

SPELLBOUND 41

Chapter 41 - Candidates

"Milady, uhm... would you like to eat in the terrace again? Something important came up suddenly so His Highness cannot join you." Elias was hesitant in his suggestion, sounding apologetic as he explained the dining arrangement to Evie.

Evie who was about to take her seat halted but she forced a smile on her face to assure the butler. "It's alright, Elias. There is no need to transfer places. I am fine with dining right here. It's not like this is the first time I'm going to eat alone," she replied when someone's voice echoed, pulling their attentions.

"Would you mind if I join you, Lady Evielyn?" Evie whipped her head towards the source of the voice, and an elegant grey-haired lady was smiling, approaching her. This was the first time Evie saw a grey-haired vampire.

They said that the major indicator that a vampire was old and ancient was their grey hair. The woman walking towards her was still very beautiful and elegant, exuding a regal aura of probably a queen dowager. Could it be that she's the mother of the late empress?

"Duchess Aurora," Elias greeted the woman and gave a deep bow to her. Evie followed Elias' actions and immediately did the same. She had yet to meet anyone other than Gavriel and his men in this castle – not even the Duke and Duchess – so having the duchess suddenly approaching her totally caught her off guard. Was it alright for her to interact or stay close to her?

"Duchess, it's a pleasure to meet you," Evie greeted and the Duchess' smile widened. "I thank you for gracing me with your presence at this meal. I'm sure it must have been hard for an important figure like yourself to put aside some time to deliberately come all the way here to accompany me." Evie remembered to be polite and gracious in speech as was expected of a noble lady.

"The pleasure is all mine, Your Highness. I have been wanting to meet with Prince Gavriel's wife ever since I've heard of you." She replied and the two ladies finally settled and sat across each other. After exchanging pleasantries, the servants laid out the dishes and both ladies started on their meal.

"I hope you have been enjoying your stay here, Lady Evielyn."

"Yes. Though Dacia is very different from my home city, I find this place really fascinating." Evie said. For some reason, she felt at ease with her, just like how she felt towards Elias when she first met him. They were both unintimidating. Was it because of their soft eyes and warm smiles? "This city is definitely a magnificent place. I am exceptionally in awe of the snow and how beautifully it enhances the scenery here. We never get it looking this way back where I came from."

"I am pleased to know that, Your Highness. If you feel bored, feel free to visit me, alright? I can be your company if you ever choose to have a spin and go sight-seeing around the city."

"Thank you so much for the offer. I'll definitely seek you out when the time comes when I'd like a tour of the city."

"It would be great if the prince would be the one to accompany you... but I'm afraid he's currently too occupied with state matters right now." The Duchess sounded a little apologetic and gave a gentle smile.

"Yes... he is..." Evie just smiled in return and gave an elegant shrug of her shoulders.

After their dinner, Evie and the duchess were still chatting as they left the dining hall and had just stepped into the massive living hall when they saw a number of ladies ascending the grand staircase heading towards the castles' ballroom.

With just one glance, Evie could tell that they were all gorgeous specimens of females – almost flawless. It was obvious they were probably the daughters of the nobles in this Dukedom. But why were they here? Did the duchess host a tea party? Evie doubted it as from what she observed, those beautiful ladies looked as young as her.

"Oh, they're finally here." The Duchess sounded pleased as she looked at the ladies with seemingly scrutinizing eyes.

"Who... who are they?" Evie asked curiously and hesitantly.

The grey-haired vampiress glanced at her while Evie still had her eyes firmly fixed on the bevy of fine-looking ladies. The Duchess regarded Evie with an observant gaze as she spoke.

"They are the daughters of the nobles, Your Highness." Duchess Aurora said, not taking her eyes off Evie's face.

"Why are they here?" Evie finally meet her gaze. "Is there an event happening currently?" she continued asking and the Duchess was silent for a moment. Seemingly weighing something in her mind before she answered.

"They were invited to enter into the castle as the candidates for His Highness' concubines."

It took a couple of seconds for Evie to register those words that the duchess had uttered. Her mind could not quite accept what she had just heard. Evie ended up standing there, frozen, as the duchess scrutinized her reaction.

Even though Duchess Aurora had yet to meet her husband due to the current situation, she had already heard about this. And this was why she sought to meet the Princess. Of course, she already knew about the deal of Gavriel's marriage to this human princess. And Duchess Aurora was actually disheartened when she heard about the deal that Gavriel was not even allowed to touch his own wife.

The duchess found it ridiculous, that a husband was not allowed to touch his own wife. So even though she does not approve with the idea of a married man having mistresses, Aurora could only support it in this particular case. She would definitely support the wife over any mistresses, because as a wife, she despised mistresses. However, how could she support a wife who denies her husband the right to touch her? Especially when she knows that her husband was in a dire situation and desperately needed an heir to secure his bloodline.

"I am glad Prince Gavriel finally agreed." The duchess continued, still watching Evie's face intently.

Chapter 42 - Same Thing

"He... he agreed?" Evie's face was suddenly drained of all colour. However, her facial expressions did not change in the slightest.

"I haven't met my husband or the prince yet, but it appeared this was what the council had concluded and decided on. If the prince had not given his consent, there would be no way that anyone could have made a move."

"I see..." was all Evie said. But her reaction was clear to the Duchess. It was obvious Evielyn was affected and was even probably devastated, and heart broken, judging from the dispirited look in her eyes.

This was not what the duchess had expected. Didn't she hate Gavriel that she didn't even allow him to sleep with her in the same room? Aurora had heard that yesterday, the prince left the princess' room and slept somewhere else. Even the servants have started gossiping, saying that the princess must have kicked him out in the middle of the day.

So, what was with her betrayed expression now? Could it be that they were missing out on an important piece of information? This could spell out a disaster if things were not handled correctly.

"I would like to retire now, Duchess Aurora. It's been a pleasure to meet and speak with you." Evie forced a small smile and then turned away to leave. Her voice, her forced smile, and the sorrowful look in her eyes... It was crystal clear to the duchess on how hard she was struggling to keep her emotions in check. These were not the reactions and expressions of a wife who does not care about her husband at all. In fact, she was behaving as if her husband had betrayed their love and marriage vows despite giving her heart to him! What exactly was happening here?

It appeared she and the rest of them were wrong to believe in the rumors. But her, not allowing Gavriel to touch her wasn't a rumor. Could it be that the princess was slowly falling for the prince now?

"Please slowdown Milady. You might fall." Elias said when Evie hastened her pace, desperately wanting to get back to the security of the room she shared with Gavriel.

Elias was also surprised at what he had heard. He was not aware about this as he had yet to meet with the prince since the prince left for the meeting. Did he really agree? He highly doubted it but since he was certain that the Duke and the Duchess would never do anything without the Prince's permission, he could only take it as the truth. The Duke had never done anything against the Prince's wishes before.

And because Elias and all the other five loyal men of Prince Gavriel had also been urging their master to sire a child, he could not hide his relief and gladness. They understood the importance of having another royalty. It was all for Prince Gavriel's sake as well. Everyone who supported the prince wanted this so badly that all of them would probably do anything to make it happen, if only the Prince was not against it.

Evie suddenly lost her balance as she stepped on her skirt due to her rushed steps. Thankfully, Elias caught her right on time, just before she could fall to her face.

"Your Highness, please. I just told you to slow do..." Elias could not continue his statement because he finally saw the look in Evie's face. Oh no... he had totally forgotten about the lady.

Hiding her face, Evie pulled away from Elias as she rushed forward again. Realizing that the lady was not happy at all and even looked as if her heart were crushed, Elias couldn't help but worry. He didn't expect her to be affected this badly and take it so harsh, since he knows that she still didn't allow the prince to touch her.

Could it be because she's worried that the Prince will eventually marry one of his concubines? He remembered how she reacted about the issue with Lady Thea back in the capital and Elias' worry skyrocketed. He was certain that the reason why she went to the little forest and encountered a beast was because she was angry and hurt, thinking that the prince was going to take on another wife.

Afraid that she was going to do something that would end up hurting herself, Elias slightly panicked. The prince would probably kill him if something happened to her. He must do something to calm her. He must reassure her that there was nothing to worry about.

"Milady, uhm... I hope you can understand this. I know you're already aware about the brewing war between the prince and the fake royal family so everyone is really unstable right now." He started explaining as he walked beside her.

But Evie continued, seemingly determined to finally reach her room and shut him out. "Everyone is urging the prince to sire a child to secure the royal bloodline. And that's why they could only resort to this. You know that vampires don't conceive children easily, right? So having him take more than two concubines would be the most ideal way to increase the chance of him siring a child."

Evie wished she could close her ears and shut down her mind. She didn't want to hear any more. Yes. She knew. She was completely aware about this matter that Elias had mentioned. The importance of the damn bloodline. Because her own family was suffering from this and unfortunately... her father did the same, just for the sake of producing an heir, since her mother was unable to give him a male child. She could not believe she was going to go through this as well.

"And you are already aware about the fact that it is almost impossible for a human and a vampire to have a child together, right? So... I hope you can understand why this had to happen, Milady. The people are desperate for a reassurance especially during this troubling times. They want to do everything and anything possible to secure the royal bloodline before the war starts.

So please don't worry, Milady. Because I am certain His Highness will never take another wife. You will be his only wife. The concubines' sole purpose is to bear His Highness an heir." He continued and Evie almost laughed.

These same things were told to her mother as well. She wondered how painful it was for her mother. Now that she was being told the same thing. She wondered how her mother managed herself during those times and most probably, until now. Because it already felt unbearable to her... even though she didn't even love him... She didn't? Then why was this impossible painful feeling running throughout her whole being right now?

Chapter 43 - Mad

Evie ended up spending the entire time waiting up for Gavriel in their room, sometimes pacing up and down, sometimes sitting on the bed in a daze – but he never did appear. She eventually fell into a troubled and fitful sleep, plagued with a painful and heavy heart.

When she finally woke up, her gaze immediately fell to the empty side of their bed before she turned her head towards the window. It was already night. Though she slept, it felt as though she did not get any rest but suffered greater mental torture if it was even possible.

A bitter smile curved on Evie's lips. Her resigned heart could only conclude that he must have gone ahead and slept with those beautiful concubines of his. No matter how she tried to deny her feelings nor ignore it, the reality is that she hated how her heart squeezed in pain. A soft bitter chuckle

escaped from her lips as she buried her face in her palms. She could not help but laugh because now that her husband finally did what she had been expecting from him to do since the very beginning... she was in utter despair... why in god's name did it hurt so bad? She was not prepared for something like this, for a pain like this. This was definitely not included in part of her plans. Things have truly taken a detour – and a major one at that!

The entire night, Evie did not bother to leave her chamber. Elias had brought her meals to her and she ate them silently, not even bothering to speak to Elias. The butler could not help but worry because she was acting indifferently again. Though she wasn't being ridiculously stubborn like last time back in the capital, she worried him this time because of her utter silence.

And just like that, morning came and it was time for her to go to bed again. She had just come out from the dressing room, dressed in a night gown and robe, when she froze at the sight that welcomed her.

The man she had been waiting for since yesterday was finally back in their room, wearing a white robe. His raven black hair was damp, indicating he had just come from the bath.

Evie's throat suddenly became very tight. All the thoughts that nearly drove her to tears were now crashing onto her like painful waves as she stood there as still as a statue, silently and forlornly looking at the general area where he was standing at.

She of course did not notice the yearning look in Gavriel's eyes as he gazed at her as though he had finally seen someone he had been longing to see after a long time. Though it was only a day and a night that had passed since they last saw each other.

With a soft smile, Gavriel took a couple of steps towards her.

She flinched and he halted. His eyes narrowed as his soft smile abruptly faded. Confusion danced in his eyes but a moment later, he smiled again. He remembered how this wife of his responded to his kisses the last time they were together. He could still vividly visualize in his mind's eye, her exact expression when he promised her that he would return and continue where they left off. So, despite her suddenly flinching again, Gavriel's thoughts were still positive.

"Are you mad at me, wife?" he asked, a hint of something mischievous blended in with his deep firm voice. His eyes never straying from her, holding her gaze, and never blinking that Evie was forced to break her eye contact with him.

"No, I'm not mad at you." Her words came out, hollow sounding and seemingly drained of all emotions that had Gavriel's smile fade suddenly and made him freeze in his tracks with narrowed eyes.

His gaze became serious as he moved closer to her. He could tell something was off.

Evie stepped back but Gavriel did not stop until he cornered her and Evie's back hit against the edge of the table.

"I think you are mad, Evie. Is it because I failed to accompany you for dinner?" he decided to test the waters.

"No, Your Highness." She answered so formally that it sent chills up his skin.

His gaze faltered again, not liking the sound of her voice and the way she refused to look at him.

"Stop lying to me like that wife, you're obviously upset." He said, his lips touched her ear and Evie flinched again. She attempted to slip away but Gavriel's hands and arms had effectively already caged her, trapping her between him and the table and his strong hands on both sides.

"I told you I'm not. Please let me go." Her voice was clipped, and short. Totally absent of the shyness and warmth he clearly remembered was still present the last time they had their last conversation.

He stared at her for a moment, his eyes darkening in displeasure.

"Stop being stubborn like this Evie... it's making me want to torture you."

Her eyes flew wide as she finally looked at him. The shock and accusation in her eyes made him bite down on his lower lip hard. Did she truly think that he was going to harm her? That he was even able to bring himself to do so? Gavriel couldn't help but let out a half-hearted chuckle at the thought.

"Don't be so shocked Evie... I'm talking about a sweet, pleasurable torture I am certain you would like." He said, his eyes glimmered mesmerizingly as he flashed a smile that was deadlier than anything else in her dictionary. A smile so tantalizing it was enough to make her forget about her predicament momentarily.

But she shook herself awake inwardly, determined not to let him entice her any further than he already had. What she went through the entire day and night had scarred her internally too much. Accepting his advances was the same as digging a hole for her inevitable demise in the end. What she had already experienced was enough to wake her up from this beautiful but deadly dream. It was time for her to face her reality before it was too late. She must stop dreaming now and remember and focus on keeping her vows. Or else... one day, she would find herself broken and helpless, long before any rescue would reach her.

"I said I am not lying. Why would I get mad just because you didn't eat with me?"

"Then tell me, why are you... could it be because you were waiting for me?" He blinked, surprise furrowing his brows.

"You... you're wrong." Her voice faltered and that was enough for Gavriel to realize that he was on the right track. And just like that, the sour look on his face dissipated. He was damned happy that she had actually been waiting for him.

"Good Lord, Evie..." His breathing hastened as he moved closer, his cool breath touching her lips. "I just warned you not to lie to me like that... Could it be that you're doing this on purpose because you want to experience the torture I'm talking about?"

His sensual deep voice and the way his breath caressed her face nearly drove Evie to give in to her inner temptations. But she bravely persevered with her iron will, reminding herself of the heartache she had just went through.

"There is no such thing as sweet torture. I at least know that's a joke."

"Oh no, Evie. I can show it to you right now –"

"Please let me go." She cut him off. Her voice dropped a few degrees and was colder as she placed her hands against his chest to push him away.

He stared at her, the lines of his face set in hard ridge, not expecting her cold response. His confusion was back again, and his patience was wearing thinner. And then, his eyes narrowed as though something came in his mind.

"Tell me, Evie... did something happen? Did someone upset you? Who is it?"

Chapter 44 - No One

Evie stiffened at his words but she maintained her indifference. "Nothing happened."

"Look at me, Evielyn." He said firmly. And when Evie refused to obey, Gavriel took a deep breath, closed his eyes for a brief moment, and opened them again. "Don't make me repeat myself..."

Evie finally turned, and she could not believe that even at this moment, the stunning beauty of the man before her still could cause her breath to catch in her throat. Why does he have to be this bewitching?

Trying her hardest to keep her emotion hidden from him, Evie looked at him with emotionless eyes.

The muscle in Gavriel's cheek ticked along his jaw but he stayed very still for a long moment, as if he were having his very own internal battle within him while scrutinizing his wife's face.

"Alright... I won't ask why you're acting like this anymore." His gaze softened. "Why don't you question me instead, wife? Won't you dig and find out the reason why I couldn't spend the day with you?" came his impossibly alluring voice, coaxing her.

Evie bit the inside of her lips. Why? Why did he have to be like this? Please... stop Gavriel... stop doing this to me... I don't want to get hurt anymore...

Forcing herself to remember the pain and telling herself that that was just the beginning of the turmoil she was going to experience if she continued acquainting herself to him, Evie managed to stop herself from giving in.

She looked into his eyes and had to swallow hard before she could say, "I'm not going to do that, Your Highness. I don't have the right to get upset even if you spend the day with someone else and I don't have the right to question why you can't spend the day with me. So, I won't be doing that because it would be selfish of me to deny you of your needs since I'm the one not allowing you to touch me."

Gavriel did not move at all and they just stood very close as Evie took a deep, shaky breath into her lungs, silently strengthening herself inwardly. The implication of her words struck Gavriel hard.

He laughed. It was a small derisive sound that left his lips as his face became taut. And then, he stared at her in stony silence.

For some reason, what she said broke through Gavriel's veneer of control.

"So, we're back to this again, huh. You think of me as nothing but a filthy monster, don't you?" he finally voiced out, after a long while. His voice was controlled but bruised and angered. "Alright then, since that's how you see me, I might as well do what you're expecting of me properly and go spend this night with as many women available in this castle." He hissed and then left the room.

Running his hands savagely through his hair, Gavriel clenched his fists tight. He couldn't believe he had just said those words. He could not believe how angry he was right now that he had to force

himself to walk out of her presence for fear that he would burst in anger. He just could not believe that she could drive him to the edge of his sanity so easily like that.

Damn, why did he say those words? Why the hell was he so angry that she still didn't trust him at all? It wasn't even a month yet since they had gotten married. He should have understood that she was still unable to trust him. But... why can't she still trust him after all this? Damn. No one could ever make him this emotional... no one could make him lose his temper like this better than her... damn, she was driving him insane.

Cursing inwardly, Gavriel nearly smashed a pillar with his fist. Good thing he managed to stop himself because he didn't want to scare her. The thought that she'd probably think there was an earthquake, or some disaster happening ultimately stopped him and he laughed shortly again. He left their chamber because he was feeling the rising anger within him and he did not want to show her his rage. He didn't want her to be terrified of him – not that she wasn't already.

He could only curse again. He needed to do something to calm down. This was bad. She's making him act like he wasn't himself!

As he walked tensely along the corridor, two young women suddenly approached him. He knew them. They were among the ladies the Duke and the other officials introduced to him years ago.

"Your Highness, we came to escort you." One of them said, smiling sweetly at him.

Gavriel groaned but he didn't even suspect anything fishy as his brain was much too occupied with Evie and his emotions. Thus, without question, Gavriel followed the ladies, thinking that duchess asked for him.

Meanwhile, inside the chamber, Evie was clutching her robe over her chest. His bruised and utterly offended expression and the anger in his voice... she remembered he wore that same face when she confronted him about Thea. Could it be that she had come to the wrong conclusion again this time around? But those ladies and the duchess' words... that he agreed... was it possible that...

Suddenly, her body moved on its own as she rushed towards the door, to chase after him.

However, as soon as she was in the corridor, her feet froze as she watched him entering a room with two of those beautiful women.

The moment the door closed; Evie felt as though something totally shattered inside her. And it seemed to suck all of her life blood from her limbs until there was nothing left of her.

She just stood there, staring at the closed door far off from where she stood, her mind turning blank.

Eventually, her feet moved, and she turned to where she came from. She walked silently until she entered their chamber. The door closed silently behind her.

Her gaze fell towards the closed windows before she approached it, abruptly shoving it wide open to let the freezing cold wind blow into the room and on her.

The tears that had threatened to spill over earlier did not come, only a numbing pain. Her robe fell on the floor and she moved closer to the window as if hoping for the air to freeze the pain in her heart and mind as well.

Staring expressionlessly at the space outside, the corner of her lips curved up as she sucked in all the despair, so deep it was making it hard for her to breathe. Oh, Evie... look at the predicament that you have put yourself into...

She laughed mirthlessly. The thought that perhaps this was her punishment for trying to break her promise of not falling for him made her feel even more miserable and wretched.

Chapter 45 - First And Foremost

Gavriel finally lifted his head from the thoughts of his maddening wife that were plaguing his mind and realized that no one else were in the room but the ladies who were with him. This made him narrow his eyes dangerously.

The bolder one of the two women was already undressing in front of him. "Your Highness, we could tell you're in a very foul mood. Did your wife kick you out of your bed again? Do not worry, we are here to serve and please you, Your Highness." The other woman whispered to him as she caressed his chest seductively. "Let us help you relax." She added as the other woman approached him, naked.

Gavriel felt the rage he was trying so hard to suppress rapidly explode out of him. "Who gave you both the permission to do this!?" he snarled in a wintry, hostile voice.

"Y-Your Highness, pl-please don't think about anything else and –"

His eyes immediately burned red, and aura flamed outwards, causing the women to be knocked back a few steps and they even started to tremble just by the sight of his fiery red eyes and the dark and suffocating power emanating within him. The malevolent aura that was swelling around him felt as though it was choking them. Why was the prince so furious at them?

"Answer me." He did not need to raise his voice. But with it sounding so livid and menacing, it instantly made the vampiresses cower in fear.

"The... the duke... he told us to come here to serve you once your wife kicks you out..."

The women's confession startled Gavriel as he looked at them in disbelief for a couple of seconds before he roared out for his butler as he thundered out of the room.

"Yes, Your Highness, you called?" Elias panted out as he came running, aware of the prince's currently volatile temper.

"Did the duke really send these women here into the castle?" he ground out through tightly clenched teeth, barely keeping his rage in check. His eyes were as scarlet blood, spitting out lava.

Knowing his prince's fury was barely holding on by a thread and that this would probably his end if he did not speak, Elias could only answer him. He should have long known that this stubborn prince would never agree to take any concubines. Why did he allow himself to believe the rumours without consulting the prince first?

"So, you're saying that ... my wife knew about these women?" he choked out, not sure if he would just explode with the torrential anger that he was holding back.

"Ye... yes, Your Highness. The duchess was the one who told her you agreed to... finally have concubines. She also had added that if it weren't for your agreement, the duke and other officials would not have dared to arrange these women for you." Elias decided that he would not go wrong

by telling Prince Gavriel everything that was discussed between the duchess and Evie yesterday, just to be on the safe side.

Gavriel was so shocked he was beyond speechless. How could something like this happen just by him leaving the castle for a day?

Gritting his teeth and growling low, Gavriel threw a deadly glare towards Elias, because he already knew that the butler had believed the duchess every word as well.

"Have the duke and everyone involved in this to head for the throne hall. NOW!" The prince ordered ferociously before he turned and headed back to the chamber he shared with his wife. He must fix this misunderstanding with her first and foremost!

Elias stood frozen in fear for a moment before he finally managed to move his legs that were trembling like stiff twigs in winter. He could only silently pray that the prince could fix this issue, and everything would be alright between the couple before he come to the throne hall and dealt with everyone else. If things cannot be smoothed out with the princess, with the look on his face and the way he was behaving, there would definitely be bloodshed. Heavens! What have they done? Unfortunately, he was a part of this misunderstanding too. This was big trouble!!!

The very moment Gavriel entered their chamber, he was welcomed by the sight of his wife standing as still as a statue by the window, facing outside. Her white night gown and her silvery locks dancing in the cold breeze blowing on her and into their room.

In his eyes, she was like a goddess – a sad and lonesome goddess.

Knowing that she had yet to sense his presence, Gavriel advanced on her. And as expected, as soon as she realized his presence, she stiffened. He stopped just short of touching her. Damn. His heart ached thinking of how he had hurt her so badly.

But he could not help but feel a happiness deep inside. If she was acting like this towards him again because of such a misunderstanding, this must only mean that she wanted him for herself, wasn't it? It amazed him how his burning rage dissipated like mist before the sun just at the thought of it. It astounded him how she could make him feel all these strong and varying spectrums of emotions all at once. The magic this woman had a hold on him...

Fighting the urge to just go ahead and grab her in his arms, Gavriel called out her name tenderly as he took baby steps to get closer to her. "Evie... I'm sorry," his voice soft and warm, showing her that he came in peace.

Evie did not answer.

"This is a misunderstanding, wife. Look at me..." he urged but Evie remained immobile. When his gaze fell on her hands hanging loosely at her sides and saw her pale clenched fists and the goosebumps all over her skin, Gavriel realized how cold the blowing breeze must be to her.

Alarmed, Gavriel quickly reached out to grab her shoulders to make her face him and to move her away from the window to close it. But the very moment he looked at her face, he froze.

Seeing her crystalline tears continuously rolling down her cold cheeks and her beautiful eyes, clear and full of anguish made his mind freeze and go numb with shock.

Chapter 46 - Kiss Me

"Evie..."

Not knowing what to do, Gavriel slowly lifted his hands and reverently touched her face, resting them below her ears. Her cheeks were icy cold it made his heart ache even more but what struck him the hardest were her tears. "I'm sorry..." his voice cracked a little and he then inched forward, erasing the space between them, he buried his face in her hair and held her, almost desperately. "I'm so sorry... this is a misunderstanding. Those ladies. I never allowed it. I never agreed. I didn't even know the duke had called them here." He explained as fast as he could. "Please. Don't cry. I was outside the castle since yesterday, surveying the frontlines in preparation for the war. It was so sudden as I received an urgent report informing that the crown prince was on his way here to siege the city. I only arrived a while ago and came straight to you."

Evie couldn't believe what she was hearing. The warmth of him as he hugged her so tightly, the desperate tone he was using, the cracks appearing in his voice ... his apologies and his explanations – what she was feeling that moment was beyond words for her to describe and all she could do was sob even harder. She could not even tell if she was weeping like this because of the pain he had caused her or because of the relief that had enveloped her entire being from hearing his explanations.

When she felt his presence just a while ago, the emotions that she was struggling to keep at bay immediately burst through her so hard she had not even realized she was already crying until he told her.

"I'm so sorry... forgive me..." he sounded sluggish, disoriented and utterly apologetic, hugging her tighter and kissing her head over and over in desperation, hoping to make her feel better. He would do anything in this world just to be able to have her stop crying.

The feeling was inexplicable to Evie. How was it possible that this one male could make her feel all that pain and then just as instantly melt them so easily just by hugging her tight and telling her that he was sorry?

And just like that her nightmare was over, and she was in a dream again. And she could not help but to succumb to the warmth, the comfort, and peace of his dreamlike embrace.

It took a full minute before Evie could control her sobs enough to finally speak.

"Re... really?" Was the first word that came from her mouth. Her fingers still clenched tightly onto his robe, wanting him to tell her again that he did not agree to have concubines. "You really... didn't agree to it?"

Gavriel pulled away to look down at her face, his expression inexplicable as both his hands cupped her face, his thumbs gently wiping away her tears which were still flowing. "I can call the duke here right now -"

"But I saw you... with two of those ladies... I saw..."

"You came after me?" Gavriel's eyes widened. "Oh God Evie, that was... im so sorry I made such a grave mistake. I followed them without question because I was consumed with my emotions and I thought they weren't up to something. But believe me, I didn't touch any of them, love. I told you, there's no woman I ever wanted -"

He could not even finish his statement because Evie suddenly wrapped her arms around his waist and buried herself in his embrace again. Her action made Gavriel froze, looking as though something unbelievable had just happened to him. Her, hugging him on her own accord... he couldn't believe what was happening. Did the sun just rise from west today?

"Does this mean..." he uttered and when he felt her nodding her head as her grip on him tightened, as if she had no intention in letting him go, relief and gladness welled up within, swallowing him whole. He felt that unexplainable swelling in his heart that he could not stop himself from smiling.

Gavriel, bent his head and his lips landed on her face. "Oh, Evie..." he whispered, his voice becoming huskier as he moved until Evie felt her back against something. "Kiss me..." he asked, after lifting her and placing her to sit on the table behind her.

Their gazes locked on each other as he maneuvered himself between her legs, recreating their exact position in the library before they last parted. And before she knew it, she closed her eyes, the remnants of tears flowed down her cheeks and she reached out and kissed him. She was stiff at first, but as soon as Gavriel opened his mouth and took over the reins, she soon found herself clinging to him weakly, succumbing to the drowning pleasure of his savage and passionate kisses.

His mouth moved over hers, again and again, dizzying and blatantly sexual, and so passionate she could feel her blood racing along her veins until the dark current of sensation made her feel like a boneless puddle of jelly. Everything seemed to be disappearing and she was in a dreamland with just the two of them existing.

Gavriel's hands were back at the edge of the table as his lips strayed from her mouth and travelled downwards. A low, masculine growl of pleasure and need escaped his throat as his kissed trailed from her jawline to her neck – sounding so hungry as if he wanted to consume her like a highly sought-after delicacy.

"Evie..." he groaned with need. He could hardly think straight, and neither could she.

His mouth was suddenly on her breast, making her gasp. He bit against the clothes covering her, until he caught her nipple between his teeth in a light clamp. Evie's eye flew open, and he soothed her, his breath and tongue now softly licking her peak through her night gown. All Evie could do was shudder helplessly at these new sensations she was experiencing, remembering his intimate words back then, when he told her he'd suck her breast.

She suddenly registered feeling his teeth against her skin before hearing the sounds of ripping garment that reached her muddled consciousness. He did not even give her the chance to react. Because his mouth was already closed over the tip of her breast.

He gave a soft grunt of satisfaction while she gasped and squirm at the foreign and wild sensations of his mouth moving sensually over her breast. His tongue licked her nipple and softly tugged and then sucked it. Evie bit down hard on her lip to keep from crying out.

What he was doing to her was too much that she felt she was going to faint, and yet at the same time... she did not want him to stop. Something unknown was happening to her... her hands moved to his head, clutching his hair, and pulling at him as her muscles tightened up, her senses opening, reaching, wanting something she could not quite explain.

"Fuck, Evie... yes... like that... hold on to me, love..." he groaned, his deep voice vibrating against her nipple and his lips moved to the other.

The fire of desire between them was burning so wild, it could hardly leave any room for sanity to remain.

She clung desperately onto him, as he kissed and suck her other nipple, her body shuddering with sustained shivers because of the crawling heat his tongue was sending down to her toes.

"Gav... riel... wait..." she moaned as her fingers clenched onto more of his damp silky hair. Her breathy voice was the pure sound of tortured pleasure that sent shivers down Gavriel's arms.

He pulled his head away, his breathing hard and hot against her taut and wet nipple. His eyes dark but seemed to be burning with fire and then he knelt on one knee and suddenly he was between her parted legs.

Evie's eyes grew wide when he licked the inside of her thighs, moving further inside her gown while his eyes never straying from her. Overwhelmed and shocked, Evie's hands that were clenched in his hair shakily pushed at him. "No... that's... oh, my... you can't..." she stammered, heart slamming wildly inside her chest, not knowing what to say or do.

"Don't worry, wife..." he told her as he licked his lips so incredibly sensuously it had shattered whatever hesitation that was left in her. "I won't touch unless you say so... I'll only kiss you... here..." he added as he nuzzled his head deeper between her legs.

Chapter 47 - Pleasure

Shocked with utter embarrassment, Evie automatically reached down and grabbed Gavriel's hair to stop his face from reaching her most private area. Her face was as red as a cooked lobster as she looked down at him with wide-opened eyes.

Gavriel peeked up at her and his eyes glimmered more startlingly than usual. A hint of devious yet relaxed and hypnotic smile graced the corners of his mouth.

Without averting his eyes from hers, he licked her inner thigh, causing Evie to tremble and gasp again. Her hands on his head grasped onto his hair tighter and he took advantage of her disorientation, moving further towards his goal. His breath was hot as he trailed his searing tongue along her soft skin.

"Don't worry, I'll make you feel good, wife." He said huskily, sounding as though he was soothing her with his mouth and tongue. "Open your legs for me, love..." he coaxed, and she did not know how she ended up doing so when he was not even holding her legs with his hands.

She could feel him smiling against her intimate place when she withdrew her shaking hand from his head. "Yes... like that, let me please you Evie..." He purred and he pressed his erotic mouth against her sex.

"Oh, god..." she jolted, instantly flooded with mortification. "No... wait... n-not there..." She uttered a hoarse protest and tried to move but she found herself without any strength. "Gav... riel... you can't..."

He lifted his face again, but he withdrew just enough for him to speak. "I can't? But I'm not going to touch you, Evie... just kissing... no touching..." there was something wicked in his eyes as he whispered hoarsely against her intimate flesh, sending strange waves of sensation rolling in exquisite pleasure throughout her entire body. "I'm not going to break my promise, love. I won't –"

"That's not... what I mean... It's... I-it's dirty down there... god... not there –"

"Oh, Evie..." he smiled, the glimmers in his eyes became even brighter, fierier. "It's not, love... you're beautiful... so beautiful..."

Evie sobbed as his mouth kissed her sex again. She could do nothing but to keep her eyes tightly closed at the feel of his wicked mouth and tongue lashing against her. What was this? She had no idea something like this was... oh, god...

Every lick of his tongue sent electrifying heat zipping right down to her toes – making her bite down on her lips hard to keep herself from crying out in ecstasy. But the moment his tongue brush over a certain sweet spot, she cannot help but just quiver and release a moan from her throat.

She felt him groan against her and then he suckled the taut bud of her sex, making her twist and grab his raven black hair. He did not budge despite her tight hold on his hair, and she could not move an inch away. At first, he licked and sucked her slowly but as moments ticked by, his pace continued to increase.

She could feel how wet she was now and to her mortification, her shame seemed to have long left her as her body arched and gasped, helplessly widening her thighs for him. Her body language was literally asking him for more.

His warm and skilful tongue danced across her pulsing flesh until Evie's heartbeats seemed to drum in rhythm against her head.

"God, Evie... you're so responsive..." came his husky murmur and she forced herself to look down. Her vision was blurry as their gazes met. "You're so sweet, love..." he added and as though something snapped within him, he ate her again, but this time, his movements were hungrier and wilder.

Heat blazed over every pore of her skin and she knew her face was contorted and flushed with pleasure.

He did not relent until her toes curled and there was a strange and wicked tension that coiled deep within her belly. She did not even realize that her leg was now hooked over on his strong shoulder.

Gavriel slowed and gazed up at her once again, making sure to look at her face in astonishment.

"Do you want me to stop?" he asked, his gaze was impossibly intense, yet he seemed to be teasing her. Stop? How could she even...

Evie shook her head, face aflame and biting down on her lips due to her embarrassment. He flashed that devilish smile and he licked her while maintaining eye contact. The sight of his erotic gaze as he did that and everything else sent strong ripples throughout her body.

His mouth nudged past her folds and something strong and wet and hot probed the entrance of her body. She jerked in surprise.

"Oh, god... wait... Gav..." she squirmed, tugging at his hair again but he stayed with her. His strong tongue began to move, compellingly and demandingly.

He did not pause despite her moans. He stroked and tormented her twitching flesh, not allowing her even a single moment to catch her breath. He feasted on her without reservation, and she could only

surrender to the excruciating pleasure he was subjecting her to. This pleasure... this wildness... it was too much for her... and all she could say was his name...

"Gav... ah, please... please..." She curled her fingers in his dark hair, desperately pulling on him now as her flesh began to twitch under his torments. His tongue continued bathing her sex with warm strokes until the sensation drove her higher and higher.

Something euphoric flooded her and at last she shuddered in rapture, and squirmed as she was unable to control her limbs.

Gavriel however, did not pull away. Instead, he stayed right where he was and continued feasting on her as if he were adamant on drawing out every last ripple of gratification, he could get coming from her.

When she finally stilled, looking all wilted and dazed, he gathered her in his arms and gently settled her on their bed. His face filled with satisfaction as he looked at her.

Sitting next to her, Gavriel, bent over and planted kisses on her damp eyes. "Did you like it?" he whispered huskily close to her ears, despite clearly knowing her answer.

Still disoriented, Evie opened her lips to say something but Gavriel suddenly sealed it with his and kissed her hard. When he pulled away, she was breathless while he was smiling mischievously, his gaze beaming with intense but still controlled desire.

"You forgot to give any restriction, when you allowed me to kiss you, love. That means I am allowed to kiss every... single... nook of your body." He triumphantly announced it to her as his gaze surveyed her with a predatory greed and desire. And I'll enthusiastically and hungrily do so... I'll kiss you every chance I get... every part of your body, as long, as deep, and as wild as I like until you finally give in to me and allow me to touch you. I'll make you beg me to touch you...

Chapter 48 - Solution

Reluctantly, he finally eased away and pulled the blanket over her. He was about to stand when Evie reached out and tugged on his robe.

"Where... where are you going?" she asked, her face suddenly anxious as her fingers tightened on his robe without realisation.

"I have an errand to take care of." He responded, as his gaze tilted towards the door and the commotion that was going on outside for a long while now.

"Errand?"

"Mm. Don't worry, I'm not going to leave again without telling you first." he smiled contentedly and kissed her forehead, causing her colour to rise again. "I'll come back as soon as I deal... as soon as I am done saying a few words to them."

...

The duke and everyone else involved were waiting anxiously in the throne hall where it was silent and tense as they all stood before Gavriel.

When they were suddenly summoned by the prince with such an urgency, they could not help but feel threatened. Aside from his stubbornness, Prince Gavriel had been a good and incredibly sensible leader. He was the kind of ruler who does not make his subject serve him out of fear as he

never acted rashly nor according to his emotions. Up until now, he had never made any decision worthy of criticism except for the issue on his marriage to the human princess and regarding his bloodline. He had almost no flaws, if not for the fact that he was so adamant in being a one-woman man. If only he did not marry a human.

"I see that everyone does not want to respect my decision now," Gavriel said, sitting in his chair in an utterly relaxed manner.

"Your Highness. Please understand us. This is not about disrespecting your decision. We are only doing our best to help you. You know that you, having an heir, is the only way to secure your bloodline and you know we are running out of time!" The old Duke burst out. "This is the only way for us, your subjects, to be at ease! We only want to protect you and your bloodline!"

Silence enveloped the throne hall following the old Duke's outburst as everyone now was looking at the prince with intensity, showing him their determination on not regretting the actions they did.

However, their will of defiance did not last longer than a few seconds as something heavy, dark, and ominous suddenly crept across their skin.

Gavriel laughed softly but after hearing that quick and soft sound, for some reason, it sounded as if it was the most sinister thing, they had heard for a long time now.

"So, this is all because every single one of you here are actually scared to death, huh..." Gavriel said. Everyone was flinching where they stood, except the five elite personal soldiers of his. He rose from his seat. His aura was so heavy they felt like something poisonous and demonic was seeping out of his body.

The vampires, even the old duke and the few ancient vampires around could swear they never experienced something like this before. They were dumbstruck and actually terrified just by this prince approaching them? Just what was going on?

Before they knew it, Gavriel was right in front of the Duke, his hand already landed heavily on his shoulder.

"It appears, I don't have any choice but to teach you a lesson." He whispered and something inexplicable happened.

Everyone collapsed on their knees as if a force just pushed them down. And they were helpless. Terror filled their eyes as they looked up at the prince. Their gaze filled with nothing but fear and confusion, asking themselves just who this person was before them. What did he do to them?

Gavriel's gaze was bright but piercingly cold. Colder than anything they have ever seen. This was not the eyes of the prince they knew.

"All of you listen well..." he spoke, looking down at them. "There is no one for you to fear but me. I vowed to protect this place... I'll destroy anyone who dares approach it with my own two hands..."

The vampires could not even move as they listened and looked at him. He was no longer speaking like a prince, but a king... a terrifying king they had never seen before.

"So, all you have to do is obey me and never... dare... anger me again. Because the next time... It won't be bloodless."

As soon as the throne hall's door closed behind the prince and his men, the vampires finally let go of their breaths and moved. Their knees still slightly shaking as they stood up one by one.

"I never... experienced anything like this before." One of the grey-haired ancient vampires said to the duke. "I don't remember the past royalties having such kind of power as well. Just what kind of power does he even have?"

"I don't know." The Duke shook his head, but a smile played in his lips. "But I now understand what the late empress told me before... She told me the prince is much more powerful than we could ever imagine. And she was certain that one day, he would definitely take back this empire with his own power. So, this is what she meant when she told me all we need is him."

...

"Your Highness, don't you think you overdid it?" Zolan who was walking beside Gavriel said as the six men walked through the corridor.

"Agreed. Some of them were shaking so bad." Levy nodded as he yawned lazily. Though the men actually thought that everyone in the hall were actually lucky. Because if the prince didn't manage to solve this misunderstanding and the princess became even more distant from him, they were certain that the great hall would have been reeking with blood by now.

"But I guess, they'll finally stop being scared now."

"Oh yes, they will not be scared of the emperor anymore because they're more afraid of His Highness now." His men shook their heads.

Gavriel pinched the skin between his brows and let out a sigh. There was no more trace of the darkness he had shown in the throne hall.

"That's better. Scaring them is better than me losing control and ending up killing one or more of them. They're my subjects after all." He paused and looked at Samuel. "So? Why did you leave your post and come here?"

"I just came to tell you the crown prince is really planning for an attack." The big man said, causing Gavriel to rub his neck lazily. "And we found out he might be bringing a half-blooded vampire with him."

The expression in Gavriel's face immediately changed. "A half-blood huh," he muttered, and something gleamed in his eyes. "At least, he's taking me quite seriously then."

"Yes, Your Highness. That's why I'm sorry but you're mistaken if you think you have the luxury to stay with your wife anytime soon. You have to be there at the front lines at all times since we do not know when they would suddenly launch their attack." Samuel responded casually and as all the men expected, Gavriel cursed in displeasure.

However, a moment later, Gavriel's darkened face lit up and he flashed a satisfied and mischievous smile, making his men wonder what tricks he has come up with this time.

"There's a way for me to stay with her in this situation Samuel." He said, looking happy with the solution he had found.

All his men's eyes looked at him and waited for what he had to say next. "Since I can't leave the frontline, I'll just take her there." He grinned widely, satisfied with his own solution.

Everyone: ". . ."

Gavriel: "The moment they come I'll just ask one of you to immediately send her back to the castle. Problem solved."

Chapter 49 - Here

Clad in a furry and thick white cloak, Evie stood at the top of the tallest watchtower at the City's entrance. Gavriel was standing next to her – a sight to behold as well as he stood tall and elegant clad entirely in black – holding her hand, and watching her silvery hair being blown behind her by the gentle cold breeze.

Evie had her eyes fixed at the vast snow-white meadow spread out before them, realizing from what her eyes were looking at, that Dacia was truly a fortified city. The giant ancient walls that seemed to be made from black stones looked so formidable and impregnable. No human army could ever manage to breach these fortifications and seize such a place like this.

Now that she was looking at the full view of the entire fortress, and saw what a formidable stronghold Dacia actually was, Evie could not help but look on with wonder. Why did the Dacians ever thought of creating and building such gigantic walls in the first place? Was there an unknown reason that prompted this decision? These walls were definitely not made to stop human invasion, given how sturdy and durable they were. It was obvious they were constructed with the consideration of withstanding not just normal physical attacks, but more so attacks which are more supernatural and magical in nature.

She looked at Gavriel, curious and wanting to ask more on the questions running about in her mind, but the moment their gazes met, Evie found that she could not speak. His gaze was so intense and beautiful that Evie was rendered speechless and motionless from it. Then her face slowly turned hot as images from their previous intimate encounter just hours ago flashed in her head.

"Yes?" he said after a while, a slow and sensuous smile spreading across his lips.

Evie blinked and her eyes flitted away, utterly embarrassed at her own thoughts. "I... I just want to ask a question." She managed to choke out, trying her best to clear her mind.

"Go ahead, Evie." He encouraged, not taking his eyes off her.

"Why... why are the walls here so huge?"

Gavriel finally averted his gaze and glanced at the walls below them. "They have built these walls long ago when the beasts were still roaming around the Northern Empire."

"Beasts?"

"Yes. The beasts residing in the Middle Land. Long ago, they were the notorious enemies of the vampires. There will always be clashes and bloodshed every time the beasts come into contact with any vampires and vice versa. However, at some point, and for reasons that were still unknown, the beasts suddenly stopped setting foot onto lands which are claimed by the vampires. Since then, they only roam around in the Middle Lands and within the boundaries of the Dark Valley to these days."

Evie had heard about the beasts residing in the Middle Land even back during the time she was still living in the Southern Empire. She was told that these beasts were not only very powerful but also were extremely destructive in nature and were all man-eating monsters. However, these were now

not the main concern of humanity and it seems to be that the same was true with the vampires as well since the beasts does not seem to be posing much of a threat to anyone staying out of the regions they occupy anymore.

"Do you think... there will come a day when the beasts would suddenly leave their territories and start attacking again?" Evie asked absentmindedly as she stared at the steep peaks of icy mountains from afar. She was not facing Gavriel and thus, did not see how her question instantly changed his expression.

"What do you think?" he asked instead of answering, causing Evie to return her gaze to him. "Do you think that there is that possibility of that happening one day?" his voice was deep and sombre.

For some reason, Evie felt that there was something she could not understand – some undercurrents that she was not privy to – and in that brief moment, she shivered, and goosebumps broke on her arms. But then, she sneezed all of a sudden, and the strange atmosphere disappeared before she could dwell any longer on it.

Gavriel reached out for her hood and gently covered her head. "Alright, the air is getting colder and it's time for you to go back and rest. I just brought you up here to show you around for a moment." He said, after which he scooped her up into his arms securely and leapt downwards as he speaks.

In no time, they were back again in Gavriel's quarters which was situated in one of the towers nearer towards the gate. The place was small compared to their room in the castle, but it was not that bad at all. In fact, it looked quite comfortable for a room in such a location.

Silently, he reached out for her cloak and took it off, surprising Evie. He then brought both their cloaks out of the room, and Evie suspected it was to knock off the snow that gathered on them and also to allow them to warm up and dry a little. When he came back to their chamber a little while later, he had asked her to come along with him and she just nodded obediently without question. She had the thought that he must just want to bring her somewhere else to sightsee for a while before heading back to his room.

She watched him placed her cleaned off cloak on top of a chair as well as his. She got absentminded just looking at his long tapering fingers manipulating their cloaks and wondered how can a male's fingers be so appealing and able to hold one's attention? Blushing at the direction her thoughts were headed towards, Evie shook her head mentally and directed her gaze onto his face, seemingly deep in her own thoughts.

Noticing her questioning gaze, Gavriel moved close to her and bent over. "We're not going back to the castle, wife. So, you're going to sleep here... with me."

Chapter 50 - Where?

Evie glanced at the bed and innocently nodded. But the next moment, her expression changed.

"But... why?" she asked hesitantly. "Did something happen between you and the duke?"

"No, love. Nothing happened. I simply said some kind words to him as a reminder and everything's fine now." He immediately answered with a smile. "I am needed here and since I don't want to leave you all alone in the castle, I decided to bring you here with me. Moreover, I don't want any more misunderstanding between us. Given our track record, I'm afraid that something will happen again if I leave you, so I'd better keep you close to me. This is alright with you, right?" he gave her a

mischievous grin, letting her know that he was teasing her and taking the sting out of his words, just in case she felt slighted at him referencing all their previous misunderstandings with each other.

When Evie just stared at him without answering, Gavriel craned his head and moved his face closer to hers until his breath was fanning her face. A slight line appeared between his brows as he scrutinized her face. "You don't like it?" he asked, his face turned a little dark. "Is it because this room's shab –"

Gavriel choked the remaining words he was trying to say as Evie's body suddenly crashed against his. Her fragile arms wrapped around his waist as she buried her face against his chest.

And he stood completely frozen, totally not expecting this reaction from his wife at all. However, he was not one to complain and was absolutely thrilled at Evie's proactive response to him.

"It's alright with me. I like it. This place isn't shabby at all." Her voice was slightly muffled from burying her face in his chest as she responded hastily, her fingers clutching onto a handful of his clothes. "I'll stay here with you." She added softly, her voice becoming emotional.

Apart from all the heartaches she had went through, Evie had been lonely. Sitting inside her room all day, alone with no one to talk to had left her feeling so isolated from the rest of the world. She had to keep her distance from the vampires to avoid tempting them so it would be impossible for her to find anyone to speak to and be comfortable with even if days or even months pass by. One human maid or anyone she could comfortably talk to without worrying would be enough but finding that someone in this place full of vampires was close to impossible. Because even Elias only gets near her occasionally. She knew that everyone was keeping their distance for her own sake. And to compound to the problem, she could not go out, knowing that her presence alone would cause immense trouble for the peaceful vampires residing in this place.

She had tried to ignore this feeling since she left her home, telling herself that it was normal for her to feel lonely and that she could do nothing but to just endure it and get used to being alone. But it had been hard. She was naturally a people person and love to chat and be around others.

Every time Gavriel left her, the depressing feeling of lonesomeness crept persistently within her. The moment he said he did not want to leave her all alone, her heart had swelled in pleasure, thankful that she need not spend the rest of her days and nights here being confined within her room and all by herself again.

"Thank you for taking me with you." She added breathlessly, still hugging onto him tightly. "I really don't mind staying at the front lines." She pulled her upper body away from his and tilted her head to look at him when she did not hear any response from him.

And it was then that she finally realized what position they were currently in and that she was hugging him. Tightly at that.

Evie blinked and her cheeks reddened, visibly embarrassed. She snatched her hands off him and Gavriel, the statue, finally moved.

"You're not playing fair, Evie..." he complained playfully, his voice suddenly deep and husky as he moved close to her, walking her back until Evie's back hit the wall. "I am not allowed to touch you, but you're allowed to touch me whenever and wherever you want? Such unfair treatment, my dear wife... tsk, tsk, tsk..." his voice was now ragged with desire and despite her already being cornered, he still didn't stop advancing in tiny, measured steps.

"Now look what you did..." he whispered as he settled his forehead against the cool wall and moved his body even closer until Evie felt something hot, hard, and long poking against her lower abdomen. "Take responsibility, love..." he added in a pained and rough tone as he pressed himself against her.

The way his breath snagged, and the tortured sound of his voice made Evie look slightly alarmed.

"Are... are you alright?" she asked, worried. And he could not help but let out a quick amused laugh as he heard the genuine worry in her voice.

"No. I'm not alright." He continued teasing her, wanting to see how she would react. He would never be bored of her and her reactions.

Her alarm intensified. She reached out for his face and the warmth of her palms cradling his face fanned that fire that was blazing within into an inferno. His member swelled and twitched, as her gaze widened when she looked down involuntarily. She did not know where to fix her eyes – either down there or to keep it locked on his face.

"What's wrong? Are you in pain? I should call for help."

"No, love. You're the only one who can help me right now."

"What should I do? Please tell me. How can I help you?"

Gavriel's eyes glimmered with primal fiery need. He could not believe his ears. This was his chance. He should ask her to let him touch her now. She would definitely agree since she was slightly panicking.

His desire for her was so strong it nearly forced the words out of his lips. No! He cannot do that. He did not want to take advantage of her kindness. He would not go to the extent of tricking her. That was not the way he wanted things between them to develop. He wanted her to give in to him willingly and desperately, begging him to touch her... but not this way...

"Touch me." Came the hypnotic voice and Evie stilled, blinking.

Her lips opened and then closed, her disbelieving eyes fixed on his taut face and to the grey fire in his bright eyes that seemed like a lure more potent than any potion existed.

"Touch... touch you... where?" she swallowed hard.

He bit his lower lip and released it very slowly. He retracted one hand that was against the wall, without averting his gaze from hers, never blinking. His hand moved towards his trousers, to the pulsing and hot bulge that had been insistently prodding at her.

"Here, love."