

## SPELLBOUND 31

### Chapter 31 - Safe Haven

"The lady's meal is ready, Your Highness." A knock sounded from the door followed by a voice, breaking the heavy silence that followed Gavriel's intimately intense words.

He eased back and looked at her hair before giving a satisfied nod and finally letting the strands glide smoothly over his fingers – missing their texture immediately the second they left his grasp. When he lifted his gaze to the mirror, he saw his wife's face burning red and was as pleased as punch. He found her reaction absolutely adorable, and her lips were finally pink again.

Since he had awakened her before daybreak, Gavriel knew that she must be starving. He had suspected her weakness from earlier until now was mostly caused by starvation. Reason being, last night, as soon as he arrived home, he had dug out from her maids and Elias that she had not been eating well since he left, and she even skipped her dinner before going to bed last night. He had planned on feeding her but with all the chaos that were occurring, he hadn't had the chance.

"You must have your breakfast now, wife." He stretched his hand and once Evie took it, he led her out of the room.

"Your Highness, the officials are waiting for you in the main hall." Samuel reported respectfully, after greeting the couple with a formal bow.

"They've been waiting for an hour now, Your Highness." Elias butted, his face a little grave. "I will take Her Highness to the dining hall."

Gavriel sighed but when he looked at her, "It's okay, please go," were written all over her face, with a small smile to ensure him she was fine with it.

"Alright," he finally relented but before leaving, he bent close to her without warning, he whispered in her ear. "Make sure to eat a LOT, Evie. If you don't... I'll come and feed you personally."

His stern gaze then fell to Elias. 'I'm leaving her to you. Make sure she eats a lot and don't let anyone near her.' He warned firmly through their silent communication and when the butler nodded, the prince finally left.

Elias immediately led Evie to the dining hall. He had noticed Levy watching and following them at a distance. Elias was not even surprised anymore at all the excessive precaution. He could only mentally roll his eyes and smirk in his mind at His Highness' obvious and overwhelming care for Her Highness' well-being. The lady didn't know but the day she nearly got killed by a beast in the little forest, Gavriel had almost turned his castle upside down and went into a frenzied terror from thoughts he almost lost her while his wife was sleeping. Since that day, they had all realized how serious their prince was about his wife. She was someone they had to protect at all cost or else... Elias didn't even want to think what the prince would do. He still shivered thinking back at the violent waves of anger and barely leashed ferocity of emotions His Highness had exuded that night.

Snapping back to attention and to his relief, Elias relaxed seeing that the lady was finally eating well. He had been worried the past few days and he was starting to get slightly annoyed with her attitude. But it seemed she was alright now, and she was even eating so enthusiastically like a starved little kitten.

"Elias..." Evie called the butler attention as she was finishing her meal. "Did something happen last night?" she asked, hesitantly. "Why did we leave the capital in haste?"

The butler was silent for a moment and she knew he was weighing in his mind if he should answer or not. Gavriel told her that he would explain but he seemed to be pretty occupied as always. And she couldn't wait anymore to know what was going on. Moreover, she felt like it was better for her to hear it from Elias than her husband because she just somehow knew that Gavriel will end up seducing her again instead of answering her questions.

"It's because it's no longer safe for you to stay in the capital my lady. So, His Highness' only choice is to take you away immediately."

Evie's eyes widened a little. "Why? Who would harm me?" her brows knotting hard, confused?

"The vampire emperor wanted a war to break out."

"I... I don't understand. Didn't they agreed to the truce because they don't want a war?" Evie's voice became a little alarmed.

"It seemed the emperor changed his mind. His Highness learned about his plan of breaking the truce and once the humans come, the emperor had intended to use His Highness to lead the vampire army to go against them."

Shock etched on Evie's face.

"But you don't have to worry now, My Lady. They can no longer harm you, so a war between vampires and humans will not happen."

"H-how can you be so sure? If the emperor sends his men to..."

Seeing the fear in her eyes, Elias panicked a little. "Uhm... please don't worry about that, My lady. The emperor will not send his men here. And even if he did, they would never have a chance unless he sent in his entire army to invade Dacia. But even if he does that, please do not worry, His Highness will protect you."

"Wh... what do you mean? Why would the emperor invade his own land just to get me?"

"No, uhm... the truth is the emperor had just declared His Highness Gavriel a traitor the moment he took you away and brought you here. The emperor declared that the prince tried to lead a coup, so he'd probably send an army here not to kill you but to take the prince down and kill him."

"Why?" Evie couldn't believe what she was hearing. "Was this all... because of me? Gavriel is —"

"My Lady." Elias cut her off. He was worried with the look on her face. Damn. Did he make a huge mistake revealing all these? He had answered her because he thought it was better if she knew and he was certain that the prince wasn't planning to hide this from her either. "Please listen... the truth is this isn't your fault at all. The emperor just found another reason to bring His Highness' down. If something happened to you that night, he had planned to put the blame on His Highness and force him to atone for his irresponsibility by leading the empire's army to fight against the humans once the war breaks out. And then while the prince is being distracted with the war, he'd definitely find a way to kill him. The emperor is hellbent on killing the prince for the reason that His Highness Gavriel is a threat to the current fake royal family. So please, don't think that it's all your fault milady."

Silence reigned between them as Evie took a few moments to process everything that she had just heard. She remembered the blond-haired royals she had met at the royal ball and their kind treatments to her that night. "This place..." she finally spoke. "This isn't just a safe place for me, right? It's also safe for Gavriel, right?"

The butler looked surprised at the worry in her voice and the fact that she seemed genuinely worried about the prince. Elias smiled at her warmly. "Yes, milady. Do not worry. This is his safe haven ever since he was young. This place had been his hide out for a long time and the vampires here are all very protective of him. They would fight for him to the death even if they know it means they are going against their own emperor and their fellow vampires. And please do not worry about His Highness and just believe in him. He is stronger than you could ever imagine."

## Chapter 32 - Something Really Good

After Evie was done with her meal, Elias brought her around to tour the inside of the castle. Elias did not bring Evie to venture outside due to the heavy snow. However, Elias had cut short the tour even before they could have a look at everything, citing the reason that she had to go to bed and rest. The vampire was obviously regarding her as someone so fragile and weak, looking very alert and uneasy with worry the whole time he accompanied her around, telling her to be careful as they were going up or down the stairs as though she would suddenly trip and fall.

Evie could not blame him though. She knew that to the vampires; humans were fragile vases that could be shattered to pieces with just one mistake. For most of the time, this statement would hold true. Compared to them, human life truly was fragile. Even simple accidents could ultimately lead to one's death. But Evie had also seen so many strong humans who go against the norm. Many of them who break the mould and do not conform to the norm were fighters that could find that little spark in them to fix themselves and stand up again and again after falling and breaking.

She wanted to tell Elias that humans were not as fragile as he thought they were, but she bit back those words, keeping the thoughts to herself and just nodded at him. She knew that words alone would not be enough to make him believe what she believed. He would have to witness it with his own two eyes for him to believe. It is as the saying goes, "Seeing is believing", "Actions speak louder than words", and "A picture is worth a thousand words". This was why, even though she was burning to defend her own race and claim that there were humans who were deserving of praise for being the strong people they were, she knew it was not worth it to get into a debate on the matter with Elias. She strongly believed that one day, not just Elias, but also the vampire nation themselves would know that there were humans that are worth their recognition and a power in their own right.

Once she was back in her room and alone, Evie walked towards the large window. Looking out, she could see the magnificent city below, the attractive and stately houses arranged and surrounding the castle in rings – and she genuinely had to admit that she found the view utterly fascinating. The roofs, the streets, the gardens, everything was covered with sheet of thick, pure white snow. She had never seen anything like this back home. She had thought back then that if there ever was a place with a singular colour, it would probably look pretty desolate and bland. However, having seen it with her very own eyes, it seems that she was proven wrong. This place felt like a different world to her – and it was a magical and beautiful one.

As she watched the snow-covered city, Evie began to wonder what was going to happen to her from here onwards. The things she had learned about her husband, the secret the vampire's royal family were trying to hide or ignore, and the fact that there was a brewing war between her husband and

the royal family were all something she had never even imagined. And that was why, at this rate, she did not know what was going to happen anymore.

"Are you okay?" A low voice suddenly echoed near her ears, jolting her, making her whip around in surprise. And she froze, wide-eyed, as her nose brushed against his. Their lips just millimetres apart. It appeared to be that he was leaning over her when she turned around!

Evie's heart thudded in her chest wildly, her face flaming red and hot. Stumbling back to place some distance between them – more for her peace of mind rather than for modesty's sake – Evie grabbed onto the window frame behind her as she looked at him, disoriented and embarrassed and utterly nervous. "You... startled me," she stammered, still blushing.

The vampire prince's lips curved up, as though he had just witnessed a really adorable scene that had pleased him to his bones. "I'm sorry," he said, biting his lower lip to hide his smile. Evie arched a brow as she looked at him. He did not look apologetic at all. In fact, he looked as pleased as a cat that had swallowed a canary.

"Are you... laughing at me?" Evie asked, pouting her full lips, not knowing her actions had drawn Gavriel's eyes to those tempting lips like a moth to the flame.

"No, my wife." He straightened, something in his eyes glimmering intensely as he shook his head at her. "I am just happy." His light eyes seemed more startling than usual.

She blinked and then her brows creased. "Happy?" she echoed, curious as she cocked her head to one side. Not knowing that action actually made her look even more appealing in her husband's adoring eyes. "Did something good happen?" she was surprised at how she suddenly felt somewhat excited to know what was it that had made her husband look this pleased. There must be some good news he had heard in the meeting he had just come from, right?

"Hmm," he purred and a hint of relaxed but devious and devastating smile touched the corner of his mouth. "Yes, wife. Something really good had just finally happened."

Evie furrowed her brows and again tilted her head slightly to one side as she questioned him with her eyes. Her curiosity elevating.

"You want to know?" he asked, his eyes glimmering teasingly. It was obvious he was enjoying the banter between them.

"Yes." She took the bait almost immediately despite the thought that he must be teasing her.

"I'll tell you, Evie. But... you have to come closer. This is a secret so I must whisper."

### Chapter 33 - I Am Yours

Evie pressed her lips together, seeing that he seemed to be enjoying his little teasing game. But she really wanted to know what this piece of good news was.

"You're... a tease." Though she complained, she stepped closer to Gavriel who ended up biting his lower lip again probably to stop himself from chuckling.

"Closer, wife."

She pressed her lips tighter and despite the moment of hesitation, she still obeyed, causing Gavriel's eyes to lighten up even more.

Evie steeled herself as she continued to approach Gavriel. They were already too close, and their faces were only inches apart! She didn't dare look up at him and just kept her eyes staring straight at his chest while waiting in anticipation. He finally bent over, so close that his lips felt like they lightly brushed past her ear. She knew it didn't, but his cool breath caressed her ear and she couldn't help but feel disoriented. "My wife finally made a move on me."

She drew back, looking at him. "What?"

He bent again, this time, his breath swept past her cheek. "She nearly kissed me. That's her first ever move on me."

Evie was so speechless her jaw dropped. And then her face became red as a cooked lobster as Gavriel eased back with a satisfied and somewhat seductive smile. "You don't need to do it sneakily my wife, you are always welcome to just jump on me and devour me anytime. I am yours after all." He added with a wicked chuckle and Evie felt like her entire body would blow up due to overheating.

"I... I wasn't... that was –" she stammered so badly and before she could even form a coherent sentence and regain her bearing, Gavriel moved back and yanked on his collar as if he were in a hurry to take off his clothes.

Evie's eyes immediately widened, and her body stiffened but when she looked into his face, he had his eyes closed as he unbuttoned his shirt. "Those officials talked way too much. I've tried to escape midway during the bloody meeting, but they were as elusive as ever. They already knew how to force me to stay with them, those sneaky old coots ..." He complained, stretching his neck from left to right, producing little cracking sounds as if he was really tired.

Watching him, Evie was surprised at how human he looked and acted right now. His appearance was as godly as usual, but he felt a little more human when he was dishevelled. She never would have thought that he was tired if she didn't hear from Elias a while ago while they were touring around the castle that Gavriel hadn't slept in the past four days straight.

Elias of course told her it wasn't that big of a deal as vampires can go on for days without any sleep just fine. But Evie had heard previously from her father that the limit vampires could go without sleep was three days. They can move just fine even without sleep or rest for three days straight but after three days, her father had said that the vampires will start to move slower, and their strength would also be reduced to be a little weaker than normal.

The butler told her that Gavriel was fine and that he could even go on without any rest for many more days but that didn't erase the tinge of concern in her heart for him.

And before she knew it, she had approached him and reached out to help him remove his shirt. Gavriel immediately paused in his movements, staring down at her in shocked surprise. His little shy and wary wife was helping him remove his shirt?

Evie remembered her parents. Every time her father arrived home after a meeting with the emperors or from a war, her mother was always there to support and aid him in every little thing. She did not allow the servants to help her husband take off his robes and shirt. Her mother had told her that this was not just because it was her duty as his wife, but also because it was her way of showing her support and care for her husband.

Evie did not know whether or not she was doing the right thing. She was well aware that her marriage with Gavriel wasn't like her parents which was grounded in their love for each other. Theirs was a love match, while hers and Gavriel wasn't – it was a transaction. And she was not supposed to end up caring about him. She sighed in her mind and thought how messed up her situation had become just this short time of being here in the vampire realm.

But no matter what, she was still his legal wife and remembering the fact that Gavriel had chosen to take her away from the capital for her safety and ended up being labelled as traitor, Evie could no longer bring herself to keep hardening her heart against him and to keep thinking of him as her enemy.

All of a sudden, he bent, and he buried his head in the hollow of her neck. "Evie..." he uttered her name, his voice became hoarse. Evie felt goosebumps form on her skin as never had her name sounded so tantalizingly seductive from another's lips. She waited for what he would say next with bated breath, but nothing else came. He just stayed still and remained in that position.

"Y-yes?" Evie managed to say. Her heart starting to thud harder. "Are you alright?"

He shook his head and Evie was slightly alarmed.

"Wha... what's wrong? Should I go call Elias –"

"No." he cut her off, still not moving at all.

Evie slowly lifted her hand to touch his arm. She felt his muscle contracted at her touch. And he was cold.

Her eyes widened and her heartbeat accelerated because she knew that he wasn't like other vampires. Gavriel was never cold to the touch but comfortingly warm.

"I think you're not fine." panic was evident in her voice.

"Are you worried?" he asked and even his breath against her skin was cool she couldn't help but shiver.

"Of... course. Please let me go call someone..."

She felt him smile and he eased back, his eyes glimmering as he gazed down at her.

"No need, wife. I don't need someone else to help me."

"But..." she was about to protest but she somehow knew that any number of objections she raised would be futile. "Then, what do you want me to do? How can I help you?" she asked, unable to hide her panic anymore.

"Let me touch you."

#### Chapter 34 - Grave Mistake

"Let me touch you." The raspy voice that was hot and heavy with want, literally scorched her with the intense heat of his intentions.

And Evie could not speak. Her tongue felt swollen, and her mouth seemed to be glued shut. She was transfixed by his glittering eyes that held her so intensely, making her unable to move. He was doing it again, seducing her, hypnotizing her and she could not help but fall helplessly under this

deadly but somehow welcoming spell that was killing every one of her will and thoughts and hesitations.

"Is that too much for me to ask yet?" his voice came out like a pained groan but a moment later, it became even deeper, hoarser, darker and hungrier than ever before. "Then... how about a kiss? Let me kiss you, Evie... just a kiss... I won't touch, I promise."

His words, his closeness, his electric gaze, and the erotic waft of his cool breath against her lips turned Evie's mind into mush. She could not even follow the rhythm of her heart anymore. And before she knew it, she nodded.

"O-okay. Just kiss... no touch... touching..." She didn't know what came over her that made her agree but perhaps she somehow realized that he was going to persist until she answered – and answered positively that is. She was scared that she might actually lose herself and ended up being the one jumping him like he had told her to a while back instead of him jumping her. Her body's reactions towards him made her realize how dangerous this husband of hers was. He was a man who could make a woman strip themselves down to nothing and throw themselves on him with just a whisper – no, it would not even take a whisper as his eyes itself was enough to seduce thoroughly. And to her bemusement and slight indignation, she was not the exemption. Despite all the stakes, she could not stop her body from reacting.

And that was why she could only give in. The thought that her body would end up betraying her at this rate scared her. Besides, it was just a kiss, she thought. It would not be anything serious...right? It was just a kiss. And he had saved her from death's grip trice now. She could chalk this up as her way to show him her gratitude.

"Ki... kiss only, okay?" she repeated as she looked at him in a daze. Gavriel's intense gaze glittered as if what he was seeing and hearing that moment fascinated him completely to his core.

"Oh yes, my wife... I already promised I won't touch until you ask me to."

The next thing she knew, her back was against the concrete window frame. As promised, he did not touch her, but his eyes had moved her backward without her realizing. He braced one hand over her head against the window frame and the other against the wall by her shoulder.

His posture was loose and easy, but Evie somehow felt that she was being dominated. Bewildered and disoriented, Evie waited nervously at what he was going to do next.

He stared at her and she closed her eyes, not wanting him to see the emotions running through her.

Then she felt a soft brush of heat against her upper lip that made her go stiff. Though it was so soft and light she could scarcely feel it, Evie could not help but tense up. This was her first time and the sensations and feelings seemed way much more than she had expected.

But another touch came, this time on her lower lip and then at the sensitive corner of her mouth. He did not rush, neither did he stop. His lips came at her again and again in soft, silky caresses as if he were soothing her. Until she felt suddenly lightheaded, and her body was no longer as stiff as a rock.

Briefly, Gavriel drew back, and an incredibly restrained hunger and desire filled his eyes as he stared at her. His hands that were against the wall had long since turned into clenched fists. The next

second, his mouth possessed hers with small, persistent kisses, coaxing her lips apart, so softly... so patiently.

Evie felt as if she were flying up into the clouds. Everything was becoming inexplicable. She found herself opening up to him, giving in to his delicious and passionate coaxing which was impossible to resist.

The instant she parted her lips, he sealed her mouth with his as if he had been waiting for that moment all this time. Evie shuddered at the sudden intrusion. Her head helplessly tipped back against the window frame as she felt the hammering of her heart and the blood rushing through her veins.

He slid his tongue even deeper inside her as though he was exploring the inside of her mouth. And she did not know why or how, but his alluring voice began to echo in her hazy mind. "I'd slid my tongue inside your mouth. I would invade your mouth . . . lick every corner of it until you moan for me. I'd tangle my tongue against yours and then suck and lick it. . ."

And she began to feel weak and utterly hot, as if she were suddenly drunk. She gasped shakily for air and he eased back slightly, just enough for her to breathe. His breaths that filled her mouth were now a little warm. But Evie was too overwhelmed to notice.

She thought it was over but before she could even open her eyes, his tongue was inside her mouth again. And this time it did not come slow and soft, it was more like a savage invasion and she was caught off guard, unable to offer any resistance. He began to lick every corner of her mouth and then sucked and licked her tongue like a hungry beast until little moans and groans started escaping from Evie's throat.

He responded with his own deep groan and his kisses became even deeper, hungrier. Evie had never imagined that a kiss could be like this, or even feel this way. A whisper in her head had told her she had made another grave mistake that moment she shivered at the very first touch of his lips against hers. And it appeared, the whisper was right because at that moment, there was no will, nor thought, that could stop her from responding to him.

And the moment she did, no matter how inexperienced and sloppy her response was, a deep and low sound of pained desire vibrated deep within Gavriel's chest as his nails sunk against the concrete wall.

## **Chapter 35 - Finally**

After the deliciously toe-curling kiss, he eased back a little until their lips were barely touching. The steamy puffs of their breaths mingling as she finally opened her intoxicated eyes. But before his glorious face could register in her blurry gaze, his tongue was buried inside her mouth again.

Another deep, raw and spine tingling kiss followed. He continued tasting, sucking, and licking the inside of her mouth as though he could not get enough of her.

And as he feasted on her mouth, Evie could not do anything but feel the inexplicable pleasure that was threatening to blot out her consciousness. Something hot and sweet began to swell within her breast and stomach and between her thighs.

Another sweet moan escaped from her lips as her trembling hands move on their own and settled lightly against his naked chest. A sound of satisfaction rumbled in Gavriel's throat and his mouth was suddenly latched onto her jaw. He kissed and nibbled her there and then slowly travelled down



the hollow of her neck, licking her as if he were tasting something divine. And it felt so good Evie could only writhe in response.

The sweet and hot sensation streaking down her breasts and experienced a sudden increase. And when he sucked hard on the sensitive skin of her neck, she quivered, and it was as if there were jolts of electricity zapping her all over her body.

A gasp escaped her mouth as she uttered words in what sounded like half moan and half whimper. "Gav... Gavriel... wa... wait..."

Suddenly, he went very still and then pulled away with startling abruptness.

The sudden loss of his solidness and warmth had a protest nearly slipping from Evie's throat. She did not mean for him to stop. She did not want him to stop. She wanted... more.

She gasped again at her own thought process, eyes wide with shock as she looked at him.

The muscles in Gavriel's jaw contracted and tightened at the sight of her expression. But he said nothing so the only sound that could be heard between them for a while was her gentle gasps of breaths and his deep and rapid inhalations and exhalations.

He closed his eyes and appeared to be struggling with some powerful emotions within himself before straightening and raking his hand through his hair. After a short moment, his jaws relaxed and he spoke softly, his eyes still intense but now controlled and restrained.

"Alright," he said in a low voice. "I'm going to take a bath, wife. You don't need to wait for me and go to bed now. Sleep well."

And without a warning, his lips crashed against her lips again before he abruptly tore them away.

His back already facing her as he powerfully and purposefully strode towards the bathroom before Evie realized it. The door closed, cutting her view from his drool-worthy back and she finally found herself able to break free from the earlier paralysis.

Her mind was in a muddle, utterly disoriented and a little confused. She began to feel her body again and she was surprised that she did not crumple to the floor in a boneless heap.

Walking towards the bed on unsteady legs, Evie ran her palms over her still burning face. Her brain finally began to work normally again, and she buried her face against the pillow.

Her lips still felt tingly and her nipples too, she began to absentmindedly touch them. Oh my! She gasped upon realizing what she was doing, and she rose abruptly as if startled. She went and grabbed a glass of water and gulped it down.

She jumped back into bed again, afraid that he'd come back because she wouldn't know how to face him now. And she was certain the colour of her face was still red.

Forcing herself to fall asleep, Evie tossed and turned on her side of the bed.

After a long while of failed attempts to forcefully get herself to sleep and the impossible attempt of forgetting about the mind-blowing kiss, Evie heard the soft sound of a door opening and then closing. She went very still, feigning to be asleep.

She felt him drawing the thick curtains over the window she had pulled open when she was looking outside. The room suddenly plunged into darkness.

He climbed silently on the bed, and Evie felt the mattress on his side dip as she tried her best to stop her nervousness. She knew vampires had very sharp senses and perhaps, the thuds of her heart might be deafening to him. With great effort, Evie sighed silently multiple times and somehow, her heartbeat slowly quietened. Maybe because Gavriel never even made a single move anymore. He was, she noticed, utterly still.

Time passed and she finally had the courage to turn around so very slowly and peek at him. She moved as quietly as she could. It took her a long while just to lie on her back. Evie could not see him fully in the dark but she could see the outline of his shadow. Was he already asleep?

The fact that he never made a single move for a long while now made Evie thought that he was probably asleep especially since he hadn't slept for the past four days. She finally let out a quiet but very long sigh of relief. Her mind began to wander back to their kiss again until she herself eventually fell asleep.

When her breathing was finally even and steady, Gavriel's lashes flew open in the dark, eyes still as piercing as ever and not a hint of sleep could be seen clouding it. His head turned over and looked indulgently at this wife of his. She was facing him, and her peaceful face was now in deep slumber. A long drawn but quiet sigh escaped his lips as he lifted his hand and covered his eyes with the back of his palm. He was a little worried a while ago when he heard how nervous she was as he approached the bed. Her reactions made him unhappy and incredibly displeased because it seemed as if she was still uncomfortable and scared of him. But as he calmly thought about it, he understood why she'd feel uneasy and scared. He was a vampire after all. But when he recalled how she had responded to his kiss so beautifully, a slow smile curved on his lips that almost seemed a little wicked and he looked at her sleeping face again.

Before he knew it, his gaze was zoned in on her full lips. The delicious lips he had just recently and finally tasted. 'Goddamn,' he cursed within him when he realized his fingers were about to touch her slightly swollen lips. He rose and leaned against the headboard, pinching the skin between his brows lightly. It seemed he would not be able to restrain himself as easy as before anymore – now that he had finally tasted her.

## **Chapter 36 - Hidden**

The other side of the bed was empty and cold when Evie woke up. She couldn't help but wonder if what happened last night... no last morning was all just a dream. Did he even get any sleep at all? He should have as he was asleep before her. Did he wake up after sleeping for just a couple of hours?

Evie shook her head and hastily climbed off the bed as the memories of their kiss began to invade her mind again. Elias had knocked on her door after Evie was done with her private matters and he escorted her out of her room.

It was sunset and her meal was prepared at the castle's terrace. The snow had stopped falling but everything was still covered in white, and the venue of her meal was unexpectedly quite regal. She was going to eat on a beautiful terrace overlooking the city accompanied by the lovely sunset. She still could not get used to the fact that in this place, their breakfast was not after sunrise but at sunset. Elias had pleaded to her yesterday to follow the vampire's sleep routine, giving her the reason that the castle was filled with vampires and that it was not good for a lady wondering around in the middle of the day which was the equivalent of midnight for the vampire. Evie understood. And she remembered how her husband told her she was the only human in this entire castle, and she could be a great temptation for everyone in this place. So, she could only obey. There was no reason for her not to when she knew it was all for her sake.

"His Highness cannot join you for breakfast today because he's currently held up by some official matters, but he might be able to join you for dinner later." Elias said politely and a little carefully, observing her reaction.

Evie swept her gaze across the beautiful view. It seemed Elias brought her meal here because he did not want her to eat all alone at that long table in the large and lonely dining room.

"I understand that he cannot join me." She smiled at him. "This spot is really beautiful. Thank you for choosing this spot."

"I am glad you liked it Your Highness." He smiled back and Evie ate her meal silently, occasionally watching the view as she enjoyed the food.

"Do you have anything you wanted to do tonight, milady?" Elias asked after her meal. "Please don't hesitate to tell me if you have something in mind."

Evie shifted her gaze to the setting sun which was now about to sink below the horizon. "I think I'd like to continue the tour that we didn't finish yesterday." Was all she replied, and the butler nodded. After she was done with her meal, they went on to continue their tour and as expected, every nook and cranny of the castle screamed of nothing but fineness and grandeur. The only difference between this castle and Gavriel's was that this one looked a little more ancient and had more gothic feel to it, making the place definitely suited for vampires.

"Uhm... is it just me or did everyone desert the castle because I'm here?" Evie asked as they walked along a corridor. She had already noticed when they toured around this morning. She could feel their presence, but she had yet to see anyone around except for Elias and she could not help but wonder if the vampires were avoiding her like she was the plague.

Elias immediately shook his head. "No, no, Your Highness." He even waved his hand in almost a frantic way. "Everyone is actually here. They... they're just hiding behind the pillars and everywhere..."

"Why?" she inclined her head innocently but then, a thought came to her and she nodded. "Ah, I see. It must be hard for them. I think I should really stay in my room –"

"No, My Lady." Elias broke off. He was shocked at his own rudeness, but he just could not seem to take what she was saying anymore. "Please don't think that they're avoiding you because they don't want you around. They are actually peeking at you surreptitiously just to take a look. Most of the vampires here – especially the servants – have never seen a human in their entire long lives. They are just afraid they would scare you and that's why they end up hiding the moment they sense out your presence. Please look..." Elias turned, and his voice echoed. "Stop hiding everyone. Come out!"

A number of vampires suddenly appeared seemingly out of nowhere, and they all were looking at Evie – not with disgust but with eyes filled with something like fascination.

"See? They just don't want to overwhelm you, Milady, since everyone knows you're the only human here." Evie noticed some of the vampires nod their heads at Elias' statement.

Evie did not know what to feel. She could see and sense that they really didn't seem to be looking at her like she was some kind of exotic food, or as one that is of an inferior race, or she was a dangerous plague that didn't belong in their world. Once again, her expectations were proven wrong. And she remembered Gavriel's words that she was safe in this place.

She was suddenly emotional and slightly ashamed, but she pushed it to the back of her mind at the moment and didn't allow anything to show on her face. The little devil at her shoulder whispered that they might be only treating her like this just for now – when she is still a novelty to them. Still, her heart swelled with relief and she smiled, her eyes saying 'hello', and everyone looked surprised and then bowed slightly at her.

Their reaction made Evie feel even more overwhelmed. Gladness filled her heart.

Once they arrived at the highest terrace, the night was already deep. She had worn her fluffy coat with the hood as she stepped out of the intricately designed terrace.

Her gaze swept to the city that was now lively and awake. She noticed she was getting more and more used to seeing a place that was lively at night.

"You told me before that this place is His Highness' safe haven, so I am assuming that he had lived here before, right?" she asked, her eyes still roaming around and enjoying the view of the lively night city.

"Yes, milady."

"Could it be that he grew up here?"

"Uhm... no, Milady. His Highness grew up in the capital when his mother was still alive."

Evie turned to Elias, noticing the change in his voice when he mentioned about the prince growing up in the capital and not here in Dacia.

"Did... the royal family hate His Highness ever since he was young?" she asked hesitantly.

Elias regarded her with a thoughtful look but after seeing the curiosity burning in her eyes, the butler sighed and looked down at the city as well. "His Highness didn't have a normal childhood because he grew up hidden in a dungeon." He said and Evie's eyes widened as her heart shuddered at that information.

A deep frown immediately etched on her face as she looked at him, pleading him silently to tell her more about Gavriel's childhood.

Seeing the concern and interest in Evie's eyes, Elias seemed to have made another decision. He had once asked Gavriel if it were fine for him to answer her questions about him, if ever she would ask, and Elias was surprised when Gavriel told him it was fine.

He hadn't had the chance to ask again which of the things about him he was allowed to reveal to her since he also thought that the lady would never ask.

"Why?" she asked in disbelief. "Did the emperor throw him in the dungeon because he found out Gavriel's a real royalty?"

"No, Milady. His Highness' mother hid him there to prevent the emperor from finding out the truth about his existence."

### **Chapter 37 - Why Not?**

"The late empress hid her son in such a place because she knew that the emperor would kill His Highness the moment he sees his appearance. That's why nobody had ever seen His Highness for the first 16 years of his life except the late empress herself," Elias continued. "When the late empress revealed the existence of Prince Gavriel, the imperial palace was shaken since they never thought the empress had ever conceived the emperor's child. That time, Prince Gavriel's eyes were scarlet red, and his hair was dark brown. Nobody knew that the late empress had purposely starved His Highness so his eyes could remain red all the time and had dyed his hair as well. She had told everyone the reason why she had hidden His Highness' existence for so many years was due to the prince's unusual red eyes and she was just trying to protect her child from any harm.

Everyone knew that the empress and the emperor's relationship was not one that was on good terms with each other as the emperor blatantly showed his dislike towards the empress and favoured as well as loved his mistress excessively instead of his wife. They understood the reason why the empress had to hide her son. It was all because the emperor's first-born heir was from his mistress and not the empress. They all knew that a power struggle would definitely occur between the two princes. Since the law of the vampires always requires the first born to inherit the throne, the mistress' son had a big advantage but with Prince Gavriel as the legitimate son, his right to the throne is also undeniable. So, the officials had accepted the empress' explanation on why she had hidden her son for so long."

"H-how about the emperor? Did he buy the empress' explanation?" Evie asked, her eyes filled with interest and concern and curiosity.

"Unfortunately, he didn't. He had secretly sent his elite men to investigate deeper into the matter. The empress had told everyone that Prince Gavriel grew up in Dacia but the emperor's men found out that nobody in Dacia ever knew about the prince, much less saw him, in the last sixteen years. No matter what he did, there was no information at all. It was as if the prince had just appeared out of nowhere. And his suspicions never stopped there. He began to mentally harass the empress to tell him the truth, telling her that he did not believe that Gavriel belonged to him. But the empress endured everything and stood her ground against the emperor.

The empress wanted Prince Gavriel to grow stronger before she could finally reveal the full truth of his lineage and real appearance to the empire. She wanted him to grow so strong that he could stand against the emperor in his own right. She had Prince Gavriel enrolled into the top and elite military school as soon as she revealed him. To her and everyone's surprise, the prince didn't even need the help of any school to hone his strength because the prince was already extraordinarily strong in everything." Elias began to puff up in pride as he continued his story. "When I first watched His Highness' fight, I got goosebumps. He was only seventeen, but it felt as though he had been born a warrior, as if he had been through hell since he was a small child, which was impossible because we knew there had been no major wars that happened during the last sixteen years. His skills and aura were something a vampire could never hone from fighting against humans. The truth is... I am actually quite doubtful myself about the fact whether or not His Highness truly grew up in a dungeon. Haha."

Evie creased her brows as Elias rubbed the back of his head as he laughed awkwardly. "But according to His Highness himself, he indeed grew up in a dungeon. He had never revealed any details about his life growing up in there, though. That fact that he did was the only thing he confirmed. And..." Elias trailed off, finally realizing that he had been saying too much already. "Uhm... I think we should go back now, Your Highness." He changed the topic and Evie bit her lower lip in utter disappointment. But Elias already had his back turned on her and headed back where they came from.

Realizing that the butler was not going to continue anymore, Evie could only follow. She suppressed the intense urge to ask more because she knew that the butler had realized he was exposing too many details to her. Evie knew the strict rules for servants in talking about their masters, so she understood why Elias had stopped. But she thought that maybe, she can make him talk again in the following days. She must not pry too hard and come at him too obviously. "Where do you want to spend the rest of the night, My Lady?" Elias asked as they slowly descended the grand stairs.

"Am I allowed to go out and visit the city?"

Elias halted.

"Apologies Milady but I need to ask for His Highness' permission first. I'll definitely let you know once I receive his answer."

"Oh... understood..."

"How about the library, My Lady? Would you like to spend the rest of the night there? Or perhaps you might like me to take you to the gardens? But I guess, you're already tired from roaming the castle for hours now."

"Alright," Evie could only smile awkwardly because this butler was worrying too much again. "I'll go to the library then."

The butler escorted her to the library in an instant and Evie was surprised and fascinated at the gothic looking and large library. She never expected she could find a library this huge and elegant

inside a vampire's castle and she could not help but wonder what topics could be found written in all the countless books that were stored here about.

"You can leave me here now Elias and go do your thing. You don't need to watch over me every minute of the day. I think I can spend the rest of the night in here peacefully." She said, smiling. Evie didn't know why but she suddenly felt excited at the sight of this place and the myriads of books held on those ancient shelves, as if different adventures were awaiting her within those time-worn pages.

Thankfully, the butler nodded. "Levy is on stand-by just outside the doors. So, if you need anything, please don't hesitate to call for him."

"Mm. I will."

"Also... uhm..." Elias hesitantly leaned a little closer. "Please don't ask His Highness about the dungeon and his childhood." He said, causing Evie to frown a little.

"Why not?"

"Because... His Highness seemed to really hate talking about anything related to dungeons or his childhood. The truth is that with the mere mention of the word 'dungeon' could drastically change his mood entirely. So please keep what I told you earlier just between us, okay? Milady?"

She nodded. "Don't worry, I understand."

"Thank you, Milady." Elias flashed her a relieved smile.

## **Chapter 38 - Reading Or Kissing**

Evie had already gone through a few books that she found in the library, but she could not focus on any of them. Her mind just kept going back to the thoughts about Gavriel and his childhood. What happened to his mother, the empress? Vampires supposed to live for a long time. So how come she had already... could it be that she was killed?

The thought made Evie's grip on the book she was holding tightened. Her heart ached at the realization that Gavriel had already lost both his parents and was now labelled as a traitor.

Moreover, what had happened to him in the dungeon? How did the empress manage to hide a prince in a dungeon that was located in the imperial palace for sixteen years? Didn't vampires had the ability to sense someone's presence even without seeing them? Not to mention what Elias said about his extraordinary skills. If no one aside from the empress saw him within those sixteen years, how did he even hone his fighting skills?

Questions kept piling up in Evie's mind as she continued to pore over the book she was holding, knowing that there would be no way that she could find the answers within these pages no matter how much she thought and researched about them. Heaving a long and drawn-out sigh, Evie lifted her face and her eyes swept through the large library.

The five books she had chosen were unexpectedly all about the vampire empire's history. She would love to delve more into their history as she was curious to know, but at that moment, her curiosity about her husband's past was way stronger that she had actually wished she could just find a book personally dedicated just about him.

Evie thought that if there ever was a book that contained the details of Gavriel's secrets and of his past, the book should be looking like... her eyes just wandered around for minutes as if she were looking for something.

Something seemed to have caught her attention and her gaze finally settled onto one spot, towards a dark greyish book on the lowest level of a bookshelf located at the far corner of the library. It was something that did not look like anything special but somehow still seems to exude a mysterious feel.

She did not know why she thought that way. Maybe it was due to Gavriel having a perfect look that is beyond special. But perhaps, Evie was comparing the book to Gavriel's inner self. He acts and reacts very normally that one would think of him as the typical royal who grew up in a normal environment. The way he managed and brought himself never gave anyone a clue that he was someone who grew up hidden in a dungeon and had lost all his family. Evie also felt that there were more secrets he was hiding, horrors so deep that she cannot even begin to imagine how bad it was. And yet, he was still gentle and calm like a lake. So calm and gentle that one would think he was nobody dangerous and had nothing to hide.

Rising from her seat, Evie approached that shelf and gave a hard stare at the book. And the longer she stared at it, she did not know why but it seem to be becoming more and more mysterious, nearly enticing, in her eyes. It was really strange as it was just a book and there was no way it would be about him... right? Was this because she was just thinking too much? That must be the case, she thought, sighing.

Still, she reached out to retrieve the book when all of a sudden, she heard the soft sound of the doors closing and muted falls of footsteps coming towards her.

Evie whipped her head around after she straightened up and a little shock zipped through her as their gazes met.

"Gav... riel..." she uttered softly. She did not expect him to personally come to look for her here. Didn't Elias mention earlier that he was busy?

His gaze momentarily shifted to the lower corner of the shelf before returning his gaze to her. He took leisurely measured steps towards her and as Evie looked straight up into his eyes, the memories from last time they were together suddenly flashed in her head.

"W-why are you here? Elias mentioned that you were busy." She managed to ask, trying to distract herself, knowing that her color was already rising just by the thought of their kiss yesterday.

He inclined his head and replied innocently. "Can't I drop by to check in on my own wife?"

"Of course... you can."

"Are you fine staying here all by yourself, Evie? If you are bored..." he trailed off as Evie shook her head hard and very adamantly.

"I'm not bored at all! I really like reading and being by myself."

Gavriel gave her a long, intent stare, and he stepped so close, so suddenly that Evie barely managed to catch her breath in surprise. Before she knew it, he was looming over her, his hands already propped against the shelf, caging her within his arms and his lips near her ear.

"Are you saying that you like reading and being all alone here than being with me and... kissing?" he whispered in his low, hypnotic voice and Evie could only part her lips in surprise as her face burned red.

"Wha... what –"

His mouth suddenly caught hers, crushing hers against his, but not ruthlessly. His tongue hungrily thrust inside her mouth then played tag with her tongue. And she could only melting helplessly, as if affected by some powerful drug.

But he didn't wait for her to return his hungry kisses this time. His mouth strayed from hers and she almost whimpered in protest if she didn't already feel his tongue wandering across her cheek to the sensitive hollow of her ear. She gasped as his teeth caught softly at the tiny lobe.

"Gav... riel..." she moaned his name as she held onto him for balance.

"Evie..." he uttered, his breath snagging. "Now tell me... would you rather read or kiss me..." he whispered as his tongue worked its way down the sensitive hollow of her neck. His breath trailed

scorching heat like hellfire against her wet skin as he spoke again. "Be honest and answer me, wife... tell me what you really want to do right now... reading or kissing..."

Dazed and disoriented, Evie bit her lower lip hard. She honestly did not want him to stop. She wanted... more.

Before she knew it, her traitorous lips had already uttered something. "Kiss... kissing" And Gavriel pulled away in shocked surprise – though he was really hoping for it, he was still half ready for her rejection as usual. Evie swayed at the sudden absence of her solid anchor but Gavriel caught her just in time and pulled her against him.

The next thing she realized; she was suddenly seated on top of a table that was nearby.

## **Chapter 39 - Safest Place**

Gripping the table on either side of her, Gavriel caged Evie between his arms as his mouth seized hers ardently. Pushing his tongue inside her mouth, he entered repeatedly until she was drunk with pleasure and too dazed to even think.

Then his mouth was travelling along her neck again as if looking for something. His mouth stopped and suddenly, he licked and then sucked on a tender pulse point, causing Evie's legs to stiffen. Oh my... what was this? What's happening to her? What was he doing to her?

Evie could no longer hold in the sounds that her throat was making that she had been trying so hard to bury. She was not certain what kind of sounds or words they were once she let them out but all she knew was that it sounded to be something like pleading. And she cannot... must not say whatever it was... but... biting her lip didn't even seem to work anymore.

To her relief, his mouth had sealed hers just before she could open her lips to voice it out, pushing back the sounds again. This time, his kisses seemed teasing... as if he were pushing her towards something. And once again, she was helpless in his manipulations and could only let him push her further towards whatever place it was that he had wanted her to reach.

Her hands slowly moved, reaching out and then settled onto his broad shoulders. She knew what her body wanted to do, to pull him... closer.

But all of a sudden, he pulled his mouth away from hers and ended the kiss with a low frustrated groan that jolted Evie from her dazed state.

He turned his head towards the door and Evie gasped, seeing a hand that had pushed the door slightly opened.

"I beg your pardon, Your Highness, but everyone has arrived and you're the only one everyone's waiting for now." The man behind the door said, who sounded like the big man, Samuel.

An electric moment passed as Gavriel appeared to marshal his thoughts. But when he looked down again at her and saw her mortified and shocked expression, Gavriel let out a shuddering sigh, looking as though he was forcing himself to bring his desire under control.

Once he loosened up and relaxed his taut muscles, he moved closer to her until his lips touched her ear. "Sorry, my wife but I have to go back now. We'll resume where we left off once I'm back." He whispered, pressing a kiss on the vulnerable hollow below her ear before he eased back and left the room and his dainty wife pleasantly dazed.

His face was dark as he scowled at Samuel.

"You had reminded me to come get you when it was time Your Highness." Samuel reasoned out as they strode ahead of the corridors, trying his best to deflect the irritation he could feel like a living entity coming from his prince.

"Yes, Samuel. I said to call. Not barge in!" Gavriel huffed, exasperated at his man's denseness.



"Actually, Your Highness...I did call out to you for a long while before I pushed the door open..." Samuel reported sullenly, feeling a little miffed that his prince was so caught up with his wife that he did not even notice him calling at all.

Gavriel halted for a moment, his scowl towards Samuel faded when he realized he didn't just forget about the time and everything else but actually even became deaf while he was kissing her. Good lord... his wife truly was dangerous. He cleared his throat and resumed walking.

"These officials are way too punctual. One or two of them should at least have forgotten about the time and came a little late. Don't they all have their own wives?" the prince suddenly complained, causing Samuel to look at him in utter disbelief. Were these words actually being uttered by his almighty prince? He almost could not believe his own ears if it were not for the fact that he is hearing it this very moment.

"Are... are you really saying that you want them to be late to this very urgent and important meeting?" Samuel asked, perplexed and still dumbfounded, but Gavriel had already entered the large door leading to the castle's throne hall.

"You're not going to join Zolan inside?" Luc, who was assigned to guard the entrance said and Samuel sighed, shaking his head as if to clear his head before he too finally entered the throne hall.

"In other word, no one believes that I'm the real royalty... is that what you are trying to say, Duke?" Gavriel's voice was dry as he stared at the Duke of Dacia who was giving him reports about their progress. They had been trying to secretly inform some trusted states within the empire about the existence of the real vampire royalty, in the hopes that these states would come to support the prince as well.

When the Duke could not say a word and just dropped his head in apology, Zolan spoke. "Their doubt and distrust are actually quite an obvious result, Your Highness." He said and everyone looked at the long-haired man whose black eyes were filled with intelligence and wisdom. "It has been more than two hundred years since the real royal bloodline was thought to be annihilated. It was supposed to be logically impossible for a true royalty to suddenly pop out of nowhere now. So, it is understandable there is no way they will believe this unless... they actually see you in person. The few vampires who saw you in the capital all started to believe just with one look. Unfortunately, those vampires at the ball in the imperial palace and the ones whom we visited when we were there all turned out to be the emperor's dogs. They believed upon seeing you, but their loyalty was long since bought over by the emperor.

Fortunately, I believe many states in the northern and eastern part of the empire will definitely accept you. Even if they all support the current emperor right now, I am certain they are not corrupted dogs like the states near the capital. They would turn their backs on the emperor if they knew a true royalty still exists today. However, you must show yourself to them. Once they see you with their very own eyes, they will believe without question like how the Dacians accepted you. Words alone are useless at this point, because you already know that the vampires have long accepted that the true royal bloodline is long gone."

All the officials nodded in agreement.

"But that would be risky for His Highness." The Duke butted in. "Having the prince leave Dacia and sneak into the other states is dangerous. Also, I am certain the emperor has already taken

precautions and made his preparations about this. If I were him, I would do anything to stop the prince from entering other states."

The officials nodded their agreement again in unison. They had just found a solution, but it turned out to be really dangerous. If anything happened to the prince... everyone was suddenly shrouded with anxiety and uncertainty.

"But..." It was Samuel who spoke this time. "His Highness and his men are a force to be reckoned with as well. We can ensure His Highness' safety. Well... in fact, I am certain His Highness can even make it in and out without our help. So that is not the problem here. The real problem here is that –"

"He's going to come and attack Dacia." Gavriel broke off as he lazily rested his chin against his knuckles. "That man is not an idiot. He won't let me take another state from him. So, he's definitely going to attack us while we are still lacking in allies. I'm guessing he is already prepared to attack at any time, and he won't just be aiming after me... he'll destroy and crush this entire city into ashes and set it as an example to every other states. So even in the case where I do survive, no state would be willing to support me again."

Everyone felt a chill run down their spine at the prince's statement. But Gavriel was smiling wickedly, a strange glimmer playing in his remarkable eyes.

"Y-your Highness, that is not amusing." One of the officials said in a fearful tone.

But the prince rested his head back against his chair, still smiling. "It's not..." he uttered and his smile finally faded. "I just find it funny that we don't have a choice but to end up fighting against our very own kind." He looked at them, his eyes now completely changed. "But fear not, men... I am here to protect this place." I told her this is the safest place... so no matter what, I will keep it safe... or else, she'll label me a liar...

## Chapter 40 - Vital

After the serious discussions and strategizing about the upcoming war, Gavriel was about to end the meeting when the Duke of Dacia raised a new topic.

"I believe this is a crucial concern we must address immediately, Your Highness."

"Are you saying that this other topic of yours is as vital as the upcoming war? Duke Henry?"

"Yes, Your Highness."

Everyone who had finally relaxed their tensed shoulders after the bloody simulations and discussions, straightened their shoulders once again, as though to brace themselves for this other major problem they had to deal with. Just what kind of problem was it that it was as important as the war that's looming over everyone's heads?

Gavriel sat back. Though his face remained relaxed, he looked at the Duke with curiosity. He made sure to find out every major problem that they needed to address and he didn't find anything that was as crucial as this coming war. Had he or his men miss something important? That was impossible... even if he had missed it, his men, especially Zolan wouldn't.

"Alright, state it Duke Henry." Gavriel said and the Duke immediately began.

"Your Highness, we are aware of your power and abilities. You are definitely strong and powerful –"

"Please get to the point Duke." The prince cut him off, causing the Duke to sigh and then looked at him with all seriousness.

"We wanted you to sire an heir, Your Highness." The Duke said and everyone, except Gavriel's men, looked at the prince with a severe and almost pleading gazes. "You are the only true royalty left. And now you're going off to war... if something happens to you –"

"Nothing will happen to me." Gavriel said. The curiosity and interest in his eyes were gone. He was obviously disappointed that this was the crucial problem the Duke was talking about.

"Your Highness, we need the reassurance. You know how important this is. Please take this seriously. It's your bloodline that we need to protect most right now. Not this city, not us. You don't know how hard it was for us to accept back then that the royal bloodline was completely annihilated. Many of the ancient vampires killed themselves because they refused to serve a fake ruler. There were some who killed themselves for failing to save the royal bloodline. So please listen to us, we've been begging you for many years now. It's high time for you to sire a child and secure the royal bloodline. This is the only way we could really relax."

Everyone agreed with the Duke and they all moved and pleaded with him, causing Gavriel to close his eyes and lean against the back of his chair, fully aware where their pleas were coming from.

"I strongly suggest that you take a couple of noble women or more to make sure –"

"I already have a wife." Gavriel's voice suddenly turned hard and as sharp as flint that the atmosphere immediately became a little tensed. But the Duke was determined.

"But Your Highness, she's a human, you know how rare it is for a human and vampire to have a child." Duke Henry argued. It was common knowledge that it was extremely rare for a half vampire to be born. That was why despite the rampant slavery and the fact that many vampires were using human women to quench their sexual desires, the number of half vampires didn't even cross the number of four yet ever since the first half vampire was born.

Those half-vampires were strong creatures. For still unknown reasons, these half-bloods that were born tend to be much stronger than pure blooded vampires that they were considered special – a prime creature. Upon the birth of the halfblooded vampire, no matter which family he came from, he and his family will be promoted to nobles and he will be given an important role in the empire once he grew up. The strength and power of a half-blood was just too incredible that the vampires began to desire to sire such a special child. Even the previous emperor and the current one had blatantly desired to have their own half-blooded child. And this was the main reason why many of these greedy vampires have a large number of human concubines.

"We are begging you, Your Highness. We know you are an honorable man so we will never dare to ask you to have more than one wife. We only want you to have them as your mistresses until one of them sire you a child. So please, Your Highness. This is for the sake of the royal bloodline as much as for the entire empire. And besides, we know about the deal of your marriage with your wife, that you're not even allowed to touch her without her permission –"

"Enough!" Gavriel's voice thundered as he stood.

Everyone was stunned and stiffened in their spot as this was the first time they had seen their prince raise his voice this loudly and coldly in a meeting.

"This meeting is over." He declared, a cold icy aura flaring out and his face as dark as thunder clouds when he turned to look at Samuel. "Gather everyone, I will meet the soldiers now." He ordered and Samuel bowed before he left.

Once Gavriel and his men were gone, the Duke and the other officials all sighed. Some shaking their heads in disappointment because of how the prince had reacted.

"This is not good. I don't think His Highness have the luxury to object with this issue right now. He knows what is at stake here himself more than anyone else. Heavens! Just why the hell is His Highness so against this?"

"No. This is not acceptable. We can't just sit here, just twiddling our thumbs."

"Yes, something needs to be done as soon as possible. It is imperative that His Highness sire a babe before the war against the emperor starts. That's the only way all of us can breathe a sigh of relief."

"But how can we convince him? He's strongly against it and you know it's easier to move a mountain with spoon than change his mind!"

"Still... there must be something that we can do!"

"Yes, there must be something. We just need to think hard enough. We cannot just sit back and hope on His Highness and his wife conceiving a rare half-blood which we all know might never happen."

"Yes. No matter what, His Highness must sire a child as soon as possible. I don't care if His Highness will end up hating me for this, but I will do anything to make it happen." The Duke said and everyone nodded their agreement.