peaceful. At that moment, he looked so much like her doting, loving and sweet husband Gavriel. If only...she thought to herself, if only his eyes were not that intense flaming blue when those lids fly open.

She stayed still for a long time, just staring at his sleeping face, wondering what could have happened. Who was the person who took over her husband's body? Who was this Gavrael? And why did it seem like he knows her so well? Was he truly telling the truth when he said she had forgotten about him?

But no matter how Evie thought about it, she could not find an answer. She could not remember any time gap she could possibly have forgotten when she was younger. No matter how much she thought about it, it was not possible for her to have met him before.

Lost in her own thoughts, Evie unconsciously lifted her hand to touch his face, but she stopped just before skin met skin. Then she slowly peeled his arms off around her and climbed off the bed.

Thankfully, the man did not wake up. Evie remembered her comrades who were still trapped in the dungeons, and she felt bad for sleeping in such a soft and comfortable bed while they had to weather the night in the prison.

She then realised that while he was sleeping, she could go and check on her comrades. Once he wakes up, Evie planned to negotiate with him on their release.

However, before Evie could touch the doorknob, she halted.

She heard his groans, causing her to look back.

He started to move around restlessly on the bed. Looking at him, Evie could not help but go back towards the bed. And she was surprised that he was already drenched with sweat. He was absolutely fine just a while ago. Was he having a bad dream?

Seeing him looking like he was suffering, Evie's heart could not take it, and she was surprised. But she told herself it was because this was her husband's body, she could not possibly feel nothing when he was suffering.

"Gav..." she paused, not knowing how to call him. "Gavriel..." she paused again as she shook him. "Gavrael –"

Suddenly, he opened his eyes. They were still that intense blue as he stared at her and there was utter fear in them that Evie could not bring herself to move as she stared down at him.

"Are... are you alright?" she managed to stutter out and the next thing she knew, she was buried tightly in his embrace. His embrace was so tight around her. It was as if he was scared of something... of letting her go.

Evie was about to pull away when she snapped out from the initial shock, but she could not bring herself to in the end. Because she had felt him trembling. It shocked Evie to her core, the way he embraced her while trembling uncontrollably. What is going on with him? For such a strong and stubborn person like him to be shaking this way was unimaginable. What kind of nightmare did he have to be this scared?

She would never have thought that the same man who was being so merciless and cruel last night is now trembling in fear. Therefore, she just sighed out helplessly as she reached out her arms and caressed his back to calm him down. Her hands seemed to just move on their own.

"It's alright..." she whispered to him. "It's just a nightmare." She continued patting his back until his breathing evened out and returned to normal.

Evie then pulled away from him. "Do you need water?" she asked him as she turned to head towards the door when Gavrael caught her wrist.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked, his voice was cold and when Evie looked at him, she was frozen at the look in his eyes. "I will never let you go anywhere else without me." The command in his voice was absolute and he suddenly looked terrifying again. He had the look of a tyrant finally deciding on one thing and he would go against the world to make it happen.

"I'm not going anywhere. I'm just going to ask for a glass of water for you." Evie told him as she tried to take a step away and pull her hand out of his grasp. But it was to no avail. It seemed as though he would not be letting her go.

After a few moments of them staring at each other, he rose from the bed. "Fine. We'll go get that glass of water together." And in the next minute, they both appeared in the castle's kitchen.

Evie was speechless as she watched him grab a glass from the counter, poured water into it without ever letting go of her hand.

"Ga... my lord, could you please let go of my hand first?" Evie asked as he gave her the water. She made sure to keep her voice low and gentle in order to avoid provoking his irascible temper.

"No. I can't Evie. I won't." He replied firmly. His voice and gaze becoming grave again as he looked at her.

"I will never let you go ever again, not even for a moment. Do you understand?" Gavrael hissed. His heart was still beating ferociously with fear. After what he saw in his nightmare, that unacceptable image that had burned itself into his cornea had shaken his entire being. It was impossible for him to ever let her out of his sight again. Not even for a moment, from here on.

Chapter 276 - Answers (Part I)

Evie was locked in his room again. She had angered him in the kitchen when she tried to negotiate with him on the matters of her comrades. He had wanted to literally bind her to him, and of course – she refused. Her immediate rejection caused him to fly into a rage. Though he did not shout at her or harm her, Evie could feel it in his suffocating aura that was leaking out of him and the gravity in his eyes. And then he had gone and locked her up, even using some strange magic as an impregnable wall around her, and he did all that without even letting her speak any further or hearing her out.

What he did made Evie rage in anger as well, making her even more convinced that this cruel man was not her Gavriel. Her Gavriel would never do this to her. Her Gavriel would never lose his temper with her, nor treat her so dismissively. He would always be so considerate of her feelings and would be ever so respectful with his conduct. This person, to put it simply, was a plain brute!

Utterly frustrated and now anxious at what she must do next, Evie paced back and forth inside the room. She had tried to leave, even using some of her magic that Zanya had taught her in Crescia but nothing worked. The barrier was too strong. His magic was just too strong for her to overcome.

Clenching her fists tightly, Evie angrily yelled as she gave an annoyed kick at the invisible barrier surrounding her, venting out her frustration and anger. How could she find any answers when she is being imprisoned like this? That person is just... impossible!

"Gavriel!!" she called out miserably as she fell to her knees. She was about to break down and cry when suddenly, she heard a voice.

Evie frantically looked around, trying to locate the source of the voice but she saw no one.

"Princess..." the masculine voice called out softly again.

"Who are you?!" Evie asked, warily.

"I'm right here, princess." That same voice responded patiently.

Following the source of the voice, Evie saw a figure of a man right outside the barrier. He had long hair that was tied back at the base of his neck and a flowing beard, and she noticed with surprise that his skin was dark. His form was suspiciously similar, just like when Zanya had appeared before her in her spirit form! Was this another faery trying to communicate with her? But he was...

"Fear not Princess Evie, as I cannot harm you. My physical body isn't here so you don't have to be afraid." The man said. His voice and the look in his eyes were gentle.

Breathing out and relaxing a little, Evie asked again. "Who are you? And what do you want from me?"

"I'm Claudius." He introduced. "I'm the teacher and mentor to your husband, Gavrael."

Evie took a while to process what the man said. After which she frowned and shook her head. "My husband is Gavriel, not Gavrael." Evie corrected.

"Gavriel and Gavrael is one and the same person, Princess." The man said as if emphasizing a fact to her.

Confused, Evie frowned hard. "I don't understand... I know it's the same body, but this Gavrael who is inside my husband's body right now, is clearly not the man I had married." She was so conflicted now.

"Please allow me to explain everything, Princess. I am here to help you and tell you everything you need to know about Gavrael." The man said and Evie swallowed. Her heart started beating fast. Was she finally going to get the answers she was looking for?

Claudius smiled at the young woman and then without beating around the bush he immediately started to tell her what had happened. The reason why Claudius was here in the first place was due to King Belial. He had asked Claudius for a favour and to lend his son a hand. After the king found out that his son had still ended up meeting the girl, he began to worry about him. The king had never told his wife the tragic fate of their son because he knew the queen would break down and might... no, she would insist on going to the surface to help him sort things out. And that was something the king could not allow. Because if the queen goes back to the surface again, she might never be able to return to the Under Land again. He had already lost his son in some sense. He could not lose his queen too. She was the love of his life that no one or nothing can replace.

Therefore, King Belial sought for Claudius' help. The king had requested of him to watch over Prince Gavrael. He had told him to make sure that Gavrael's new life as Gavriel will not end up tragically again. And that was why here he was now, trying his best to get some things sorted out.

Gavrael could not see or hear anyone from the Under Land, whether they were in their spirit form or not. It was because that was one of the prices that he had to pay when he left the Under Land. He could never return to the Under Land and could never see nor hear anyone from there anymore.

Thankfully, this princess was a light fae descendant so she could see and hear Claudius with no issues at all. Since there was no way for him to communicate with Gavrael, he could only explain everything to this princess. He hoped that she would believe his words. Although he could not disclose to her too much on what had actually happened right before Gavrael turned back time, Claudius made sure to explain to her in detail that Gavrael had turned back time for her sake.. And because of that, he had to endure the consequences of using such a powerful spell, resulting in the current split in his personalities.

Chapter 277 - Answers (Part II)

"So, you're saying... I and Gav... Gavrael was..." Evie could hardly process everything the man had told her. The strangest thing was that she was supposed to doubt and feel that what he told her was hard to believe, but she did not. Instead, she felt an inexplicable pain deep within her. As if her heart was mourning the loss of something that her mind cannot remember.

"Yes, princess. Please believe that all the things I told you really happened. The reason why you cannot remember is not because you have lost your memories. But it is because Gavrael turned back time and you and he had returned to the point when you were both still children. He did that to save

you... This is also why, regretfully, there is no way for you to remember. As there is nothing left to remember..." Claudius explained as he ended a little sadly.

Evie swallowed. Because what he explained, again made a lot of sense. This was why she could not remember that there were any gaps in her memory where she could have possibly met him before!

She buried her face in her palms. She could not believe she was already believing the man's words. Without any doubt at all. However, Evie was still confused. She looked at him again, with questioning eyes.

"You said that Gavrael and I had returned to that time when we were children. It means none of us were supposed to remember what had happened before the time manipulation. Then why does this Gavrael still remember?" she asked.

"Because that's his punishment. In fact, he also doesn't remember he did such a forbidden thing as well. And you were right princess, if only he had forgotten everything about his life as Gavrael as he was supposed to, this problem wouldn't be existing right now. But like I told you, he remembers because this is the price he had to pay for using such a forbidden spell, princess. Not forgetting will make him suffer more. You might not believe it, but back then Gavrael's greatest fear is to be forgotten by you and be hated by you. He thought you had broken your promise and gotten to married someone else and then forgotten about him. That'd be his ultimate torture."

Once again, Evie felt the sharp pang of pain in her heart. It was squeezing in pain. And she could no longer reason out to herself not to believe in this man's story. Because if this was not the truth, why then was she hurting like this? This pain would not make sense if this man was lying. Her heart knows it well.

After a short while of silence, Evie returned her gaze to the man again. "How about Gavriel's memories? What happened to it?" she asked, weakly. Still pained.

"Forgive me, but I don't have a certain answer right now. However, I believe it is not lost forever. I believe the same thing might have happened. When he was Gavriel, Gavrael's memories apparently had remained buried within him and was never really erased. I believe this time, it's Gavriel's memories that is now buried deep within him. Since Gavrael's memories miraculously emerged, perhaps, it's possible for Gavriel's memories to return as well one day." Claudius could only give his deductions on this as even he could not tell for sure what would happen. Never had anyone used this spell and its consequences had nothing to be compared to. Therefore, he could only speculate and give the princess his conjecture on things which were still unknown.

"Do you know what happened to have triggered Gavrael's memories to return and take over?" Evie was curious about this. She guessed something must have happened to Gavriel when they separated after the battle, and it must have been something significant for things to escalate to this point.

"I am not certain, princess. But I think the reason must be because his dark magic had returned. He most probably has returned to becoming a dark fae again and his vampire half is now being completely suppressed. That's why 'Gavriel' is not here but is now replaced by 'Gavrael'."

"Can't both Gavrael and Gavriel's memories co-exist? Do you think they will be able to co-exist and be able to come to a balance if his dark fae side and vampire side don't completely suppress the other?" Evie somehow felt torn for both the personalities. One was the personality that she had

married and fallen in love with. The other one had taken on such a massive punishment just to carry out that forbidden spell to save her life out of love for her.

Claudius was visibly surprised at the princess' question. Apart from his surprise that the princess seemed to be easily accepting his words and without much of a doubt, he was also shocked that she was already trying to think of something to solve the problem. And her idea was not bad at all! In fact, it was amazing. That could be the answer to this whole messy situation going on about the prince! If only he could remember both memories, then...

"That's a very great idea, princess. Do you have an idea as well on how to make his vampire side come out?" Claudius asked but before Evie could think of a response, Claudius spoke. "Oh, he's coming back princess. I'll have to say goodbye for now –"

"Wait! I still need to –" Evie called out, worried on how she can get in contact with him again.

"Don't worry princess, if he ever puts up a barrier around you again, I can show up before you again and speak to you. For now, remember what I told you. Maybe, what you can do for now is to speak to him. Make him talk. I have lots of details I could not tell you because I have limited information on it. But if it is him, I'm sure he could tell you more. It might help us figure out a way to bring Gavriel's memories back. But make sure not aggravate him... he is dangerous right now..." his voice trailed off as the barrier surrounding the room disappeared along with him.

Chapter 278 - Portrait (Part I)

When Gavrael entered the room again, his face was no longer filled with rage anymore. However, as Evie looked closely at him, his eyes still remained cold and distant.

After all the things she had heard from that man Claudius, Evie did not feel like wanting to even process all that he had told her first. Nor did she want to think too much about it before doing anything. Right then, she had a strange feeling welling up within her as she looked at him. And before she could process what she was doing, she was already charging towards him. She then slammed herself into his front and hugged him tight, causing the man to immediately freeze where he stood.

The tray of food that he was balancing in his hand fell with a resounding clatter on the floor but neither of them cared for the spilt food, broken dishes, and scattered cutleries. He was too shocked to care about those insignificant things. The look in her eyes when they parted a while ago was still engraved in his mind – that look full of despise, as though she was looking at a horrifying monster. So why? Why was she suddenly hugging him now? What had suddenly changed in the span of just him going to get her some food to eat? Not that he was complaining about it. No, in fact he was elated beyond words! However, her reactions to him were like night and day from before and what he is experiencing now.

While Gavrael was undergoing both relief and confusion, Evie simply revelled in his warm embrace. Her mind told her she must at least try to look for proof that what that man had told her was the actual truth. But her heart is telling her otherwise. Her heart is currently rejoicing while singing out to her that she does not need any more proof than what is already before her. It all made perfect sense to her now. Her heart is telling her that the most important thing was the fact that this man right now, was not actually someone else. He is the very same man she had fallen in love with, and her heart clearly knows it! And that was all she needed and what matters to her the most right now.

"Gav..." Evie called out. For some reason, she did not want to call him Gavrael or Gavriel anymore. "We need to talk." She added as she pulled away.

He snapped out of the daze he was in, and he narrowed his eyes. His expression darkening. Did she hug him for this? Was this just another clever ruse to throw him off so she could try to negotiate terms with him again?

That thought made his blood boil. He remembered her doing this to him before, whenever she wanted to insist on something he did not approve of, she would kiss him or embrace him and the fool in him would always, always end up agreeing. She had always been his weakness before, but things were different now. He would not allow her to do whatever she wanted anymore... he cannot agree with every single thing that she asks of any longer.

Because right now, it was not her hate that he feared the most anymore. The image he saw in his nightmare... that is the one thing that scares him more than anything else. And he swore he would never let that come to pass. He will do everything, anything... even if she would end up hating him forever, he did not mind. As long as she will be here with him, alive and well.

"I don't have the time right now. I just came back to send you your meal. But look what you have done." He responded coldly, looking down at the food scattered all over the floor.

"This is important. There is something you need to know... I –" There was a sound of knocking that came from the doors that interrupted Evie's words.

Gavrael turned his attention towards the door. Evie looked a little frustrated as his attention was distracted. The matter of his current situation was of utmost importance! They need to discuss it as soon as possible. Now, if possible!

"What is it?" he threw his voice to the doors and the man outside the door spoke. He could hear due to his vampire hearing, but Evie could not make out what was being said.

"The man you sent to investigate Princess Evielyn's husband is back, my lord." The man reported and Gavrael's eyes immediately twitched before narrowing into slits.

A wicked and dangerous smile then carved itself on his lips the next moment. He turned to glance back at Evie and ominous clouds seemed to have gathered in his eyes. Evie wondered what news he had received to cause such turmoil to appear in those stunning laser blue eyes of his.

"Tell him to wait in the throne hall, I'll be there shortly." Gavrael said and turned to the doors, about to leave before Evie made a grab for his coat.

"I said we need to talk –" Evie repeated, hoping to get him to stay.

His forefinger landed on her lips, stopping her. His gaze now intense as he fixed his eyes onto hers.

"Just because I want you doesn't mean I am allowing you to order me around, Evie. Your words are no longer my law. Mine is the law now." he hissed out darkly, and Evie felt a chill crawled under her skin. But she did not let his darkness intimidate her and his words to aggravate her this time.

"Don't you want to know about the man I married?" Evie quickly asked him, as he was already turning the doorknob and about to leave the room. She cunningly used this topic as a lure, knowing that he was more than interested in this matter, thus hoping that he would take the bait.

He halted and pitch black anger flared out and seemed to surround him. However, instead of rushing towards her as she had expected, he only looked over his shoulder and flashed her a wicked deadly smile. A smile that should belong to a cruel villain, and that smile made Evie swallow subconsciously.

"The man you married?" he drawled out.. "I don't need you to tell me about him, Evie... because he'd be a corpse very soon anyway."

Chapter 279 - Portrait (Part II)

Evie's eyes widened and she rushed towards him, but he had once again very quickly erected that invisible barrier that blocked her within, not allowing her to reach out to touch him. He smirked before disappearing without even giving himself a chance to listen to what she was saying.

Biting on her lower lip hard, Evie clenched her fists tight as she looked helplessly at the closed door. He was driving her mad with so much frustration. Only this time, she could not possibly muster up any hatred towards him nor get angry with him anymore, despite what he had just did. The story she had heard from that man was still stuck vividly in her head. Claudius had told her he had suffered too much, and that pain had changed him, hardened his heart, and made both his heart and mind corrupted by the darkness. Evie knew that it is true, that pain changes people somehow. And that was why it pained her even more. How much pain he had to go through to turn into such a cynical, harsh, and cruel person like he is right now? Only Gavrael himself knows. But she wanted to know as well, very badly.

She desperately wanted to reach out and soothe his troubled soul, but she felt it. The barrier that he seemed to have put up around himself. It was as if he was trying to make himself develop some sort of tolerance against her.

Moreover, she could not help but think about his words when he said earlier where, 'your words are no longer my law'. What did he even mean by that?

Evie was anxious now. She needed to do something as soon as possible. She felt that if she did nothing, it seemed as though he was going to drift away from her without warning and completely get swallowed up by that deep darkness that was within himself. She kept feeling it every time she looked into his eyes. Evie also could not help but fear that he might slowly harden his heart to the point that she would not be able to thaw it anymore. She also feared that he was going to become too cruel and villainous, that one day, he might not be able to recognise any good in anything or anyone anymore.

What must she do? First things first. She must think of a way to keep him with her and make him listen to her! She must find that opportunity to explain to him about everything that had happened to him... to them, and most specially about Gavriel!

...

In the throne hall, the atmosphere was freezing cold. There were only a few men with Gavrael and these few men who were not under his spell were rigid with fear. The look currently on their Lord's face was so severe and solemn that they knew that something had happened which had extremely displeased him. Even if they could not see his expression, the heavy aura that was pressing down on everyone in the throne hall was clear enough that no one dared lift their eyes to look at the person sitting on the dais.

All of them feared this person. When he first appeared in Kirzan, they all knew that he was the infamous second prince of the vampire empire named Gavriel, the man they all thought was already dead. But none of them could say a thing because apart from the fact that he never gave them the chance to speak, they were also too scared to say anything.

They had seen how cruel he was in his dealings with those he deemed his enemies, and his absolute mastery of that magic none of them had seen before, as well as the immense power he wielded within himself. They had seen how he went around slaying people as though he were just killing off some ants. So, none of them dared say a word to him unless being spoken to or ordered to. Then he had told them that his name was Gavrael and not Gavriel. He also did not seem to be aware of anything related to the emperor and the crown prince or the battle that happened in Dacia. All these had raised questions and doubts within themselves. It was obvious he was Prince Gavriel. All of them recognised him at one glance. Also, they have heard of how he had battled the imperial army that had attacked Dacia. So, why was he behaving like this now? However, none of them dared to verbalise them out to him as they valued their lives too much! If those questions irritated him, that would be the end of their miserable little lives.

The people were confused because his appearance was definitely the Prince Gavriel that they had seen previously in person, but in the end, all they could come up with was that he might be some imposter or the prince's doppelganger. A very powerful and wicked one at that. There was no way they would ask to confirm it – if they still wanted their lives.

When he had asked them to look for a silvery-haired woman, they had asked him if he was talking about a Princess named Evielyn. And then when he heard someone said the words 'isn't she the prince's wife?' he had gone on a rampage. They nearly died from that one-time raging temper of their lord. They feared him so much that none of them even dared to open their mouths again after that incident and comment on the fact that the prince they were talking about was the man who looked exactly like him.

And now that he had found the girl he was looking for, he ordered them to find this Prince Gavriel. When they told him they could not find the man's whereabouts, he had asked for that man's portrait, and they all knew why he wanted it. It was obvious he was going to hunt for that man himself.

Because Prince Gavriel had already been cast out of the royal family portraits, it was very hard to find his portrait anywhere. So, they had to travel to the imperial capital and search in Prince Gavriel's own castle for one.

Thankfully, they had found a portrait of him and his wife.

"My lord, we still couldn't spot the whereabouts of Prince Gavriel," one of the men reported. "But as you ordered, we took his portrait with us." He added and approached the throne before kneeling and handing to him, the large portrait they had stolen from the prince's castle.

"We took this straight from Prince Gavriel's castle –"

"Remove the cover now." Gavrael's cold and impatient voice echoed out and everyone flinched, especially the person who was holding the portrait.

Hurriedly, the man then removed the cover of the portrait and held up Prince Gavriel and Princess Evielyn's portrait for him to see.

It was as if everything came to a screeching halt. The entire throne hall became incredibly silent to the point that one could even hear a pin drop. None of the men even dared make a single move as the man who was sitting on the throne looked at the portrait.

He became completely immobile, as if he had been turned into a marble statue. His eyes were glued to the portrait that was rolled out.

Gavrael had decided to hunt down Evie's husband not only because of his own jealousy and hate. It is now because of the thing he had witnessed in his nightmare. The sight of Evie's lifeless body was still so vivid in his mind that it was as though it were only yesterday that he had held her lifeless body, cold and unmoving in his very arms. And because of that, he swore on everything within him that he would do whatever it takes from now on to stop that event from happening. Just the thought of that image was threatening enough to drive him insane due to the intense fear within him. He knew he was going to go completely mad if he did not do something now. He must stop it.

And the first thing he thought about was to kill any possible suspects. First was her husband. He decided to kill anyone and everyone who he thinks that could possibly take her away from him. He must eliminate every possible cause that could lead her to that point!

If these group of useless men cannot find him, he would look for him himself and get rid of him so that Evie would never need to see him again. He did not care if Evie ended up hating him even more now once he takes the life of the man she was married to. His attention was currently focused on only one thing and that is to keep her alive.

He could not wait to see the face of this man that had dared taken the love of his life. He could not wait to find him and kill him. But now that they were finally showing him his portrait, his entire being immediately turned into ice.

For a long while, everything seemed to have come to a standstill. He even fancied that his heart had stopped for a few beats.

But as the men had expected, a storm of both Gavrael's aura and dark magic suddenly surged forth in a violent rage the moment he laid eyes on the portrait.

The next moment, the man holding the portrait fell on his knees as he reached to claw frantically at his own neck which was now being strangled by an invisible force that they all knew was Gavrael's magic. They were right when they suspected that this portrait would definitely trigger his anger. He would most probably think that they were trying to fool him.

So, they had planned to explain it to him once he finally questions them. However, Gavrael did not say a single word to confront them about the portrait. They should have known this cruel man does not waste time to question anyone. Using his strange magic, he just forced everything he wanted to know out their lips.

The man before Gavrael chokingly blurted out all the things Gavrael wanted to know. And when he heard that they had not done anything to this portrait and this Prince Gavriel was indeed very similar looking to him, Gavrael's eyes widened slightly before quickly narrowing suspiciously. Something seems wrong here.

Gavrael let go of the man's neck and he slumped over before toppling on the floor, barely alive.

Then another deafening silence enveloped the entire hall before a forced sardonic laugh broke out from Gavrael. His laughter sent chills crawling down on everyone's spine.

But all too soon, his laughter evaporated from his cold face as he stared down at the portrait again.

Gavrael stared at the man's face. He was smiling and his grey eyes were screaming out genuine happiness as he held Evie close to him. Something strange pulsed within him that made his eyes narrow suspiciously again. He again felt that there was something wrong, but he could not quite catch what it was. It was like that feeling that you have when a word was just at the tip of your tongue, but you could not remember enough to spit it out no matter how. It was this nagging feeling that he was experiencing now.

As he scrutinised the portrait, he looked at those grey eyes... that was obviously not the eyes that belonged to him!

He forced out information from the other men as well but all he got was the same facts and recollections.

"M-my lord... if you want to know more about Prince Gavriel... the best person you must ask is the princess... she..." one of the men choked out before he too passed out on the floor.

Gavrael clenched his fists tight. The rage within him was not calming down. What was going on? How could Evie's husband look exactly like him? What the hell was happening?! What kind of game this fucking fate was playing with him now?!

Gnashing his teeth as his eyes blazed intensely, he disappeared from the throne hall.

...

Evie was sitting on the floor in the room she was in, burying her face on her folded knees when she felt his dark and ominous presence reappearing very near her.

The moment she lifted her face, she saw him standing by the door, the barrier he had put around the room had disappeared as well.

A smile of relief spread across her lips as she saw him and then she quickly stood and approached him, glad that he didn't take too long to return.

But all of a sudden, she felt herself falling backwards. Then her back hit the bed's mattress. He was looming over her in a blink of an eye and his expression was hard and incredibly cold. Evie wondered what had happened this time to cause him to flip out again. She had planned to make she won't anger him this time but she didn't even do anything yet and he's already raging?

Gavrael decided to grant her wish as he remembered her words before he left her a while ago. He could never use his magic to force any information he wanted to know from her even if that was what he wanted to do. He did not want to talk to her because he knew she would only make him angry. She really had the talent to make him madder than he already was, but right now he had no other choice. He must know what was with that man who looked exactly like him.

He had to pin her down like this to make sure he would be looking at her closely like this in case she fuels his anger.. He feared losing control before her, but he knew that as long as he was staring into those clear eyes of hers, he would not lose himself and accidentally lash out at her due to anger.