

SPELLBOUND 401

Chapter 401 - How?

Eyes wide from the shock Gavriel's words had triggered in her, Evie could only look at her husband mutely for a few long moments as she was rendered speechless by him and his ambitions. Her mind kept repeating the words that he had said on a loop. The entire land of Lirea...? Did he really say that? Or perhaps she had misheard him somehow?

She was speechless and she could only look at him with wonder. How? How are they going to make that happen? Lirea was not a small piece of land, mind you! Just the thought of it sent her mind spinning in circles again.

His gaze gentled as he lightly pinched her chin, looking deeply into her amber eyes. Then something utterly firm and intense lurked within his grey orbs. "I will do anything... everything to be with you, Evie. You know I will stop at nothing. We will not be kept apart no matter what." His voice was low and deep but there was not even a hint of doubt in them. In fact, his voice reverberated with such promise that Evie's heart could very well believe it there and then that his prediction will come true. He sounded like he had already made up his mind and nothing can stop him from making what he was aiming for come true within the soonest time frame possible. "I am ready to conquer this entire continent if that's the only way for us to be together. I'll make you the first Empress of Lirea." His eyes blazed with determination as he looked at Evie with an unwavering gaze.

Evie's heart had started to thump wildly in her ribcage. His words, the way his voice sounded and the look in his eyes as he said all those things... Evie felt something inexplicable suddenly bloom within her heart and her mind repeated the words 'the first empress of Lirea'.

"I know it sounds really ambitious at this moment." Gavriel continued, now caressing her cheek in little circular motions with his thumb gently. Then a confident smile curved across his lips. "But I know you know it's not impossible. The current Lirea is divided and messy. The empires are fighting each other for so many years now trying to annihilate each other as something that is expected that I suspect many don't really remember why they are doing so anymore. That is why I believe it's time for all the empires to unite and become one. Humans, vampires, faeries... it's time to stop these races from fighting and I truly believe that..." he paused and pressed his forehead against hers. Then his whispers came. "You and I are the destined ones to bring these empires together. Our child will be a combination of all the races who are living in this land... so making the entire land unite is also creating a perfect place for our child."

Moisture had appeared in Evie's eyes as she continued listening to him. Oh god... she could not believe he had already thought about all these details. She still could not quite wrap her mind around the miraculous fact that she was really and truly pregnant, but yet... This man... this husband of hers... was already making her utterly speechless, as he always does. And Evie could not deny the utter thrill and excitement and hope that were very quickly blooming in her chest. Initially it was still slow and hesitant. However, after listening to his explanations and thinking more about it, she has welcomed the idea as a fish taking to water. And she wanted to just hug him to bits and tell him what a genius he was. What he had brought up has made her so happy and hopeful that she could not wait for them to start working together, taking the first steps to achieving their dreams. The sooner they started, the faster they get to realise their goals.

But a thought suddenly sprung in her mind and made her unable to celebrate as the happy smile on her face slowly vanished. Conquering kingdoms would definitely result in one thing... wars. And where there were wars, there was killing, and death. Sacrifices and bloodbaths were always a given whenever a war is involved. Could she and him and their child really live blissfully knowing the true reason of the cost of their happiness and what it took for them to be together?

"How?" she finally asked. "The humans will fight to their deaths to protect their lands. Even though they are considered the weakest among all the races, they have the advantage of numbers and... humans are fighters, Gav. They will do anything and everything even if it costs them their lives to fight to maintain their homes for their families. As it is, they've been fighting against the vampires for countless of years now. I don't think they would ever be able to give up their lands without a fight that will definitely result in a bloodbath..." Evie's voice trailed off as she looked at Gavriel helplessly.

Gavriel nodded and looked at her with an understanding and profound gaze, looking like he had already considered and thought about that fact as well. He will not be Gavriel if he had not done so.

"I promise I'll do my best to avoid a bloodbath."

"How? Are you going to speak and negotiate with the human emperors? The humans had agreed to make a truce with the vampires lately, remember? And the vampires had then gone behind their backs and betrayed them and that resulted in my father's..." Evie choked and could not complete her sentence as she fought to keep her tears at bay. Gavriel hugged her in silence, offering comfort as there was nothing that could be done for Lucius now. His gentle hand caressed her back in an up and down motion, allowing her to breathe and compose herself. After letting out a shaky sigh and calming herself again, Evie continued.. "I don't think the humans will trust any vampire ever again, Gav. "

Chapter 402 - Strange

"I know, love. But that's why I have you here."

Evie jerked her head up, wide eyed again. And he smiled at her, kissing her lips lightly as he enjoyed her expressions.

"Do not worry, love. Just trust in me." He reassured her and Evie fell silent, knowing that those words alone had helped her calm down already. "Good girl..." he smiled sensuously, "For now, don't think too much about this and wait for me. When the time is ripe and things are prepared, we'll talk more about this again. And what I can promise you is, it won't be long before we can sit down together for this talk."

She nodded in full trust of his words and rested her head on his chest. "I trust you, my husband. Always. You know you're the one I trust the most in this world."

A low and blissful groan escaped his throat and Evie could tell how happy he was with what she said. He reached out and was about to kiss her hard, but just as his lips were a hair's breadth away from hers, knocking sounds on their bedroom door stopped him. Now the jinx was finally here again. Heavens! They both looked at each other, considering if they could ignore the person on the other side of the door and continue with what had been paused. But...

Another series of knocks sounded again and Gavriel cursed softly.

Evie chuckled. "Alright, now go. It must be very important." She pushed her reluctant husband off the bed. And Evie watched him drag himself to quickly get dressed and stepped out of their room.

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After finishing her breakfast, Evie met Gavriel outside the castle. He was talking to a group of vampires with a serious expression.

"So, you can't find even a single one of them?" Gavriel asked. "How about the children?"

The vampire shook his head. "We have searched even the neighbouring human lands, but no one saw even a single one of those Dacrians. It is really weird, Your Highness."

Hearing this, Evie rushed towards them. She had asked Gavriel to send men to look for the Dacrians who had disappeared in the Middle Lands. She had told Gavriel that she had tried and also have been looking for them all over the Middle Lands, but the Dacrians could not be found there. So, she thought that they might have been brought back to the vampire empire. But now Gavriel's men were saying that they could not find even a single one of them?

Gavriel faced her as he heard her approaching and he held hand and squeezed them gently, silently telling her to not worry and giving her assurance that all will be well. "Don't worry, love. The search had just begun. I'll send more people to look for them." Gavriel coaxed her before she could even say a thing. "So don't think too much about it. Since you are certain that they're not in the Middle Lands, I believe they should be just fine. We just need to search over other areas for them then." He assured her and Evie nodded, relaxing and fully trusting in her husband's words.

Zolan and Samuel then appeared before them and immediately reported that everything is now prepared for them to set out to the south.

Kariza also came to Evie just a little while after Zolan and Samuel to inform her that the light faes were now packed up and ready to move out as well.

"Is Leon back yet?" Gavriel asked his men, and they shook their heads.

"How about Zanya?" Evie asked Kariza and the light fae shook her head as well.

"Zanya said she'd go first. So, I think she might be waiting for us back in Crescia now." Kariza answered and that was when everyone turned their heads to look at the man who had just arrived, Leon.

"Oh, you're finally back!" Levy jumped on him playfully like a little puppy, and the rest of the men sighed in relief that he looked physically fine now. At the same time, their gazes were obviously filled with mischievousness as they looked at Leon. Some of them went as far as to wiggle their brows suggestively at him.

But Leon's face remained severe and blasé, ignoring all his fellow companion's unspoken jabs at him. Instead, his gaze fixed itself on Kariza, as if he was dying to ask her about something.

When everyone stepped away from their masters, to give them space before separating, Leon quickly approached Kariza and caught up to her before she could walk off.

"She... Umm... Zanya's not here?" he asked a little hesitantly, his purple gaze intense, not wanting to miss a thing.

Kariza nodded, a little taken aback with this man suddenly appearing right before her and together with his intense look. "She must be in Crescia by now. She had told me she would head over there first."

The lines on Leon's forehead deepened as he frowned. He looked like he wanted to say more but after a couple of seconds, he seemed to have changed his mind and closed his mouth.

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Meanwhile, Gavriel was hugging Evie tight as he whispered into her ear. "Remember not to push yourself too much, okay? Don't forget that our little one won't like it if you work too much."

"I know, I know." Evie smiled against his chest, finding it adorable how he was already nagging her even when her stomach was still flat, and nothing could be seen yet. "Don't worry, I will be extra, extra careful. I won't do anything that will be bad for our angel, I promise." She told him solemnly, fully intending to honour her every word. She was not going to be foolish and endanger their precious babe on purpose.

"Thank you... I will be quick, love. Wait for me." His large hands caressed her head fondly.

"I will. Please take care and come back to me safe and sound."

"I promise." He said and gave her another deep kiss before turning around to leave.

Evie then waved at Gavriel's men, and they all obviously were not pleased that she was not going to be with them anymore. But they understood that Crescia was much safer for her – especially more so now with her current condition – than going with them to join another war.

And thus, with heavy hearts, they all parted that day and headed in opposite directions.

The light faes arrived in Crescia in the afternoon as they surveyed the Middle Lands as they travelled to their castle. The dragons which had travelled with them stayed back at the gates while Evie and the light faes headed for the castle as Evie wanted to address them first.

Evie and Kariza were expecting Zanya to be waiting for them in the great castle, but to their surprise, the light fae was not there. They could not even feel any traces of someone who was just there.

"This is strange," Kariza told Evie. "The purple-eyed vampire seemed to be looking for her too, my queen. But I told him she must have been here. But it seems that she's not. Where could she be? Zanya isn't someone who just simply roams around and disappears on a whim."

Creasing her brows, Evie immediately ordered some light faes to go look for her. She did not know why, but she was suddenly reminded of the sudden and strange disappearances of the Dacrians who were waiting at the magical lake back then.

Chapter 403 - Missing

Days passed swiftly and Crescia was finally showing changes of it returning to the state of being a paradise that it was once, long time ago. With the return of the tree of life, the once barren, dismal, and lifeless place started to once again have living things bloom and flourish. And with Evie's power, she was able to restore the lost magical plants that were unique to their lands and can be found nowhere else.

The light faes began to build homes again and the once gloomy and hulking dark castle had since undergone a total face lift and was now brimming with silvery light, like an ice castle on top of the hill. It was a complete one hundred eighty-degree transformation from what it was before. Instead of triggering fear and causing a threatening ambiance on a whole, it now gives a quality of lightness and optimism. The dazzling sunlight streaming in from the crystal clear windows only uplifts the spirits of everyone who walk into the castle.

Watching from the large and highest window of her castle, Evie smiled. The sight of this place coming back to life only made her heart swell with joy. She observed the pride and delight that radiates out from every single light fae in the kingdom as they worked to restore the castle back to its former glory. In fact, some of them even commented that it might be even better than how it was previously. It was incredible how she already felt so much in love and in tuned with this land. Thinking back, it is almost unbelievable how different this place looked like when she had first stepped into it. Reviving this once dead and desolate land made her feel an inexplicable feeling in her heart. She could somehow feel that it is becoming so much a part of her as she could sense the life and pulse of the land within her if she turned her mind inwards and focus.

Because Evie had put more of her focus on the revival of her Queendom, she somehow managed to distract herself from missing her husband too much. She was sending Silver over to the vampire kingdom every now and then as her glorified 'pigeon' messenger to check on her husband and exchange letters with him. Of course, there was an ulterior motive of her doing this too. She had to use her dragon because she wanted to see him through her dragon's eyes. How they both exchanged letters were by sticking the envelope containing their letters securely into a flat leather pouch that was strapped around the dragon's neck using a long strip of leather about the width of an adult male's arm, both the pouch and strip had been magically enhanced in order to not snap.

The exchange of letters and the fact that Evie could check in on him frequently enough and see him through Silver's eyes, made Evie feel incredibly better and their separation did not seem to be as bad as she thought it would be. Maybe her 'seeing' him looking very much delighted at their special means of communication helped. That was all she wanted.

Hearing the familiar sounds in the sky, Evie saw four of her dragons appearing and she spread out her wings and flew over to the spacious courtyard to meet her handsome dragons as she welcomed them back.

She had sent them out again to search and scour through the Middle Lands. Their mission was to look for Zanya. She had sent many other light faes too, in search for her whereabouts, but it had been days since they had arrived back in Crescia, and there were still no signs of her. It was as if she had completely disappeared and vanished into thin air, not even leaving a single clue for them to pick up on. Evie was really stumped at this. However, she did not give up.

Evie had also sent the others to look for Onyx. She had sent them as far as the southern empire but found nothing. Onyx's disappearance was like Zanya's as well. However, Onyx going missing was really something truly mind boggling. Where could such a massive dragon hide out in? It was such a mystery to her that she could not find such a huge creature.

Landing on the courtyard, Evie spoke to her dragons tenderly, thanking them for their hard work and their persistence before she told them to go and rest. She had been sending them out every day and even at night. Evie had also taken to sending out the other three to search as well.

And yet, this time too, the search was fruitless.

With a heavy sigh, the expression on Evie's face became restless. "Zanya... Onyx... where are you?" she murmured.

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In a city called Mirthan, the elite vampires who were resting outside a castle spotted a dragon in the sky that was fast approaching them. They all immediately stood, knowing that it was their princess' dragon and that it must be bringing news to them again.

Zolan asked Reed to summon their master who was currently in a discussion with Mirthan's duke and officials. However, in no time at all, Gavriel came rushing out.

Silver landed before him and he smiled at the dragon, knowing that his wife was looking at him through its eyes.

Samuel took the letter in the leather pouch around Silver's neck and handed it over to Gavriel.

The prince read it silently with a smile but eventually, his smile faded, and slight frown curved on his face.

The men looked at each other. That frown... was there something bad that had happened? Could it be that there is a problem in Crescia?

Their faces all showed severe looks as well.

When Gavriel finally put the letter down, he looked at his men. Then his gaze stopped at Leon.

Leon had not been himself since they left the capital and broke company with Evie and the light faes. Gavriel noticed that he seemed distracted and was unable to concentrate. He seemed to be doing his best to try and stay focussed, but his restlessness did not escape Gavriel's sharp eyes.

"Leon..." Gavriel called out and the man snapped out of his daze and stepped forward.

"Yes, Your Highness." Leon politely spoke.

"That light fae named Zanya..." Gavriel started and at the mention of the name, Leon's expression immediately changed even as his head jerked up, now looking as though he had heard something that instantly messed up his entire being. "She's still missing."

Chapter 404 - Don't Tell Her

"She's still missing." Gavriel had said and Leon froze. He just stood there, wide-eyed and mouth slightly gaping in shock from the news. It was as if his system had shut down entirely at the words he had just heard. Missing? Zanya?!

"My wife said that they have sent out search parties throughout the entire land and yet, they couldn't find a single trace of her." Gavriel continued but Leon still remained silent. It was as though he could not hear a single thing that his lord was telling him.

The others were looking at Leon with concern now as the man remained quiet and just stood there like a statue. They all knew how Leon had been since that day they had parted from the princess. Even though Leon had tried his best to hide his emotions and remained focused on his job, they could all tell that something had happened when he was away, and it was... and still is disturbing him until now.

Levy had tried to even cheer him up and made him talk and teased him that he was lovesick. They thought Leon might just be behaving like their prince who could not wait to meet his lover anymore and could not help but think about it. And with Leon's expression lately, the men thought he was acting worse than their prince. They did not know and had no idea that Leon's behaviour must be because of this matter. That something strange was really going on and to think that Zanya was still missing until now. How many days has it been since that day?

Tomorrow, their prince was finally going to take the last dukedom of the vampire empire and then he will finally be declared the new King. This was crucial a day for their prince and them, his men, as well. Therefore, nothing should sway their concentration and affect their performance. Their best would naturally aid their lord to winning this war with more ease and less troubles.

The men could only think that this was why Leon could only stand there and could not say anything much. He must have been wanting to just bolt away to go look for her. But at the same time, he also knew that he had his sworn duty that was to prioritise and put his lord and master first. And knowing Leon, the men was aware about his loyalty and his sense of responsibility. Leon was someone who always put his sworn duty over his personal life. There was no way that he would turn his back on his Lord, even if it was to the extent of losing his own life. Therefore, the men knew that Leon must be suffering so bad for him to be even so out of it.

So, they had predicted and was very convinced that no matter how tortured he was right now, he was not going to ask or beg the prince to let him go to the Middle Lands to help look for her.

But to their surprise, Leon spoke with so much difficulty as he clenched his fists so tightly by his sides, as if what he was about to do was one of the hardest decisions he has ever made in his life. "Your Highness, I..." he choked out. "I want to go... look for her." He could not finish his sentence confidently and ended it while staring at the ground where Gavriel's feet stood.

The men were shocked, to put it mildly, except for Gavriel.

Seeing how difficult it was for Leon to finally spit out those words, Gavriel patted his shoulder understandingly.

"I know." He said and Leon looked at him with surprise, not expecting his lord to be so sympathetic to his plight. "It's natural for you to want to go. And I also wanted you go. I am bothered about these disappearances. So, I'm going to let you go ahead of us, Leon. Go and search for her while keeping your eyes peeled on what is actually happening with these disappearances. Send reports back on your findings."

Leon immediately bowed his head at Gavriel, unable to express how thankful he was for the prince's understanding.

"Forgive me for not being there for your most long-awaited coronation, Your Highness." Leon said and Gavriel just shrugged, seemingly unbothered about him being crowned as King.

"It's fine. Because this coronation is just the first step of many other such steps in the future. I'm not even asking Evie to come. Though she will definitely come rushing if I tell her but...?this is not the most awaited day for me anymore. When that day comes, I will make sure everyone will be there at attendance. So don't apologize and go. Ride on Silver to reach there quicker."

"Thank you, Your Highness." Leon bowed again and was about to leave when he halted and looked over his shoulder. "I'm not allowed to tell Her Highness about your coronation tomorrow?"

"Yes. Don't tell her. I don't want her to come here yet. I'll appear before her as a king the next time I see her. I want to surprise her."

"I understand, Your Highness." Leon then bowed to his lord before climbing onto Silver and the dragon pushed off mightily from the ground and flew away, leaving the men watching his departure in silence.

Once the dragon disappeared from their sights, Gavriel's gaze became serious as he turned to look at his other men who were standing behind him.

"Prepare yourselves men, we're going to launch an attack on the last dukedom tonight itself." Gavriel declared, and the men's eyes widened in surprise. He had just declared that tomorrow was the attack. Did the news about Zanya's disappearance change his decision?

He nodded at his men and all of them entered into the castle. They knew that it would be an emergency meeting to push forward their plans.

And once they were inside the throne hall, Gavriel suddenly declared the change of plans, shocking the duke and the officials again. But none of them protested their prince's plan and thus, that night, Gavriel led his army to conquer Katerina and her husband's hideout.

Chapter 405 - Search

Leon's heart was beating like a drum as he sat on Silver's back, looking down at the ground rushing past him as they approached the Middle Lands.

He could hardly form a single coherent thought the nearer they were to their destination. He kept thinking back to that one day. That dawn, as soon as he came out of the water, he had searched around the area, trying to find where Zanya had ran off to. He had thought she was somewhere in the vicinity. However, when he could not find her even after expanding his search for another 5 miles out, he thought that she must have left as soon as he had fallen unconscious due to exhaustion.

Leon could not quite explain how he felt at the thought that she had left him without even saying a single word to him just because the mating was already a done deal. Why did she leave? Why did she not wait for him to wake up? Was she in such a hurry to get somewhere? Or... could it be that she had regretted after the fact that they had gotten the mating done?

Although he was not a person who would usually worry about such things, he just could not help but think negatively at the fact that she had left without saying a word. He remembered that she had said it when she came looking for him. But was all that mattered to her was completing the mating only? He had tried his best to understand her. But he truly did not know why his heart was aching so much at the thought that probably, she did not want to see him anymore after this.

For all the days that had passed since that day, he found that he could not put her out of his mind at all even if he had wanted to. And to make things worse, he realised that lately, he had started to feel restless, as though there was a fire that had been lit under his pants. He had even begun to dream about her in his sleep, always starting off with him chasing after her, and looking for her as she disappeared from his dream view.

Now he understood what was behind the unease and ache that he had been constantly feeling growing in his chest. She did not leave him because she had not wanted to see him anymore, but she

had disappeared. And he could somehow tell that she had disappeared that dawn itself. Right now, he felt that he would rather have her run off in avoidance of him than this – disappearing without a trace or even a hint. He could not accept this. How many days had passed since then? And she was currently missing? How was it that he did not have a stronger feel that something had happened to her?

Gritting his teeth, Leon could not help but feel angry and disappointed in himself. Shaking himself out of that dazed state he was caught in, he refocussed on his surroundings and looked down again.

The moment Silver crossed the borders of the Middle Land, the dragon suddenly dived down gracefully and landed on the ground, surprising Leon. He had thought that Silver was going to take him into Crescia first. But he did not have the time to wonder anymore as he saw three light faes who were standing nearby, looking at him as though they were expecting him. He then walked over and chatted with them to find out what they were doing out of Crescia.

They had told Leon that they were searching for Zanya's whereabouts. Leon joined them and he led them to the place where he had last seen Zanya.

Upon reaching the place, Leon and the light faes began a thorough combing down to search the place. They had planned to turn over all stones if that what it takes to bring them even a single clue of her whereabouts.

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Meanwhile, in the Northern Empire, Gavriel and his army had already started invading the last city in the South. The city had fallen into Gavriel's hands before the sun could even rise and he crushed all the hopes of the opposition to ever dare consider going against him ever again in this lifetime. Katerina and her husband were also caught and along with them, the generals and important officials who had conspired with them.

Gavriel had mercilessly condemned them all to be thrown into prison, and the sentence was to last for their entire lives until death claimed them. Many of the vampires had then begged to be killed instead as they were all well aware that the prison where Gavriel was placing them in was a place no one had ever escaped from before. But Gavriel did not even bothered to listen to their pleas and before daylight came, all of them were cast into that maximum security prison – forever doomed to live out their entire lives in there.

Everything went on smoothly and efficiently that day and when the night finally came, Gavriel's coronation was held immediately and Gavriel was declared the new king of the entire vampire kingdom.

The events went by too fast that even the vampires themselves could hardly believe that their ruler had changed yet again. And it seems that this time, their new king will definitely bring big changes to his rule now.

Many vampires had expressed their unhappiness, but no one dared to speak up as they all saw how powerful their new king was. Of course, as many or even more were glad as they knew that King Gavriel was the vampires' real and true monarch. Their previous rulers were fake royals and had stolen the throne from the true heir.

While the capital was in the process of being restored to its former glory, Gavriel had his coronation ceremony conducted in the second largest city of the empire.. He had also immediately addressed

his people that very same night and even those who were opposed to him inwardly, were unable to deny the power he had on them all after he was done with his address to the people.

Chapter 406 - Danger

Even the elite men were smiling from ear to ear as they watched their prince, no, their king, so majestically speaking up there and looking at the vampires who seemed to have fallen into a trance.

After the speech, Gavriel was swamped by more things he had to deal with first and foremost. It was daylight again when he and his men were alone in a hall and were finally able to get some peace and quiet from all the hustle and bustle of the previous days.

"Congratulation Your High..." Levy cleared his throat. "Your Majesty." He grinned wide and the rest followed suit, bowing at him in reverence and awe.

"Stop grinning already, Levy. You'll turn into a Cheshire cat." Gavriel smirked at him.

"I can't help it! I am so happy for His Majesty." The drama king and his one-man show kicked in again and they just laughed at his clowning around.

But after a while, Gavriel's expression became serious. "None of the dragons came back to check in since Leon left with Silver?" he asked, and the men began to wonder as well. They all have been so busy since the previous night that this one thing had slipped their minds. But now that they thought about it, it was a surprise that the princess had yet to send a dragon to check in as how she usually does daily. She used to send one over every night, never once missing a single time.

The men shook their heads and Gavriel's expression turned dark and the air around them became heavy.

"Don't worry, my King." Levy said. "Maybe, Leon had said something to stop the princess from sending a dragon over?"

But Gavriel's expression did not change. He stood from his throne and then looked ahead, silently pondering some things in his mind before turning to face them.

"All of you get ready. We're going to Crescia now." he declared, shocking the men. They had not thought that His Majesty would mobilise them immediately, especially since they had just finished with his coronation not too long ago. "Zolan and Reed and Samuel will remain here on standby. I will go with the others to Crescia in secret. Have the vampires and officials think that I am resting and sleeping in today. No one else must know of our departure. Luc, Levy, meet me at my chambers within a quarter of an hour. Get the things you need."

The trio could only nod. After preparing themselves in haste, Gavriel, Luc and Levy snuck out and left the city.

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That night Leon left the city of Mirthan with Silver,

Evie was already in her room. But she was not asleep yet. She stood by the window. Her eyes were closed, and her mind and senses were in Mirthan. Her lips curled up in a breathtaking smile as she saw her husband again through her dragon's eyes.

When suddenly, she felt goosebumps run down her spine. Her brows creased and the moment she opened her eyes, she froze due to shock.

A man in a dark cloak was standing right before her in her personal chambers. Thundrann?! No! That man was already dead! Zirrus had executed him and burned his body to ashes! Then who...

The man lifted his face slightly. She could not see his face clearly because of his hood, but she could see his eyes – a pair of blazing blue eyes that were exactly the same as Gav and his father, King Belial. Her heart thundered within her, and she recognised this feeling all too well – it was the feeling of danger, and she had never felt this way when standing before Gav and even before King Belial.

She instinctively called forth her magic when she discovered that she was unable to move. To her shock, not only could she not move. She could not even speak as well. All she could move was her eyeballs. What had this person done to her? Panic started to assail her especially when she remembered that there was a precious little one within her now. What could she do now?

"I finally caught you off guard, Queen." A deep and dark voice echoed from under the dark hood before he lifted that hood. Blue eyes, dark skin, black hair and pointed ears... a dark fae! Who is he? "I know you are strong and powerful. So, it would be impossible for me to catch you like this had you not left your body this defenceless by focusing all your senses somewhere else."

A slight smile curved on his face as he said those words. He had the face of a saint of the darkness. A face that could only belong to a deceptive angel of the darkness.

"Do not worry Queen, I am not here to harm you. I am only here to take you away." He continued and Evie's eyes widened even more. Her mind was screaming, trying to break free from the dark magic that had bound her and rendered her immobile. "Weren't you looking for that light fae and those vampires?" he asked in a smooth voice. "I'll bring you to them, Queen."

Evie's body then began to glow, and the man looked shocked. He uttered another spell and dark smoke materialised from thin air and wrapped around her like chains. "What a dangerous Queen you are." He muttered, smiling. "Please do not resist. Do not force me to harm you. Don't forget you have a precious one to protect inside you, Queen." His reminder came to her like lightning! Another shock. He knew of her child?!

How? How did he know? Who is this man?! What did he want from her?

As if he had understood the look in her eyes, he straightened up. And then he spoke again. "Alright, I shall introduce myself first before we leave. My name is Gideon, the crown prince of the Under Lands. I am the one and only brother of your husband, Gavrael." He introduced himself very calmly and before Evie could recover from the shock, a large swath of dark smoke swallowed them both and in the next instant, they were gone from Evie's room.

Chapter 407 - Under Lands

When they materialized, Evie found herself securely tucked in – what she believed could only be – the dark fae's arms. He was carrying her, princess-like, as he unhurriedly walked ahead into a dark tunnel. She realised that she was still under the influence of that binding spell as she was still frozen stiff.

Her eyeballs could only move around, trying as best as she can to see where he was bringing her. When she could not make out anything due to the extreme darkness, her body then glowed, making herself her own light source, and lighting up the pitch-dark place.

The man carrying her halted when he saw this happening and she looked up at him in challenge, silently daring him to say anything about her actions. Their eyes met and Evie creased her brows at the sight of him smiling down at her. And due to their proximity, Evie could not help but notice that this person possessed a rare, exotic, and heart stopping beautiful smile.

With the light coming from her body, she could now see his features very clearly. Just like his smile, his face was also kind of exotic, his catlike eyes shaded with thick dark lashes, and all his features were almost immobilizing. He looked like someone who was not born to sin. All it took was for one look at his face and one would think he was a gentle and beautiful angel who got lost in the dark. No one would think that he is one who would be capable of even killing a little chick.

"Easy there, Queen." His gentle voice echoed around them like a kind of dark slow music. "You really are incredible to still be able to summon your magic even when you are already unable to move or speak..."

His voice trailed off and his smile faded when Evie's body brightened up even more. It was as though she were challenging him more by doing so. "Stop that, Queen. Don't exert yourself too much." His voice rumbled out low and his gaze remained patient. "Didn't I just warn you about the little one inside you? I am using a very powerful dark spell to immobilize you right now, so don't try to struggle from it because it will only become more powerful and tighten up its grasp on you if you force yourself to break away from it."

Evie's gaze blazed with fury at she glared up at him. This man was blackmailing her, and he knew that this threat would be very effective on her right now. He was such a despicable person! She really wanted to give this person a nice dressing down if she could. But since she could not, all she did was level her eyes at him as though laser beams were shooting out of them. And if eyes could kill, Gideon would have died many times over.

"I'm sorry but I can't let you talk yet. At least not until we cross the portal." He continued walking when Evie's body slowly dimmed. She knew she should not be too wilful and cause harm to her unborn child. As much as she wanted to fight back, right now, this was not the best way forward. She would observe and bide her time and strike when there was an opportune time for her to do so. Therefore, Evie kept her eyes peeled and her ears wide opened to get as much information as possible to her whereabouts and not miss the chance of escaping.

Hearing the word 'portal', Evie's eyes widened. Was he really taking her over to the Under Lands? Wait... does this mean that perhaps Zanya and the other vampires who were missing were all taken to the Under Lands as well? This thought would never have crossed her mind before this incident.

And it was as if he could read her thoughts, the dark fae spoke again. "Yes, you are right. I'm bringing you to the Under Lands. And yes, those people whom you are searching for all this time, are all over there as well, right now."

Evie was dying with the frustration of not being able to blurt out all the questions she had to him or even to struggle. Why? Why is he bringing her there? What was going on? How could it be that it was so easy for him to take any random persons over to the Under Lands? She had remembered hearing from Claudius that it takes an immense amount of magic to bring a non-dark fae to the Under Lands from the surface. And once a non-dark fae entered, they can never get out again without a great sacrifice in exchange.

As Evie questioned herself, the man holding her halted. Her heart drummed within her as she looked at the sight of the solid wall now turning into what looked like a dark and thick shadow.

No... her mind immediately screamed out Gavriel's name. She knew her husband can no longer return to the Under Lands. She had to escape. She cannot allow this dark fae to bring her across this portal! He would not be able to find her! She was not even sure if he would be able to sense her presence in the Under Lands.

Once again, he seemed to have read what she was thinking, and he looked down at her again. There was an enigmatic look in his eyes. "Do not worry, Queen. Gavrael will definitely come. That man will always do the impossible for you." He said in a serious tone before quickly stepping inside the vortex without giving her any more chances to even process what he had just said. He had made sure to grasp onto her tighter, even though she was already bound by the spell. He did not want to risk her escaping at the last minute.

The moment he stepped across the portal, he spoke again, an odd flicker flashed across his blazing blue eyes. "Gavrael will come for you... even if it kills him."

He spread out his large wings and the next thing Evie knew; she was flying with him through the skies.

"This is your first time coming down here. Have a good look at the birthplace of Gavrael, queen." His voice echoed and Evie found that she was suddenly able to move her head around now. She attempted to speak, but her voice was still not coming out even though she could open and move her mouth now.

She could only grit her teeth angrily and followed his line of sight.. And the instant she saw the view below her, she was stunned.

Chapter 408 - Not Yet

"This is my city, Yryzia." Gideon said as pride coloured his voice. And Evie could not help but feel mesmerized at the sight below her. The massive city was constructed as how Evie had never seen done before by any race on the surface. It was like she was inside a cavern so large that even dragons could actually be able to fly within it. It was as though they have their own 'sky', though not as endless as how they had it on the surface, the space between the ground and the ceiling was much larger than Evie ever imagined or had expected. The houses that were littered below seemed to be made of black crystals and that was the case with the castles too.

The most surprising thing was that the place was not as dark as she thought, despite being located underground. The ceiling of this place was filled with light blue crystals which were glowing like stars. There was also a river below that was glowing with the same gleaming and crystal-like water in Crescia.

Evie could only think of one word as she looked down. The Under Land was a veritable paradise in the darkness. It was breathtaking and she could not help but admire the view.

He continued flying steadily as if giving her all the time to enjoy the scenery. She also felt that the way he was holding her seemed to be extra careful. He was so gentle that Evie could almost forget that she was actually a prisoner who was being abducted and this man holding her was her captor. Evie pursed her lips as she was displeased at herself letting her guard down – even if it was only a little and for a short while. She reminded herself that this must not happen again.

Finally reaching the tallest castle in the city, Evie's heartbeat raced again. What was this man going to do to her? She could only brace herself now for what was going to happen next.

He landed right before a large door, and it immediately swung open. Evie could tell he had used magic to do that as no one was there to even open it.

As soon as the door shut closed behind them, Gideon halted, and he bent over to carefully put her down. "I'm removing all your bindings now," he muttered lowly. He had barely even let go of the spell binding her for a second, when she was already on her feet, as if she were afraid that she will not be able to balance herself.

His actions just kept on confusing Evie but that was all. She would never dare think that this person truly meant her no harm, especially when he had kidnapped her, separating her from Gavriel and blackmailed her.

She felt the dark magic that had been wrapped around her disappeared and finally, Evie was freed from her immobility.

The very first thing she did was to stretch her hand out and her magic flowed from her like laser beam coming from her palms. Her magic wrapped around Gideon's neck in an instant.

"Why are you doing this? Why did you bring me here?!" she demanded, her gaze fierce and cold and urgent.

However, even with her magic wrapped tightly around his neck, ready to strangle him to death or even snap his neck from his body, he still smiled at her – a smile so enigmatic that could be offered to a friend or foe with equal ease. Evie was thrown even more for a loop. She just could not make out why this dark fae was behaving in such a way.

"I can't answer that right now, Queen. You will eventually know when the time co –"

She tightened her magic on his neck, causing him to cut his words off. Her gaze gleamed with warning. "Answer me. Right now, when I am still giving you a chance," she commanded coldly but Gideon suddenly took a step closer. His gaze on her still very calm and steady.

"Stop! Don't come any closer or else –"

"Or else what?" he questioned curiously, his voice still remained like a gentle dark song.

"I'll strangle you... to death," Evie threw out a threat.

He smiled again. This time, he flashed a smile that was the rare and exotic smile.

"Oh, that... I know you can't do what you claim, my dear Queen," He replied without even a hint of doubt in his voice. "You haven't killed anyone yet with those untainted hands of yours."

"You... you've been spying –" Evie was taken aback. How long has this dark fae been spying on them?

He shook his head as he shrugged his shoulders elegantly. "I could tell. It's not hard to tell, Queen. Your eyes... there is no hint of that kind of hardness yet. The moment someone ends up killing another person with their own two hands, it will always show in their eyes. It's not something someone can easily hide, no matter how good an actor they are."

"Just because I have never killed before, doesn't mean I can't kill now." Evie's voice was hard and firm. "And it doesn't mean I am not willing to do so now..."

He halted just before her fingertips could touch him. "Oh, you won't. Maybe in the future you might do it. But that time is not now, Queen. Not yet..." he sounded so sure and confident in himself.

Evie bit down on her lower lip to stop it from trembling. Then she drew in a deep breath secretly and composed herself again before shooting him a gaze so fierce and deadly. "Don't underestimate me, Gideon." She used his name for the first time. However, the tone she used in saying his name was as hard as granite. There was no unclear message that she should not be underestimated. "I'm a queen. I'm a woman and if you don't know yet, as of now, what a woman can do to protect her loved ones...?then I shall gladly show you."

Chapter 409 - Theory

Gideon remained deceptively relaxed even after Evie's serious threat. He just stared at her for a long while before smiling nonchalantly.

"I have never underestimated you, Queen. I am well aware of your power... of what you can do. Or else why would I need to blackmail you? Also, if you remember, I even had to use such an underhanded tactic just to bring you here?" he said lightly as he lifted his hand and grabbed her wrist gently. "So please calm down now and listen to me. Don't forget you're in the Under Lands now, and you and your little one are ..." his eyes hardened for a moment and Evie felt her hand go numb, as if he had turned it into stone. Her heart immediately thundered the moment he mentioned her child. "...my prisoners. Ah, the dozens of vampires and a few light faes too. Or would you rather I called you as 'guests'?" Gideon suddenly smirked before his face returned to its neutral state once again.

Evie's eyes widened. A few light faes?! They have caught more of her people? Not just Zanya? But she did not remember receiving any reports of any missing light faes! Who were these people then?

"My men had caught a few light faes just a few hours ago and brought them back here as well." He told her as he finally pushed Evie's hand down. "Also, your magic is restricted inside this castle. Not just yours but mine too. Because this castle is special. Hmm... this is actually a prison castle. So don't waste your time trying to escape. I'm warning you now, Queen. Because if you don't listen to me, you will definitely regret it. I'm saying all this for your own good. So it would only benefit yourself to listen and be obedient."

The look in his eyes had subtly changed as he spoke. It was as if the hardness that was hiding behind his gentle exterior was finally making itself known and coming to the surface. And the hardness she was seeing now was something that could only belong to a very cold man – a villain. She was quite sure now that this man was not as beautiful on the inside as he seems to be on the outside. This man was a villain with the looks of a saint.

Warning bells rang in her head and for the first time since she had met him, she felt real danger, and this was the same fear she felt when Galleous had threatened that he would kill her unborn child. She could feel her entire frame shake and her skin prickled with trepidation. However, she did not allow that sudden fear to manifest itself on the outside.

Evie fought for calm, and she managed to remain composed. Though this time she decided not to try anything anymore, at least until she has a better grasp on things here. She had realized she must

be extra careful now. She still did not know what this man could do, nor does she have any idea what kind of power he truly possessed. For now, she was just going to learn and absorb as much information as she possibly could before coming up with a plan.

"Tell me..." Evie managed to keep her voice neutral as she stared at him with her same fearless eyes. "Why are you doing this? What are you up to? Is this all done so you could lure my husband to come here?"

Gideon fell silent but there was a complexity reflected in his eyes now. "You are right, queen." He answered simply and Evie struggled to keep her expression impassive. She needed more information. What is with the curt answers?

"Why? What do you want from my husband?" Evie tried to ferret more out of him.

"That... I can't say much to you about it right now," he sounded like he was not going to budge on this matter, so Evie had no choice and could only back off. But only for now, she thought to herself. She would find some ways to get the information that she needed.

"If my husband is what you want, then why did you abduct those vampires and even the light faes too?" Evie asked again. "What has the light faes got anything to do with my husband?"

Gideon began to walk forward after signalling Evie to follow after him – not before giving her a sharp warning look in reminding her to be obedient – and Evie could only compliantly walk behind him. "Those vampires were just tests. And yes, those light faes as well."

"Tests?" Evie paused in her steps, creasing her brows at him in confusion. "What do you mean by tests?" And to Evie's surprise, Gideon launched into a long and elaborate explanation on it.

"Not too long ago, I had discovered a new portal that suddenly appeared here in Yryzia. There is supposed to be only one portal which is found in the Great City, and it is being guarded by the king's soldiers. The king of course does not have any idea about this portal here yet. I was the first to test it out and I had managed to cross the portal and reach the surface successfully. After seeing for myself that the portal is working, I began to test other things out and I found out that this portal surprisingly requires nothing to cross it. And then, I later found out that even non-dark faes could cross it just fine, without anything happening to them. Thus, I sent my men to abduct all the vampires I've found by the lake just to see if the portal would close. But nothing had happened after bringing them over. And now, even the light faes could cross it just fine as well. And that includes you as well, Queen. I believe something is happening with this ancient treaty that had sealed the portals.." Gideon paused from his long explanation and looked over his shoulder, staring at Evie. "What do you think, Queen? Do you think my theory is right? That perhaps the treaty might be something that don't last forever...? Maybe there only needs to be a certain amount of time to have passed, and now that the time is getting closer to the end, the once sealed portals are appearing again?"

Chapter 410 - Neither

For a while, Evie remained silent, trying to digest the huge amount of information that Gideon just poured on her. But eventually, she spoke and told him her honest opinion. "I must admit your theory might not be far from the truth. That's the only logical explanation I could think of right now."

"As expected, Queen." He smiled and he continued walking in a fluid and unhurried way through what seemed like an endless corridor. Evie followed behind him without another word.

While walking, Evie stared at his back and now that she was observing his body and movements and not his distracting face, she realized that he seemed different. It was as though he does not resemble King Belial or Gav. Gav and King Belial both possessed a certain aura that was different from the rest, but they were very similar to each other. That was how Evie could recognise the familial connection between them. However, Evie felt that Gideon seemed to be missing that same familial trait. Gav and King Belial possessed something that screams their authority and power even without speaking. They had what seemed to be an inborn grace and stateliness that made them feel and look as though they were born to be nothing but rulers. They were the type who do not seem to function in any capacity other than being the sovereign.

But Gideon did not give out such a vibe. And aside from the long dark hair, blue eyes, and dark skin, which Evie knew were the common features of all dark faes, Gideon's features do not resemble King Belial or Gav much. Was it possible that he got his features from his mother?

At that thought something suddenly came to Evie and she paused, her eyes circled wide.

"Tell me..." she asked a little hesitantly, and Gideon paused as well in his steps. "Could it be that you are doing this because you think my husband is now able to return to the Under Lands? Are you actually worried that he's going to come back soon to take the crown from you and so you've made all these moves now while he is occupied?" Evie listed out her suspicions.

Evie was clenching her fists as she waited for Gideon to look back at her again and reply. But all of a sudden, a shadow appeared and interrupted the tensed atmosphere that had arisen between them. A dark fae materialized and bowed to him.

"Speak," Gideon commanded.

"Your Highness, that light fae... we couldn't find her yet. She most probably would have entered the monsters' forest." The dark fae reported and Evie narrowed her eyes at the mention of 'light fae' and 'she'.

"That woman is quite elusive. Stop looking for her. She might be dead already if she had entered that place." Gideon said dismissively, and Evie's eyes widened.

The dark fae bowed and Gideon dismissed him.

"Who's that light fae you're talking about?" Evie walked past him and faced him. She could not take the worry anymore. She felt her heart quickening in foreboding.

"It's the first light fae my men abducted." Gideon's words caused a gong to resound through her mind.

"Zanya...!!" Evie's eyes circled wide again. She was the first light fae that had disappeared.

"That woman actually managed to escape before my men could bring her back to the castle to be imprisoned. She's quite strong and elusive. I believe you might have done the same thing if I had not restricted and blackmailed you. Believe me, getting lost here in Yryzia is as good as taking a suicide walk. This city is surrounded with the so-called monsters' forest. Ferocious and countless of monsters lurk in the forest and a single light fae like her will never be able to survive long in there. Especially if she is in there alone."

Evie shook her head. "Zanya is strong. She's not someone mere monsters could kill."

"You know nothing about the dangers here in the Under Lands, dear Queen. That woman must be dead by now." he sounded so sure that Evie could not help but feel extremely worried for Zanya now. "This city is the farthest from the Great City, where the king lives. And this is a place where dark fae rebels and exiles have built homes for themselves. They had built this place from scratch. One needs to cross the monsters' forest to get here, so that's why even the king and other dark faes are ignorant of this place still. Well, the king might already know about it, but it is unlikely for him to come all the way here at least for now."

"So... are you a rebel or are you exiled?" Evie asked directly, not bothering to be tactful about it. Gideon only smiled.

"Neither."

"Then why are you here?"

"You've asked too many questions, Queen." He opened a door and gestured for Evie to enter. "This is where I kept the other prisoners."

Evie peeked inside and saw Elijah standing by the door. "Princess..." the boy called out and quickly, Evie entered and approached the child. She knelt before him and held his small shoulders but before she could speak, Gideon's voice echoed from the entrance.

"I'll come back very soon to get you out of here, Queen." He said and the door clicked shut behind her.

...

Meanwhile, just outside the same portal Evie and Gideon had crossed earlier, Leon and other two light faes were standing before it.

During their nonstop and long search for Zanya, they had managed to find some clues and it led them straight to this place.

Leon could recognise that the wall of shadow he was looking at before him, must be a portal of some sort where Zanya and the others had disappeared to.

"I will enter." Leon informed the light faes behind him quickly without any hesitation. "You two must go back to the castle to report this to the prin... the queen. Go now. Make haste." Leon gave out his instructions without wasting more time. He was eager to find Zanya as soon as possible.

The light faes nodded and flew off. Leon turned back to look at the portal before clenching his fists tightly. His mind was only filled with thoughts of Zanya. He was hoping and praying that she was alright.

His purple gaze blazed, and he finally stepped into the portal and crossed it.