

SPELLBOUND 361

Chapter 361 - Face To Face

"Evie is alright, right?" Gavriel had rushed to ask this, first and foremost. It was obvious that he only had her in his mind. His striking grey eyes were probing Gavrael's for an answer. However, he remained where he was, sitting there patiently, not making any overt effort to rush and approach Gavrael even though his eyes spoke volumes of how eager he was to hear any news of her.

Somehow, looking at him made Gavrael truly accept and recognise that he and this person was really one and the same. Now that he was looking at him directly, face to face, Gavrael felt convinced in his heart that he was truly looking at himself. The only clear difference were the colours of their eyes. Otherwise, there was almost no other noticeable difference. Somehow, staring at himself was such a strange feeling.

"Why are you here?" Gavriel asked again as if he had already received the answer to his first question.

A wry smirk flashed over Gavrael's face as his cold blue eyes seemed to flare. "What's the matter? You're not happy to see me back here?"

Gavriel met his gaze and after a long while of just them staring back at each other, neither wanting to be the first to give in and speak, Gavriel sighed, and his eyes slowly drifted close. What happened that night after he had separated from Evie and his men was still ever so vivid in his mind. It was as though it had just happened only a few moments ago. Every emotion, every sensation, all of it were so recent and real to him that he could still feel them.

The night of his last battle in Dacria, Gavriel's fight with Thundrann had driven him to the very edge. Thundrann had continued to grow even more powerful the longer they fought. It was as though he had an infinite source of magic and energy that was constantly flowing into him, supplying him with endless magic to drag on their fight. No matter how many times Gavriel had brought him down, he kept rising again and again until Gavriel's energy had dwindled into a hopeless state. He was pushed to the brink of desperation, and he knew there was no way for him to win against this freak of nature.

And in those hopeless moments, Gavriel could only resort to this one last thing. He had decided to give in to whatever it was that had been residing deep within him. That ferocious monster that he knew contained immense power but one that he felt would make him lose all semblance of rationality, that was his trump card.

Gavriel had always known that this thing he had always been calling a monster had been living and existing within him all this time. And he was also aware of how powerful it was. It was so powerful that he could not even fight it off or put it under his control again without him suffering for days or drinking a virgin's blood.

Since he was young, he had always felt that this monster was trying to break out of the cage it had been placed inside of him. And as years passed by, its desperation only grew, and its power even started to overwhelm Gavriel's own. In fact, this monster within him had been one of the biggest reasons why he had desired to grow even stronger. Because he had always dreaded the day when he could no longer keep his monster at bay, and it would overpower him. He had dreaded at what

would happen to the people he cared for and those around him if his monster ends up taking over his consciousness.

He had always felt its desperation to come out and he in turn did everything he could to keep it imprisoned within its cage. He had no idea that this monster he was fighting so hard against was actually himself.

That moment when he decided to finally give in, Gavriel had gone through this same thing. In the midst of his fight to stay alive, he found himself descending deeper and deeper into his consciousness. This time, he had gone deeper and further than he ever had done before in the hopes of finding this monster so he could finally set it free and have it take over to keep them both alive.

He had found it in this exact same spot where he is sitting at right now. And he had been shocked to his bones to see that the monster had looked exactly like him, just with a different eye colour.

And before he could even open his mouth to speak, the blue-eyed version of him made his way out as soon as he saw the chance. He did not even seem to have noticed Gavriel's presence as he just rushed out, like a ferocious and mindless beast that had finally been freed from its cage after many years of brutal imprisonment.

Gavriel could only stand there, shocked and confused. But as time passed by, Gavriel began to slowly understand everything. He did not know why, but he began to hear the thoughts of that blue-eyed version of him, who was apparently called Gavrael.

He could not see anything as it was pure darkness just outside of the little circle of light where he was standing in. But Gavrael's thoughts were enough for him to understand everything that had gone on. Gavriel had spent his time in the dark connecting the dots and solving the puzzles as he listened to Gavrael's thoughts.

And everything that he found out was such a shocking revelation. He learned everything that Gavrael went through, his pain, his fear, his feelings towards Evie, and who he truly was. He had heard about his nightmares and plans and jealousy and desires... everything. All Gavrael's inner thoughts, everything was transmitted and Gavriel heard them all.

Chapter 362 - Too Late

It was hard for Gavriel to accept what was going on, this whole truth, but as days went by, things slowly became better and clearer for him as he decided to come to terms with himself. The fact that his monster, named Gavrael, who was in fact, himself, was actually an extremely powerful creature and that knowledge made him feel oddly at ease. He could protect Evie with this tremendous power he possesses and that was all that matters to him. Gavrael was no different from him, as he was willing to do anything and everything for her, to save her, to love her. Their only difference was that Gavrael was much stronger, and immensely more powerful than him. Thus, enabling them to have that requirement to be able to protect their beloved Evie.

Gavriel could not deny that he was jealous as well. But he had long accepted the fact that what Evie needed the most at this moment was Gavrael, the stronger and far more powerful version of himself. And Gavriel had also accepted that Evie does not only belong to him. She also equally belongs to Gavrael too. If Gavrael did not turn back time and made those sacrifices, Evie would have been dead, and he would never have existed in the first place.

Moreover, Gavriel could not help but feel a little guilty as well. Because in those many years that Gavrael had been desperately trying to break free from his sufferings, he never lent him a hand. He instead suppressed him to keep him in his cage, making him continue that suffering from his punishment. Gavriel had wondered what would have happened if he had let Gavrael out even once back then.

But all those thoughts were of no consequence and much too late to consider now. It was too late now to regret. Gavriel thought that all he could do now was to make up with him.

He had heard Gavrael's thoughts, his decision, that after he killed the main enemy, he was going to give this body back and then disappear for good. Somehow, this decision had somehow rubbed Gavriel the wrong way and sounded totally unacceptable. It did not sit well with him at all.

"It's too early for you to give up, don't you think? Gavrael? Is there really no other way other than you just disappearing like that?" Gavriel told him and Gavrael stilled before a disbelieving smile flashed across his face.

"You know everything?" He questioned hesitantly, narrowing his eyes at Gavriel.

"Yes. I've been hearing your thoughts since the moment I got trapped in here. I'm not sure how it is happening, but it gets transmitted to me here."

Gavrael's smile turned into a laugh, an almost sardonic one though. "So, you know everything that has been happening up till now, and yet you're telling me it's too early to give up? Are you actually telling me that you don't want me gone, huh? Gavriel?"

Their gazes became intense as a short silence passed by. "Evie will be sad if –"

"Oh, she won't." Gavrael cut him off somewhat flippantly. "Haven't you heard all my thoughts? You should know by now that Evie only wanted you to come back to her."

Gavriel could see his blue eyes being filled with jealousy as well as a hint of hurt and a long and deep sigh left his mouth. "You're wrong. Can't you see that to her, you and I are one? Be it in body, heart, mind, or soul?"

Those words made Gavrael's expression become dark. He shook his head as he shot back at Gavriel. "Shut up Gavriel. You could only hear my thoughts, not hers. You didn't see the look in her eyes those moments she was desperately trying to bring you back." His jaws clenched as he remembered her expectant eyes staring into his.

"I know Evie. You know her too." Gavriel calmly responded. "And you never asked her, Gavrael. Had you asked her, you would know –"

"Enough!" Gavrael's voice boomed in anger. "Why the hell are you even saying this now? I am pretty sure you're jealous of me too, right? Don't you dare deny it. You want me gone so you can have her for yourself."

"You're right. I'm jealous. There is no way in hell I am not. Even if Evie and the whole world tells us you and I are one and the same person, we both know we're not. To us, we're two souls inside a single body. Two souls that will never be one. And I guess, we will both get jealous of each other like a pair of fools. But..." Gavriel paused. "...believe it or not, I don't want you gone. You've suffered too much for her sake and until the end, you were even the one who saved her this time too..."

Gavriel's voice cracked a little as he said that. It was hard for him to admit but he knew Gavrael deserved her more than him. Without Gavrael, Evie might have... the thought made Gavriel clenched his fists tight. He had been thinking about this for a long time now while he was confined in this prison. He had decided that he would step back and give way in letting Gavrael stay on with her. He was not giving up on her, but Gavriel just had this feeling that Evie would do something about him and Gavrael's situation. Knowing Evie, she would definitely do something.

Gavriel did not quite know how to feel about this, but he had faith that everything will eventually work out well for them. He had faith in Evie and her love. That was why he was willing to be the one who will stay back in the darkness this time until that day finally comes. He told himself that he would not mind how long it takes. Gavrael had stayed in this darkness for many years, suffering alone. Therefore, it would not be fair for Gavrael to return here after another sacrifice.

"That's why..." Gavriel continued. "Go back to her, Gavrael. I believe the war is not over yet. She needs you more than ever right now."

Silence reigned between the two identical looking men for a long while. Until Gavrael laughed, throwing his head back as if he could not believe what was going on. He could only laugh. Then he stopped and shook his head before he stared at Gavriel again.

"You know what? I never once thought you would actually give way to me like this. I see you're such a rational and sound minded version of me. I could tell why Evie loves you so much..." a sharp breath escaped him, then his gaze became serious and incredibly sad. "I'm not as calm and rational as you... I am very selfish too. So, this kind of offer is something I could never decline but..." He paused again as his voice shook a little as he continued.. "It's too late... it's too late now."

Chapter 363 - Gift

The look in Gavrael's eyes as he said the words 'it's too late now' was heartbreaking. Even though there was a slight smile playing on his face, the pain and sadness that were brimming in his fiery blue eyes could be seen as clear as day. His emotions at that moment were all over the place and his cold face could no longer hide them no matter how he tried.

"Could it be that... this is..." Gavriel's eyes widened in shock. He remembered the thoughts he heard from Gavrael about the price he had to pay. It had been quite unclear to Gavriel as Gavrael's thoughts were a complete mess lately. He had not really thought twice about why it was so, but now he had a bad feeling that it might be related to what he had just said.

Gavrael's dark magic were even blocking some of Gavrael's thoughts from filtering through to him and therefore, Gavriel had been having a hard time understanding everything especially ever since the war started. Gavriel was also sure that he had not heard a lot of Gavrael's thoughts due to the interference of his strong dark magic.

"This is the price you were thinking about paying?" Gavriel continued, looking at him with eyes wide and incredulous. He would not have thought Gavrael to use this as his last bargaining chip.

"That's right." Gavrael replied, staring down at his hand. "I don't have anything else that is left to offer. Well... anything that is of value, that is. All I have now is this soul." He then casually shrugged his shoulder.

"Wait a moment..." Gavriel still could not quite come to terms with what Gavrael was prepared to sacrifice.

"I told you. It's too late. And I am not going to regret it. Not when I have already come this far. This is the only way to end Galleous and thus, protecting Evie."

"This can't be..." Gavriel was shaking his head in disbelief.

"It's already over, Gavriel. Whatever you say now will not change anything anymore. Not a single thing. The trade-off has already been settled. It is done."

Still shaking his head, Gavriel raked his hand through his hair. "This can't happen, Gavrael. You can't just up and disappear like this. How about... what will happen to all your dark magic? If you disappear now, where would it go? Who would be able to control it? The dark magic will take over our body!" Gavriel cried out in concern.

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that, Gavriel." He looked straight into Gavriel's eyes. A twinkle in those eyes caused Gavriel's heart to drop in his chest. That look was not promising. "You'll be able to handle it just fine."

"What?! What the hell are you –"

"It seems you have not realized it yet. But I'll tell you this. I don't know if this is the power of a vampire, but you are tougher than you think. You might even be as tough as an ancient dark crystal... maybe even tougher, I don't know for sure. But do you know why I came up with that conclusion? Because you have managed to suppress me and my dark magic for so many years without any overtly negative side effects to yourself. Only the devil knows how much I tried to break free but still failed every single time."

"You might be right. Yes, I managed to suppress you, but you have to admit you are really asking for too much here. And to top it all off, this dark magic you devoured from Galleous is just too much for anyone to handle. Especially for a single person!"

"I know. But I still believe that you would be able to find a way to contain it. Though the dark magic is far stronger now than it was earlier, the difference might not be that much because I won't be with it this time. Without me, there will be more space in here."

Gavriel half-bite on his lips, still shaking his head as he was now confused with two opposing views. Then his face became severe as he stood close to Gavrael.

"I don't know what the hell made you think that I would be able to pull this off. You might think this will work, but I'm going to tell you this painful fact again. I am far weaker than you! Even if you had the necessary power and could turn the whole world upside down, it is still you who are the stronger one between the two of us!" Gavriel hissed out. Though painful, he had to be truthful and acknowledge that Gavrael was truly powerful and was in a league of his own. How could this strong creature then expect someone like him to handle all this immense power? "Whenever I am at the brink of death, all I could do is rely on you. Because I am simply not strong enough! I'm not daring enough nor foolish enough to lie to myself that I am able to handle such tremendous power alone. You and I have to work together, Gavrael. This is the only way to solve this matter! There is no other way!" Gavriel stubbornly insisted.

"How stubborn..." Gavrael twitched his mouth, trying to hold back his temper. "I told you, it's too late now. I don't know why you don't have that much faith in yourself, but you have no choice, Gavriel –"

"Damn you. You created a one hell of a problem and you planned to disappear on Evie and me just like this? You are doing this on purpose and just to get back at me, aren't you?" Gavriel narrowed his eyes irritably at Gavrael.

A wicked smile curved on Gavrael's face. "That's right. This is my farewell gift to you. And this kind of farewell gift is something that you definitely deserve."

"Damn you again... you, idiot dark fae. You think I'll let you get away with this?" Gavriel growled as he bared his fangs at Gavrael.

"I told you. You don't have a choice you, idiot vampire." Gavrael only sniffed and turned his nose up at Gavriel.

"Don't underestimate a vampire, idiot dark fae.. If there truly is no choice left, then I'll just create one."

Chapter 364 - Be There

"It's time for you to go, Evie's waiting for you. She has been waiting for you a long time..." Gavrael's expression became serious. His eyes were brimming with so much emotion. "Trust me, everything will be alright."

The longer he spent these moments with Gavriel, talking to him, looking at him, his negative emotions were somehow being soothed. He felt as though his bitterness had slowly receded and become a lot better compared to before he had met him. He felt as though meeting him and talking to him was like coming to terms with himself and the hatred and pain in his heart suddenly felt as though it was not as bad as he thought it was.

Maybe because he saw now what kind of a man Gavriel was. And he could not help but smile because this present version of him was actually a much better man compared to himself. Gavriel was not like him. Gavriel was everything he had ever wanted to be.

He remembered those times when he wished that he was not the way that he was. He had thought even way back then that he was too dark, too dangerous, too complicated for someone who resembled the angel of the light that was Evie. She had always been the light and now she had become even brighter than before while he had turned darker than ever. He was currently so dark that he felt he was irredeemable, someone who was not a right fit for an angel like Evie.

Gavrael had wondered that if there might come a day when his overflowing darkness will not only dim her light, but maybe even overshadow and engulf it completely. And that thought scared him. It had also scared him back then and even now that his love for her might break her one day.

But Gavriel was just the right balance of him. Not too dark, not too dangerous. To him, Gavriel was the perfect version of him. He would be a perfect... father for Evie's children.

"You have to go now. The barrier is breaking and I'm certain it's Evie who's coming in. You can't let her see her husband in that god awful state." He turned and faced the darkness. "Also, tell Evie that I –"

"If you have something to say to her," Gavriel cut him off. "... be there and tell her yourself. I'm not going to talk to her on your behalf."

...

Outside of the barrier.

The barrier was finally breaking apart. Onyx had gone all out since he had arrived on Evie's call for help in the dungeons, breathing out an inferno of fire – hot enough to melt metal – and then smashing himself without restraint at the formidable barrier with all the power that he had in him. But even that was not enough. Even that was only sufficient to cause thin silvery cracks to form on the surface of the barrier. Everyone looking on and seeing the mighty power and forceful magic that Onyx had wielded, had been almost a hundred percent certain that his awe-inspiring actions would have been the thing to break that barrier. Even if it was not enough to bring it crumbling down in a rain of barrier shards, they had thought that it would at least create large and damaging cracks on it that would only need a little more pressure on it before giving way. However, it did not seem to have happened as what had been envision in their minds. This was a protection barrier, the same as the one Gav had casted to surround the tree of light in Crescia. However, this one was much thicker than the one surrounding the tree of light and much more powerful.

But Evie being Evie, had refused to give up. Even if this barrier was more powerful now, she too had become even more powerful. Her own powers had also increased tremendously since that time when King Belial had removed the restriction of her magic from her. So, this time around, she worked together with Onyx. And their combined powers had finally worked to hit on that seemingly impenetrable protection barrier.

Evie was sending the dragon her tremendous amount of light magic, increasing Onyx's strength and power.

And at long last, with the queen and her dragon's effort, the impregnable barrier was broken.

Darkness blasted out from within like a bomb of dark light exploding.

Evie had initially planned to leave the area as soon as the barrier was broken and let her dragons take over her place. However, the sight that had welcomed her eyes made her body froze there and then.

The dark crystal was now gone. It was broken into pieces as if someone had smashed it. Then she saw him, her husband. His hair was long, his eyes were pure darkness now and a pair of horns had grown out from the crown of his head.

He was kneeling on the ground, roaring, as his impossibly strong dark magic swirled around him.

"My queen! We need to leave now! He is... he has succumbed to his dark magic." Zanya's voice echoed beside her. Fear was evident in her voice.

But Evie just stood there. How could she leave now when her beloved is like this? Why? Why did he succumb to his darkness? Did he not understand what she meant when she looked at him and shook her at before leaving him earlier? Did she not told him not to give in to his darkness?

Evie watched him as he rushed over and attacked Onyx like a madman. He was now so strong that the earth shook at their collision.

The vampires came to grab her before she could speak the command and they did not give her the chance to say no. They carried her and rushed out of the dungeon while the dragons fought against Gav.

"It's too dangerous in this cramped place. Don't worry. With their powers, I believe they will come out soon." Zolan said. "It will be safer and also easier for you to think of a way to help him once we're out in the open."

Evie understood what Zolan was saying. And her fear for her unborn child was what stopped her from protesting their actions of dragging her out from the inner area.

As they left the dungeon, Evie closed her eyes and watched the fight through the eyes of Onyx. "Don't harm him." she commanded, "lure him out of the dungeon."

Chapter 365 - Solution

As soon as everyone emerged from the dungeon, the shaking of the earth only became stronger, more frequent, and more violent with the passing of every minute.

Everyone could tell how fierce the battle being fought was underground.

Evie kept her eyes closed, watching the battle through Onyx's eyes. Gav looked like he had fully and thoroughly lost his mind. He was laughing like the ultimate villain who had decided to play with his prey, torture them with his unrivalled power until he was satisfied, before finally delivering the final blow. There did not seem to be even a sliver of Gav's personality that could be seen in him at this moment as Evie watched on. Though her heart ached painfully, and she was incredibly tempted to break down and wail out in mourning of the loss of his soul, she hung on. She believed that he was not truly gone as how he appeared to be on the surface.

The dragons, most especially Onyx were visibly holding back their attacks as well as the amount of power being released when fighting this maddened Gav. And Evie clearly knew that it was only due to her command that they must not harm him which was causing them to be fighting this way. They were neither going all out with their attacks nor were they pulling back to turn and run out. Her one command had put the dragons at the losing end of this fight. Every time the dragons receive a blow and get slammed into the ground or the walls, making everything around them collapse, Evie's heart shiver with worry and fear.

What must she do? She could in no way allow her dragons to go all out and harm him but at the same time, she could also no longer bear watching her precious dragons being harmed by him like this. They were truly the last of the dragons! Nothing should be allowed to harm them. Therefore, she was torn with indecision.

Utterly conflicted, Evie opened her eyes to stop watching the battle through Onyx's eyes. She must quickly think of a solution to her problem as soon as possible! She needed to think of a way to deal with this now before either party hurt the other even more!

But before Evie could even start thinking up with a single idea, another strong quake shook the ground. This one was especially vicious, and it was as though the whole earth was held in the hands of a giant and shaken like a rattle. Everyone who were outside the dungeons were either thrown off balance or even fell over and ended up sitting on the ground. Alarmed at the magnitude of that quake, Evie quickly raised her eyes to scan the area. A whole section of the palace had completely collapsed as though a sink hole had appeared right below it and the dragons then emerged from the abyss one after another.

Onyx was the last dragon to come out as he had trailed behind the rest of the other dragons, bringing up the rear and also acting as the rear guard. The mad Gav seemed hellbent to bring the

great dark dragon down. Thus, even after waiting till all the others have emerged, Onyx was still not seen.

Seeing that Onyx was not coming out from the sinkhole, Evie was forced to shut her eyes again to find out on what was happening to him as she shared his vision. Desperately wanting to know what was going on – not only about Onyx, but about Gav as well – her heart was beating so hard from worry. Onyx...

She found the dark dragon as he emerged from a huge pile of rubble. His body now was shrouded with wisps of dark magic. As if trying to escape, Onyx spread out his majestic wings and catapulted himself out from the abyss. But the dragon could not go as far as he was aiming for as something seemed to be holding him back the moment that he reached the surface.

Onyx crashed to the ground. Gav appeared as well, causing those wispy strands of dark magic to thicken around Onyx. And it was then that Evie realized what he was trying to do. Gav was not trying to destroy Onyx. Instead, he was trying to take control of him!

It was obvious as Evie could see Gav seemed to be doing the same thing Thundrann had done before back in the battle in Dacia. And with his current amount of magic, it was apparent that even Onyx was having a hard time to resist its influence, to escape his powerful magic.

"This is bad!" A light fae exclaimed. "He's going to take control of Onyx!"

"Don't worry, Onyx is our queen's dragon. He won't easily succumb just to anyone... no matter how powerful they are." Zanya replied calmly as she stared at Evie who was standing there, watching the battle silently. Her shoulders high and standing strong but her fists were clenched hard as her nails were digging into her palms.

"It won't be easy for just anyone to take control of Onyx. But it would be easy for him to control the other dragons, right?" Zirrus joined in. "If he would divert his attention to the other dragons and control them, that would be worse. He might end up using the young dragons against Onyx!"

Zirrus words made the atmosphere became even more tense and they could only stare at their queen's back, waiting for her actions to guide them on what to do. The vampires were silent and did not say a thing.

"My queen," Zirrus then stepped in and bowed at his queen before he spoke, "I know this will be very hard for you but... I think the only way to deal with such a powerful creature now is... you must trap him inside a crystal now before it's too late."

The light fae's words did not come as a surprise to Evie. She knew they could only think about this as the sole solution to this problem.

Chapter 366 - Mess

"While he's still distracted with Onyx, this is the best time for you to bind him and cage him inside a crystal." Zirrus continued and she knew he was right. This might be the only chance for her to aim her spell at him and trap him.

"He is right, my queen. You need to decide now. If he takes control of all the dragons and have them all go against us... things might go beyond hopeless for us." The other light faes encourage her with

urgency. They remembered that thousands of years ago, the fall of Crescia also had to do with some parties being controlled.

Silently, Evie stepped forward. Her gaze fixed on her lover and her dragon. The other dragons were still circling about in the sky, waiting for her command to attack Gav, while Onyx was being held down to the ground as if an invisible chain had chained him to Gav.

Gav's hands were stretched out, his palm facing Onyx and a thick beam of dark magic was aimed at and going into the majestic dragon.

Onyx roared as the dark magic seemed to be seeping into his chest.

"My queen!" the light faes began to panic. Evie could not blame anyone for urging her. She knew what was at risk. The urgency of the situation currently needed her to be quick and firm in determining on what to do next. She must decide now as there was no more time to lose.

As she lowered her lids resolutely, Evie tried to do something else aside from trapping her own husband inside a dark crystal of her making. But she could not get through to Onyx anymore. She could not see anything through his vision other than pure darkness.

Gritting her teeth, her eyes flew open again. Evie could only give up trying to get through to Onyx. She paused for a couple of seconds, then made a decision before spreading out her wings and flying towards them.

Her mind was in a mess now. This could not be happening! How did things progressed such until it ended up like this?

Suddenly, she remembered Galleous' story, about his queen trapping him inside the crystal. She remembered her response to him. And now she could not believe she was in this very same situation. She could not accept even the thought of it, that she was going to do the same thing that his queen had done to Galleous.

How could she do that to her own husband? To Gav? Was there really no other way to stop him now? To make him go back to how he used to be? Or perhaps a way for him to bring all that dark magic under control?

Trapping someone was not as easy as she used to think before. Because apparently, trapping someone more powerful than her would require an unimaginable amount of magic. But that was not the only problem. Her biggest problem was that she would not be able to undo the spell as easy as how she freed the other light faes before.

She had asked the light faes about this matter when she was trapped by Gav in Crescia because one of Evie's plans on how to deal with Thundrann was to trap him inside a crystal again. So, she had learned that trapping someone strong will require great amount of magic and it would take years for the caster to be able to free the person again. Nobody else can free the trapped powerful creature aside from the caster him or herself. It could be forced, but the caster or another light fae queen must offer her blood and life in exchange.

Evie had asked how many years it will take until caster could free the trapped creature without any sacrifices and Zanya had told her that the earliest recorded time duration was five years.

The thought that she was going to trap Gav inside a crystal for five years or more made Evie's heart clench in so much pain. How could she do that to him? They have been separated for a while since

she left Dacia and now she needed to forcefully separate them again? And for years this time? But then, what other method was available for her to turn to other than that?

As she flew closer and closer, Evie still could not quite decide.

She wanted to go and try everything to stop him, to make him see her and come back to himself again. But the fear was immense. What if she got hurt or her unborn child was harmed in the process? She would not be able to take it if that happens! But then again... her Gav...

The dilemma was ripping her heart apart.

"My queen! This is your chance!" Zirrus shouted and Evie saw Gav roaring. The sardonic laughter plastered on his face had faded.

Immense dark magic was pouring out from him in waves. She looked at Onyx and the dragon was also wailing as it trashed against the magic that was spiralling around him tightly, brutishly holding him down.

The sight had made Evie's heart shudder. He looked as though he was about to succeed.

Another shout echoed behind her, and Evie began to glow. Left without an alternative method to turn to, she summoned her magic. Her hands were trembling as she looked at her husband.

She stretched her arms pointing her palms towards him. She could not believe she was really doing this, but there was nothing else she could do.

"I promise I will do anything... everything... to free you as soon as possible." She whispered and magic began to gather over her palms. "I will do anything Gav... I will not keep you in there for too long... I promise!" She bit her lower lips so hard it nearly broke skin and bled.

And as she was about to release her magic, Onyx roared again. This time louder and Evie saw a dark miasma reeking out from his body. Its amber eyes began to darken as well.

Evie's eyes widened. And a realization flashed in her glowing amber eyes. No! Gav's not trying to control him! This is... Gav is sending him his magic, right? Or is Onyx drawing it forcefully from Gav?!

Chapter 367 - Paled

The miasma that was oozing uncontrollably from around Onyx's body became thicker and the great dragon now looked almost like a shadow that had emerged from the lowest depths of hell itself. Gav on the other hand had started to lose the darkness that had been shrouding him a while ago bit by bit.

It was as if Onyx had devoured all his darkness by now. The beam of dark magic that initially was coming from Gav's palm slowly thinned out and Onyx roared mightily, spreading out his majestic wings, and the shadow it cast on the ground was dark and threatening.

"My Queen!" Zirrus' voice echoed out. "The dragon! Aim for the dragon!"

Evie had already moved to aim her hands towards Onyx before Zirrus even finished shouting out his words. She could see that it was Onyx now that the darkness was trying to control. She did not know if Gav had forced his dark magic onto Onyx or if was Onyx who had deliberately pulled it from him... but Evie did not have the luxury to think and wonder on which was what anymore. She needed to focus on the task at hand and make sure that nothing goes wrong. Her complete

concentration is vital to the success of her next move. Therefore, she zeroed in her attention to Onyx and tuned other distractions around her out.

She could feel the chills in the air coming from the great dragon. And she knew full well what kind of destruction Onyx could cause if he ends up going on a rampage while being consumed by that dark magic that had gone rouge. Even without the additional dark magic from Gavrael, Onyx was already a considerable threat in his own right. Now that he had that dark force within him, Evie could only imagine the extent of the destruction that he would bring if he went on a rampage.

Therefore, Evie could only go with the decision of trapping Onyx within a dark crystal. She was not that willing to do that even as how she was unwilling to do so on Gavrael. However, she was left with no other choice but to just do it!

A strong and blinding beam of light then finally came streaming out from her palms. The sheer strength of the magic that left her created a strong gust of wind that made her clothes and hair dance violently around her, causing all who were looking on to see her as an avenging goddess of light who was cold and scorching all at the same time. The brilliant white light that emerged from her was brighter than the burning sun in the noon sky and her concentration and focus was so on point that there was an aloof and icy look that was usually never seen on her stunning face. All the light faes who saw their queen's current look had their hearts lifted and felt so touched that tears almost fell from their eyes. They acknowledged that they were so privileged to be able to witness the power and magnificence of their new sovereign.

But in the very last moment that Evie's magic was about to reach the dragon, it noticed her and what she was about to do. Its eyes that were swirling with something dark had suddenly lifted and looked straight at Evie and in a blink of an eye, the dragon dodged Evie's oncoming magic as it catapulted itself smoothly into the sky, roaring out its claim as the mightiest and most powerful.

Evie looked up. She prepared herself for a possible attack. If Onyx end up aiming an attack at her, she will take that as the opportunity to trap him when she launches her counterattack.

However, the dragon just flew in circles around the sky, roaring as he passed them, the thunder and lightning raged around him, providing an impressive backdrop every time he swooped over Evie and her company of people.

When Evie averted her gaze from Onyx and looked for Gav, she immediately flew towards him without hesitation and landed on the ground right before him. Seeing Gav seemingly have lost all of his strength, Evie did not think any further before her body instinctively rushed towards him. She had moved so fast it did not give her people the opportunity to stop her.

"Gav!" she yelled as she approached him, her heart dropped to her stomach as she feared the worst has happened to him.

The moment she reached him, he had fallen over and slumped on the ground. Dark magic had stopped coming out in copious amounts from his palms but there were still little wisps of dark smoke seeping out from his body in short intervals and headed off towards Onyx that was now flying aimlessly in the sky.

Her heart was thudding wildly as she quickly but gently lifted up Gav's head and rested it in her lap to cushion it.

"Gav!" she called out again, her voice soft but filled with urgency. Why had he not responded to her even after her calling out to him? Was there something wrong with him? Her heart then trembled when he gave a small cough and her eyes caught sight of a trail of blood flowing from the corner of his mouth. That was enough to throw her into a state of agitation.

Wasting no time, Evie promptly placed her free palm right in the middle of his chest and her healing magic came gushing out. She did not hold anything back as she poured all her healing magic into his body to allow it to fix whatever that was hurt within him. But Gav's hand weakly caught her wrist to stop her actions.

Evie looked at him helplessly with eyes shining with tears and when he finally opened his eyes with much trouble, Evie saw that his piercing and vivid blue eyes had paled considerably. The fierceness and coldness in those beautiful eyes that were a characteristic attribute she could always find in them seemed to have melted as well.. What is happening to him? She could feel the faint prickling of a bad premonition that was looming over her and that sent a chill shooting into her already unsteady heart.

Chapter 368 - Gavriel Or Gavrael

"Gav... let me heal you..." Evie said, really panicking this time.

"I'm... fine... Evie..." His voice came out in separate breaths.

"You're not!"

"Well, at least, this body is very fine, trust me." A faint smile curved on his face. Then he brought her palm to his face instead, as his gaze fixed so intently on her face. He stared at her as if he was trying to memorize every contour, every detail of her features as though he was looking at her for the last time. "Evie..." he called her name so gently and with so much longing that Evie did not know why, but her heart had started to ache immensely. She felt as though needles and daggers were being stabbed into her heart continuously as she hears Gavrael's voice calling out to her.

This feeling made her feel dread. Why was she feeling like this when she was supposed to be rejoicing now that he is fine, and his dark magic was not going to consume him anymore? Should she not be happy that she did not need to trap him in a crystal anymore? Evie had already allowed her magic to run through and checked that his body really seemed just fine. He was just a little weakened like he was completely drained but he did not seem to be hurt so badly. So why? What was with that unpleasant feeling that seemed to be growing by the moment? What was with that look on his face?

"Y-yes?" she managed to say, not knowing why there was already a painful lump burning in her throat and that made it harder for her let out a sound.

His thumb caressed her cheek so gently and emotion flowed in those usually frozen and strict eyes of his. Though Evie was confused, she was certain that the emotions she was feeling at the moment were hurt and sadness, as if she was about to lose someone she held so, so very dear. But what she saw in Gav's eyes was just so much more. She could see such intense sadness and pain. It seemed ridiculous in this situation, but its intensity seemed to have made her own emotion at the moment looked puny and insignificant against his.

"I'm going..." He uttered, smiling faintly, the look in his eyes was just too heart breaking that she could hardly stand it anymore. And before she knew it, silent tears were flowing from her eyes.

"Going... where? What do you... no!" Evie's body froze with shock and panic. "You're not going anywhere. You're not allowed to! NO!" She was really panicking right now.

Gavrael lifted his other hand, and he cupped her face lovingly as though he were touching the most precious treasure. Then he pulled her to him and kissed her lips lightly. But that light kiss felt so emotional Evie felt fat tears continue to fall from her eyes. "Don't cry..." he whispered and then gently bumped his forehead against hers. "Listen, Evie..." he whispered. "I'm letting Gavriel return to you now."

"W-what?" Evie was confused at his words.

Gavrael let her go and looked at her bewildered face. His thumb wiping her tears that were falling still. "Don't cry..." he said again, "because Gavriel will finally come back to you the moment I'm gone. You've been searching for him so hard and for so long..." He cracked a smile so sad that she could hear her own heart breaking.

"No! Wait. Gav... what... what are you saying?" Evie stammered, her thoughts in a whirl that she could not piece everything together yet.

But he just smiled again before pulling himself up and hugged her tight. To him, this was the last time he would be enjoying this privilege. "Thank you for everything, Evie... please... be safe and happy." He kissed her once more before Evie could speak and when he pulled away, Evie saw his tears flowing from those beautiful eyes and she became paralyzed.

"I love you, Evie... I love you so deeply you have no idea how much. And you will never know from now on. I wish I..." he trembled as he kissed her knuckles, his tears kept flowing silently. "I wish I could have even just one extra day with you... just one more day... but my time is up –"

"S-stop." Evie began to shake as well. Her heart was hurting so much, she felt it ripping apart. She never thought she would see him cry like this. She could not bear this pain. "No. Y-you're not going anywhere, Gav. You will be with me... not just for one more day but forever –"

"I am not supposed to be here anymore, Evie. You know that, right?" His voice was sad but calm.

Evie shook her head, her tears falling like raindrops. Her mind seems to be refusing to understand or accept what he was saying.

"I'm not supposed to exist anymore, Evie. I belong to a time and space that no longer exist. And now it's time for me to cease to exist as well, and for your Gavriel to come back. I don't want to leave you but... no matter. I'm not worried anymore. Because I know Gavriel will be there for you. That guy..." he let out a short breathless laugh. "I'm relieved because he loves you as much as I do _"

"It's because you and him are one, Gav." Evie said, choking. "That's why you shouldn't be saying all these things. You can't... I love you! So damned much. You know that! Gavriel or Gavrael... I don't care what or who you think you are. I love you no matter what. I love every side of you, not just your good and bright side but the dark side as well. Your past, present or future self... I love them all because they're all part of you. They are all you!"

He smiled. A happy and yet painful smile. He looked like he had something more to say but he planted another kiss on her forehead instead. Then he hugged her tight again, as if this was the very last time that he would be holding her this way. His heart had swelled at what she said. She truly

loved him too... he could not believe it. But the way she was crying for him like this, her confession... it all made his heart bleed from both happiness and sadness. He was beyond happy to know that she indeed loves him. But he was sad and pained at the same time because... he had to go now. He was going to leave her now. For good this time. There was no more another 'next time'.

When he pulled away, Evie saw the blue of his eyes slowly disappearing. "I love you." he whispered again. 'Good bye... Evie...' he added in his mind and with one last smile, the blue in his eyes completely dissipated as the last wisp of dark magic left his body. Then his eyes closed before his body become limp as his head fell forwards and landed on Evie's shoulder.

Chapter 369 - Sombre

"Gav...Gav..." Evie kept calling his name as she held him in her arms. But there was no response from the man. "Answer me... please!"

Everyone else who were there, the light faes and the vampires could only stand by silently, watching their queen slumped over on the ground, hugging her man and crying silently as her shoulders shook.

The light faes were confused. They could feel that the man in their queen's arms was still alive. He was still breathing. So why was the queen crying and looking as though she was in so much pain... as if... as if she had lost him forever? Were their senses wrong and is the man actually dying?

Seeing their queen's back, trembling as she hugged him made them all feel as through their hearts were breaking along with hers. Now they know and are seeing for themselves first-hand on how much she loves that man.

However, this is not the right time for them to mourn yet. They still have another huge and pressing problem that requires immediate attention more than ever, now that the queen failed to trap the dragon.

Looking up into the sky, everyone braced themselves for whatever that would come next. But to their surprise and confusion, as soon as that last wisp of smoke that had come from the man in the Queen's arms reached the dragon's body, it only moved to fly away and quickly disappeared into the dark sky that was showing signs of lightening already.

It was now dawn. Everything was quiet as the atmosphere remained lonely and sad.

But they could not quite relax their guard yet. They continued waiting for the great dark dragon to come back and spring a surprise attack on them. But it did no such thing. There was no sign of that dragon after it flew off earlier. However, everyone maintained their vigil until daylight came.

The sky was so blue and so clear, as the sun rose from the horizon. It was an incredibly beautiful day and seemingly one that is full of promise and good things to come. However, as opposed to the scenery on the ground, everything still remained sombre and quiet.

Evie finally lifted her face. She had long stopped crying as her tears had dried up. But she remained sitting on the ground, unmoving except her bright eyes that were resolutely fixed and watching Gav's face. It was as though she did not want to miss anything that might cross that beloved face she was observing.

When she finally tilted her head back and stared up into the clear blue sky, Evie shut her eyes tiredly for a brief moment. And in the next time when she opened them, her eyes had turned calm but there was an edge of fierceness in them. She looked like she was ready to rise and fight again.

"Zolan!" she called out and the vampire immediately appeared before her.

"Is there any place in the city that isn't ruined?" she asked and Zolan was quick to report. He had already done the survey earlier when he saw that Onyx did not seem to show signs of coming back.

"There is, Princess. The empty castles that are a bit farther off from the imperial palace were untouched. That also includes yours and His Highness' home."

Evie blinked at the sound of the word home. But he was right. That castle was the first place where she and Gav lived right after their marriage.

She kept her chin high as she continued giving out her instructions. "Alright, I will need you guys to bring Gav there. He needs to be resting in a comfortable place."

"What about yourself, Princess?" Zolan questioned carefully. "The dragon... Onyx... do you think it's going to come back?"

Evie looked up into the blue sky again. "I don't think he would be coming back any time soon."

At that moment, Zirrus and Samuel appeared. A man was held immobile in their arms between them.

The sight of the man caused Evie's expression to harden. She then nodded at Zolan and the vampires finally came forward to carry the prince away carefully from Evie's lap.

She watched until she could no longer see Gav's back anymore. And when she returned her gaze to the man Zirrus and Samuel had captured, her eyes became a little steely.

"Bad grasses are really hard to die, huh." Evie's words came out with a little hollow sound as she stared stiffly at Thundrann.

The half dark fae had been beaten up so badly but somehow, he was still very much alive. It was really such a surprise that he was still actually alive after his magic was almost completely drained out of him.

"We found him as he was trying to escape," Zirrus reported, "I suggest that we execute him now, my queen. This awful traitor no longer deserves to live." The light fae snorted with so much hate as he shook the traitor that was held tightly in his grasp. It had been thousands of years and finally this traitor who was one of the greatest causes of the light fae empire's destruction was finally at their mercy.

Thundrann suddenly fell to his knees and knelt. "Forgive me, Queen..." he began to beg, "don't kill me. I swear I will serve you to my best abilities for life. I did all those because of the dark magic that had consumed me. Now that the dark magic is no longer possessing me, I swear I can finally go back to how I used to be." It was amazing how he could throw away all his pride and beg just to stay alive.

"Shut up!" Zirrus kicked him in his sides, unable to stand Thundrann's shameless begging and blabbering.

But Evie just stared at him silently as though she were contemplating his words, keeping her gaze level and utterly calm. No one could read her poker face, and none knew what was going through her mind at that moment.. Thundrann saw that she did not immediately brush him off, therefore he knee-walked a couple steps forward and continued to implore Evie, hoping that she would soften her stance on his punishment.

Chapter 370 - Sorrow

"You must forgive me," Thundrann continued begging. "I am the only royal light fae left, aside from you. You need me. I swear I will be loyal to you and will never betray you. I will help you rebuild Crescia and the light fae empire again! I can help you make it great again! Please... just give me a second chance to right all my wrongs."

"Please don't believe in his lies, my queen. This man is a monster. He does not deserve forgiveness!" Zirrus snarled out in a fit of rage. The urge to just kill the man was apparent in his eyes. If only they did not need the queen to be passing the final sentence on this traitor, he would have long since stabbed and flayed him alive until he bled to death.

"You need me, queen Evielyn. I will do anything and everything I can to help you. You only need to command me. I will swear my life to you!" Thundrann continued pleading until someone arrived, catching Evie's attention.

Zanya stood before Evie.

Judging from their expression, Evie could tell that they came to report on yet another piece of bad news.

"Go ahead," Evie sighed, knowing that there was no way to avoid this.

Zanya stepped in and after taking a soft deep breath, she finally reported. "My queen, we found the dragon guardian's body."

Evie stilled for a long moment. But eventually, her voice came out. "Where?" there was the slightest quiver that only Zanya who were nearest to her could detect in her voice.

"Please follow me." Zanya said, her voice soft.

After taking a few steps, Evie halted and without looking back to Zirrus and Samuel, she ordered in an emotionless voice. "Chain him up for now. Don't kill him... yet." She instructed them before walking away, ignoring Thundrann's yells and begging.

Leon and other light faes were surrounding Lucius' body. When they saw Evie approaching, they respectfully moved away, giving her space to draw closer.

Slowly, Evie approached the body that was now covered with a fairy's white cloak.

She stood there silently for a while before she stretched out her hand and pulled the cover off from his face. Her hands trembled and when she saw her father's face, the cover fluttered from Evie's limp fingers and her hand slowly fell to her sides.

Lucius' face was as white and pale as a sheet of paper. This father of hers who was so dear to her, this father who had adored her ever since she was young, was now still and cold. Seeing him lifeless now and knowing that he was never going to wake up again made Evie's heart shiver uncontrollably and her fingers curled into her palms so hard that her nails cut into her skin and drew blood.

The sorrow she had went through in the past few hours until now was just too much and exceedingly overwhelming that she could no longer cry. She wanted to scream out loud to release all those complicated emotions swirling within her and sob or weep or even strike and destroy something. But all she could do was to grit her teeth and tamp down on that nausea which was threatening to spill out of her.

She hugged her father's cold and stiff body, leaning her head on his chest. However, the pure white silk over his chest was still and unmoving, proof that his heart was no longer beating.

Evie remembered her mother and her heart ached even more. Knowing that her mother was home, waiting for her husband to return to her. But he is now gone forever, and Evie did not know what to do.

This is the first time she is going through so much pain like this all at once. She could not even imagine how devastated her mother would be once she finds out that her beloved husband has gone on before her.

After another long and sorrowful moment, Evie eventually let go. She wanted to break down and cry, but now was not the right time. And besides, even if she wailed her sorrows, her father was never going to come back anymore.

Lifting her hands, magic flowed out from her palms, wrapping itself around her father's body. The magic had fixed all the awful bruises and closed the countless and brutal wounds on his body. Then she faced Zanya.

"I want my father's body to be sent home." She said in a soft, choking voice. "Back to the Southern Empire. My mother... she needs to see him for the last time."

Evie remembered that her mother had always been preparing herself for what might happen every time her father goes off to war. She was aware about the fates of the previous dragon guardians. All of them went to a war one day and never returned. The saddest thing was that even their corpses were never found as well. Evie had heard one day that if fate was going to take Lucius away from her, she only had one wish and that was to see his body for the last time.

So, Evie was going to let her mother's wish come true. She was not going back with her father's body because she had to stay here with Gav and her people. Evie wished with all her heart that she could be there for her mother during this sorrowful time, but she had greater responsibilities awaiting her. That was the lot of a queen.

And thus, Zanya arranged for the light faeries who will deliver Lucius' body back to Ylvia castle in the Southern Empire.

Once Evie bid her farewell to her beloved father, the light faes took Lucius away.

She watched, tears falling quietly from her eyes, until the light faes and her father were gone from her sight.

As her sorrow kept growing, anger began to bloom in Evie's heart. With fists clenched hard into tight balls, Evie strode back to where Thundrann was held imprisoned.

The moment she saw him, anger gripped strongly at her heart. She knew Thundrann was the one who killed her father. He was able to break free from his prison after sacrificing her father's life. He

had possessed him and battered him until he had died. She was not going to forgive this evil creature.

She halted and looked at Leon's sword. Without a word, she pulled out Leon's sword and then walked over to where Thundrann was. Her strides were measured and solemn, the aura around her cold and dangerous to the point that it felt as though it could cut anyone who came close.

Everyone reverently and hastily cleared a path for her. She let the tip of the sword drag along, screeching noisily on the concrete ground as she approached Thundrann.

There was only coldness in her eyes that made even her people and the vampires feel taken aback. They all knew what she was about to do.

The light faes were relieved but the vampires were conflicted. Their princess... they had never seen her strike a person to death with her own two hands. Was this really alright? All of them thought that if Prince Gavriel was here, he might not let the princess stain her hands with blood no matter how justified it was.

Thundrann began to beg even harder, pleading louder as Evie slowly approached. But Evie seemed to have turned a deaf ear against his cries.

And the moment she stood before him the sword was swung up high, aiming for his neck that was soon to be a stump without a head.