

SPELLBOUND 431

Chapter 431 - The Queen

"A plan..." Kione echoed and Evie nodded before her gaze fell on Azrael.

The large, striking man flashed a polite smile at Evie and bowed a little. "I'm Azrael, Lord of Axinia. I am honoured to be meeting with the queen of the light faes for the first time. That devil sprout sure is one luck –" Azrael could not finish his sentence as Kione elbowed him.

"Don't worry about this guy, Queen. It's okay if he listens in to the discussion." Kione told Evie, "Now could you tell us about this plan of yours, Queen Evielyn?"

Evie then returned her gaze to Kione and after the dark fae lord dismissed the soldiers from the scene, Evie explained to them about her plan and how she had wanted to carry it out.

The two lords did not take long before they caught up with what she had wanted to do and had jumped in and fully agreed with her plan. Since there was no need to convince them anymore, the duo let Leon and Zanya quickly leave Yryzia after Evie instructed them on all the things that she had wanted them to do.

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Back in the room, Gideon was brooding as he leaned against the wall closest to the bed. His blue eyes never left and had been constantly fixed on the sleeping girl's face – almost not blinking at all – as a female dark fae was attending to Vera. Gideon had called for the female to help with the cleaning up of Vera's wounds. His heavy gaze had prompted the female dark fae to attend to the human girl's wound with the utmost care possible as the prince had instructed and required of her.

"My lord..." the dark fae lifted her face carefully to look at him. "I will need to remove her garments to continue her treatment. Looking at the condition she is in, I'm afraid she has more wounds that are covered under her clothes." the female respectfully informed Gideon.

Gideon's brows furrowed slightly but eventually, he shifted and spoke. "Go ahead." He said before turning to walk off towards the large double windows and stood there, looking outside.

He did not move nor spoke again until the female dark fae's soft gasp pulled his attention back to the human girl lying on the bed.

His head snapped towards the bed and the dark fae was looking at him with slightly widened eyes. Her mouth opened and closed a few times, wanting to say something. But each time her words seemed to get stuck just before they could leave her mouth.

"What is the matter? Speak up!" he asked sharply and the light fae spoke in hesitation.

"I just... her back... My Lord...!" Her words were broken and unintelligible, not quite making sense. She stuttered as if unsure whether she should tell him about this or not. She did not know if such detail was necessary for her to inform her lord.

Gideon approached and the moment he saw the multiple and awful marks of old and new lashes on her back, he suddenly halted in his tracks before even reaching the bed. Her back was literally covered with scars and wounds. There was not a single spot that was clear on her back from below her shoulders right down to the small of her back. One look and it was enough for him to see the

abuse she had endured. He could not even tell how many times she must have had been lashed to have such a collection of long streaking scars across that pale and frail back.

Before he knew it, his fingers were clenched into fists. But just then, the door suddenly swung open, and his clenched fists loosened up as he lifted his head to look at that direction.

Evie walked in through the door with Kione and Azrael trailing behind her. She was about to speak when she saw that Vera was being held by a female dark fae in a sitting position.

"As expected." She heard Kione sighed before murmuring softly behind her. "Of course, he would refuse to even touch her."

Confusion flashed in Evie's eyes at the soft murmur she heard but she did not have the luxury to even turn and look questioningly at Kione because her attention was caught by the appalled look on the female dark fae's face. Immediately, she rushed over to the bed and gasped as she caught sight of the condition of Vera's back. She had bad feelings and had somewhat expected some sort of marks of abuse to be on her. But she did not expect it to be this severe!

She was speechless and could only look at that scarred back with a mix of pity, hurt, and anger at the awful sight.

Evie sat and immediately brought out the medicine Leon had handed over to her before he had left with Zanya. As she applied the medicine on the various wounds on Vera, Gideon left the room without speaking a single word, taking the two lords along with him.

With the help of the female dark fae, Evie made sure to tend on her poor friend with a heavy heart. She could not believe Vera had suffered to this extent. It was like she had been treated worse than a slave. And to think that she had been sold to please a man with all these hidden wounds and scars all over her body. Was Lady Ansley the one who inflicted all these lashes? She had truly gone hopelessly mad if she was the one who did this to her own flesh and blood!

After wrapping all her wounds with clean bandages, Evie and the dark fae made her wear a clean, comfortable, and heavy cotton night gown before finally settling Vera back to lie down on the bed and covered her with a blanket.

Evie touched her forehead and was relieved that she did not seem to be running a fever.

They then left the room together and Evie found the two lords standing silently along the corridor. Evie looked for Gideon, but he was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is Gideon?" Evie asked and the two shrugged.

"He just strode out and flew off. I don't know where he's gone this time. Probably isolating himself again." Azrael said as though this was a common occurrence.

"Or maybe he didn't want to be confronted by you, Queen." Kione sighed. "But he'd return soon, so don't worry."

"It's not because he sensed we are plotting something, right?" Evie asked a little worriedly the two and the duo looked at each other before facing Evie again.

But before Kione and Azrael responded, Gideon suddenly appeared, and he looked like he was in a dilemma as he approached them.

One look at his face and Kione and Azrael were immediately alarmed. What? Was he panicking? Gideon? Gideon doesn't panic! Is there a huge trouble brewing somewhere?

"What's wrong?" Kione asked immediately, extremely alarmed now.

"My mother... the queen... she's coming." Gideon's reply silenced everyone.

"What?!" the two lords exclaimed in unison as Gideon ran his fingers through his hair as if he was already cornered.

Evie on the hand felt her heartbeat hastened at what she heard. Queen Beatrice... Gav's... her husband's mother, her mother-in-law was coming!? Really?

Chapter 432 - One Wish

Excitement filled Evie's heart. She could not believe she was going to meet Queen Beatrice already!

But Evie's reaction was completely the opposite for the three men who were before her. At that moment, the three almost looked like they were children afraid to death of getting caught by their mother while doing something naughty. Except that Gideon's panic seemed to be more internal compared to his two friend who were openly showing their panic. Kione was already pacing back and forth, pinching his chin as if he was thinking so damned hard on what excuses he could churn out before the queen. Azrael on the other hand looked like he wanted to escape then and there, as he looked anxiously out the window.

"Don't even think about disappearing, Gideon," Kione threatened, as he halted. "We're not going to cover for you this time. And even if you threaten us, don't forget this other Queen next to us will reveal everything."

Evie lifted her chin when Gideon looked at her, indirectly telling him that she would definitely do just what Kione had said. Gideon's face darkened but he quickly looked away as he was hurrying to try and find another way out.

"I'm not sure why you men are looking like a bunch of terrified kids right now. But I am certainly not going to cover for anyone, even if you beg me." Evie said proudly with a little devilry in her eyes.

"Oh damn! This queen's another devil sprout in disguise –" Azrael blurted and covered his mouth immediately at the realization that he had spoken his mind's thoughts out aloud. He even feigned a cough, sheepishly looking away as though he did not just say that. But Evie just lifted a brow at him, not giving him a chance to escape that statement. "Forgive me Queen, what I meant is that... Gavrael must have influenced you a lot so –"

Azrael's explanation was cut off when another dark fae appeared and bowed before Gideon.

"My lord, the royal guards and three Noble Ladies are about to reach the bridge. What are we to do? The soldiers are by the city gates now."

"What?!" Azrael exclaimed loudly. "Three Noble Ladies too? Good grief, it must be those three annoying –"

"Watch your language, Azrael." Kione barked out at him, and Azrael sighed exasperatedly.

"No wonder they crossed the Monsters' Forest easily. Those three must have figured out the safe zones of the forest." Azrael shook his head.

"I'm just surprised that King Belial had actually let his queen come this far. And to a place like this." Kione replied. "He had never let the queen go anywhere risky before this."

"Claudious and Alvion's with her." Gideon finally spoke and Azrael groaned.

"Oh shit! I should've known King Belial would send his strongest guard along with her." Azrael cursed while Kione let out another helpless sigh.

"That explains it then." Kione seemed to have given up on thinking of how to escape. "Now what are we to do, Gideon? Our only choice now is to welcome them since I know you'd never force your mother to leave. We could reason out why we're here but... if the queen found out about all the people we have abducted... and especially you abducting the queen of the light faes..."

Kione looked at Evie and continued. "We could reason out that the vampires had somehow gotten lost here and that the Light Fae queen found the portal by herself and had crossed it while looking for her dragon. But... this excuse can only work if Queen Evielyn cooperates with us on it. If not, we're doomed. There's no way we can hide those numbers of vampires in the hall."

Gideon shut his eyes in frustration and then he faced Evie with a serious expression.

"Cooperate with us, Queen Evielyn." He said and Evie met his gaze straight on without flinching, lifting her chin. She was speechless that this man of all creatures were actually being like this right now just because his mother was coming. This was totally unexpected!

"Are you going to threaten me again if I say that I won't? You know I'm not afraid of you anymore, big brother-in-law." She grinned mischievously. "However, I have a proposal that I would like to discuss with you. If you accept it, I will cooperate and cover up what you did."

"And what proposal is that my dear sister-in-law?" Gideon questioned back.

"I need you to grant me one wish and I need you to swear now even without knowing what I would request from you."

"How clever..." Gideon smiled, a smile that didn't reach his eyes. He did not look surprised. "Fine. I, Gideon, swears to grant you one wish Queen Evielyn." He added without hesitation, shocking Evie at how easily he gave in. Just like that? Was this man afraid of his Queen mother or something? There was no way, right?

"I am done with my bargain. Now you must go to the vampires and speak to them before I release them all from the hall." He told her and without waiting for Evie's response, he instructed Azrael to go to the gates and to stop the soldiers from preparing to fight.

And thus, it did not take long for everything to be settled and the vampires were moving all around the castle, as though they were long time guests who were enjoying their stay there.

Kione was left in the castle while Gideon and Evie headed to the gates to welcome the Queen of the dark faes.

Upon landing, Evie's heart started racing at the sight of the royal guards crossing the bridge. They were dressed in all black and dark blue capes. In the middle of the guards, there was a group of people wearing dark purple cloaks and Evie could only deduce that one of those covered in that cloak was the queen.

The guards stopped before the gates and Gideon stepped forward, walking past Azrael and faced a man even larger than Azrael. Evie could only think that he must be Alvion. Azrael whispered to her covertly, "This big guy is Alvion. He's not one of the ten lords but he could beat three lords at once. He's very dangerous. And oh, Prince Gavrael and Gideon were trained by this man as well."

"Your Highness," Alvion bowed before Gideon and the guards bowed their heads as well.

Then they opened the path and the ones covered with purple cloaks stepped forward. One of them lifted their hands to push back their hood and when Evie saw that almost translucent and fair skin, she held her breath, knowing that this must be Queen Beatrice.

Chapter 433 - Queen Beatrice

The moment Queen Beatrice pulled her hood down, Evie could not take her eyes off her face. Long, silky dark hair cascaded down her shoulders and down her back like an ebony waterfall, and those pair of moon-like orbs framed by thick, dark and curly lashes. As Evie looked at her eyes, she realized that the queen's eyes were as breathtaking as Gav's. She was so beautiful and she possessed that kind of gracefulness she had always found mesmerizing.

"Gideon!" she exclaimed when her eyes turned and settled on the sight of her eldest son. She did not smile but Evie could see the gladness and relief in her eyes and the sudden lighter aura that swept around them as she approached him. Even her very reactions were so elegant and so lovely to look at.

"Queen mother," Gideon bowed his head in a very formal manner and Beatrice's expression seemed to sadden as her body stiffened for a moment and she slowed in her steps before stopping a few feet away from Gideon. "What brought you rushing over to a dangerous place like this?" he asked when he lifted his face, his voice still respectful and mellow.

But Beatrice ignored his question and lifted her hand. She gently touched his face and smiled at him fondly. She had the eyes of a mother who had finally saw her long lost child. Seeing the look in her eyes, Evie felt a tinge of pain in her heart as she remembered how Gav, her younger son, had left her behind in the Under Lands and went up to the surface so many years ago. She could only imagine the sorrow and heart wrenching pain Beatrice had to go through all these many years and even until now, when Gav had left. It must have been even worse when she finally found out that he could no longer return.

"It's been so long my son. However, I'm so glad to see that you are safe and healthy." She spoke with that sweet voice before closing the final distance between them and spread her arms to wrap him within them. Her hug wrapped around Gideon for a few moments. And Evie could see how tender the way she had enveloped that seemingly unfeeling man within the space of her slender arms.

Evie watched Gideon's stiff back. He did not move to hug her back, but he did not stop or push her away from him either. Those of them who were witnessing this felt a little awkward at how Gideon's non-response to the queen's gentle coaxing.

And at what she saw, Evie was surprised because Beatrice was definitely so kind and oozing with grace. Now she wondered why was it that Gideon and those two lords panicked at her arrival when she was this loving and sweet.

"I'm glad you are safe and healthy as well, mother." Gideon replied, "But... I don't think you should be here. Not in a place like this."

Beatrice pulled away and took a step back.

"Now, now... son. Let us not talk here, shall we? Bring me and my companions to your castle first." Her voice remained sweet and soothing, coaxing the brooding man. "Or could it be that you're hiding someone or something you don't want me to see inside this city, my son?" her tone turned a little teasing and light as a slight curve one corner of her lips.

"Mother, there is no –" Gideon jumped to deny but was gracefully cut off by his mother's next statement.

"Then let's go. I'm tired due to the long journey." She walked past Gideon before he could even respond but she only took three steps and she suddenly halted, right across from Evie and turned her head to fully face her.

Kione had asked Evie to wear a dark cloak before they left the castle a while ago. Gideon even used a magic on her to conceal her magical aura. They had decided to get her to tag along with Gideon rather than stuffing her in some hidden corner, not only because they believed it was better for them to keep her right before their eyes but because they believed that hiding someone in plain sight was definitely the safer and better option.

However, it seems that their plan was already ruined right from the very first few minutes. Great idea hiding in plain sight, no? Evie chuckled internally as Gideon, Kione and Azrael clearly stiffened up when Queen Beatrice did that.

Beatrice turned her head towards Evie's direction very slowly and deliberately. And suddenly, her eyes turned into a pair of blood moon orbs. Oh yes, did she sense her despite Gideon's magic?

In the blink of an eye, Gideon was rushing over to her, but Beatrice lifted her hand to stop her son from speaking. Her eyes were now turning back to its normal state but still she did not take her eyes off Evie's direction.

Then she walked towards Evie.

Gideon blocked her way just as she reached Evie, causing Beatrice to look at her son with a raised brow.

"Please don't block the Queen, Your Highness." Alvion's gravelly voice echoed as he towered next to them. His scary expression alone was enough to send half-hearted creatures scurrying away for their lives.

Gideon met his gaze full on, completely unfazed.

"I am not blocking her," Gideon's voice was incredibly calm. "Mother," he returned his gaze to the queen. "Let me introduce her to you..." he stepped aside and gestured his hand to Evie. Evie chuckled internally and thought that Gideon was not bad. He could react and respond well to the situation and adapt accordingly.

"Her..." Beatrice echoed, her moon-like eyes widening slowly as Evie lifted her hood over her head, revealing that shockingly silver mane of hers and dropped the hood back.

Then the queen gasped. Dumbfounded for a few moments, looking at Evie as if she could not believe her eyes.

"Wait... you..." her gaze flew from Evie to Gideon back and forth. "No, she can't be your..." she paused abruptly then she grabbed Evie's hands. "Oh my god, you are Evie!" she exclaimed, almost shrieking in utter shock. "Gav's... my Gavrael's wife! Right?!"

Chapter 434 - Busted

"My, my... busted already..." Azrael murmured, rubbing the back of his neck. They had already expected that it would be almost impossible to conceal the presence of the light fae queen for long as Queen Beatrice was always very sharp. Even Gideon had decided to leave the great city just so he could hide his secrets from her. Queen Beatrice has always been such an observant woman and not to mention her exceptional senses to catch on and dig out anything remotely fishy in one's actions.

However, they had not expected her to pick up on it almost right off the bat. She did not even have the chance to see nor hear anything. How did she even managed to notice her just by walking past her?! And now, she even recognized Evie as though she had already seen her before!

"A beautiful lady with silvery locks... tantalizing amber eyes... looking like a moon goddess... it's definitely you! Right?!" Beatrice exclaimed again, grasping Evie's hands tightly as she waited almost impatiently for Evie to give her confirmation on her own identity.

Evie glanced over at Gideon for a moment and when the man's expression did not change, Evie looked at the queen again and nodded. The queen literally beamed in excitement and pleasure after confirming that this lady before her truly is her younger daughter-in-law.

"Allow me to introduce myself, Queen Beatrice," Evie gracefully stepped back and Beatrice reluctantly let go of her hands.

"I am Evielyn. And yes, I am Gav's, your son's wife." She smiled and Beatrice's eyes immediately became emotional. She had been dreaming of the day when this could happen. Who knew that it would be today of all days? Her heart sped up in anticipation to get to know this daughter-in-law of hers.

Beatrice's hands flew to her mouth as her eyes moistened, looking at Evie in disbelief. Then she hugged her, squeezing Evie so tightly yet ever so lovingly. It was as if she was the son who had long since left her, the son she was longing to see and hug, for many years.

Everyone at the scene were silenced as the two queens embraced each other. Queen Beatrice was the one being so emotional between the two. Until a female dark fae, one of the ones clad in purple cloak, approached them.

"Excuse me, My Queen," she politely interrupted them. "Forgive me, but I need to remind you to control your emotions. I'm afraid King Belial will feel your currents of strong emotion where he'd mistaken it as you being in trouble."

At those words, Beatrice immediately let go of Evie and struggled to calm herself and her emotions down, while Evie looked at her questioningly, wondering what the lady meant with those words.

Noticing the questioning look in Evie's eyes, Beatrice reached out for Evie's hands again as she spoke. "The King, my husband and I can feel each other's intense emotion no matter how far we are

from each other," Beatrice graciously explained to her fondly what she meant by those words, followed by a smile. "That's why I must make sure not to be too emotional or else he'll think I'm in trouble. If that happens, he'd drop everything and come running over. Now Evie dearest, how are you? My god, I never expected this. I can't believe I am meeting you right now. What are you doing here? Wait... could it be that Gavrael is back?!" her grey moon-like eyes widened again. "He's the one who brought you here!" she truly had gotten ahead of herself, assuming that it was Gav who had brought Evie here.

Evie blinked, feeling hesitant and sorry to disappoint her joy and expectations.

Shaking her head apologetically, Evie answered her in a soft voice. "Gav's not with me."

Beatrice stilled after hearing those words before her shoulders slowly dropped. Even though she tried hard not to be too affected by that, Evie saw the painful disappointment glimmering in her eyes. But she smiled through it all.

"I see... why is he not with you my dear?"

"Mother," Gideon piped in. "Didn't you want to rest?" he was trying to prevent Beatrice from digging further on certain matters he did not want her finding out.

Beatrice looked at her eldest son. "Alright, but my son, don't think you will get away from my questionings just because Evielyn is here. Prepare yourself and..." her gaze flew to Azrael and the man straightened. "You and that infamous Lord of the Rakes as well."

After saying those words with a slightly strict voice, Beatrice looked at Evie and her face turned into nothing but sugary sweet again. The difference was truly like night and day, causing Evie to almost laugh out at the bizarreness of it. Poor guys, now she had an inkling on why the three men dread it when they heard that she had arrived.

They then travelled back to the castle with Beatrice never letting go of Evie's hand as they talked while moving forward. Mainly it was just Beatrice speaking, asking about her son, on what he was doing at the moment, and where is he and how has he been faring.

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Meanwhile, Leon and Zanya were still right at the entrance of the portal. They were delayed due to the monsters that were now roaming just in front of the portal as if they had been ordered to guard it. Who had put them here? Leon was certain these monsters were not here when he had entered it not too long already!

The duo did not expect to fight monsters first before crossing it. But they had no choice but to fight their way out. And thus, the pair found themselves in a battle once again, back-to-back and supporting the other.

Thankfully, fighting alongside each other felt different for the two of them. Not only because they were so synchronized with each other, but because they were relaxed and calm, making them fight with their full potential.

However, the duo had decided not to fight until they could bring all the monsters down. They did not have much time to do that. They must cross the portal as soon as possible so what they had planned, was for an attack that would make them go past the monster fast.

Thankfully, their plan worked out smoothly and they were finally reaching the wall of dark shadows.

Leon grabbed Zanya around her waist and leapt towards the vortex as Zanya was facing behind Leon, her hands stretched forward and her magic hitting the monsters that were coming after them.

When Zanya's vision darkened, indicating that they were finally crossing the portal, she dropped her hands and held onto Leon's neck.

He landed on the ground with her, both panting hard as he let go of her. Their eyes met and they both suddenly stilled with an awkward silence hanging between them.

But too soon, both of their heads swung to the front, and they froze at the sight that welcomed them.

"How sweet... damn, why are you two doing this to me?" Levy's dramatic voice echoed teasingly from the side as Gavriel stood before them with a severe expression.

Chapter 435 - Letter

"Where the hell is my wife?!" Gavriel's voice made everyone, even Levy, fall completely into a heavy silence.

Since the moment they had been informed by the light faes that the queen was missing, Gavriel had gone utterly silent. But only his men knew what it meant when Gavriel fall into such kind of almost torturous silence. The quieter her gets, the greater the anger that is churning within him. And if he did lose his temper, there was sure to be some casualties involved.

And now he looked like he was more than ready to jump even into the deepest corner of hell to rescue his beloved wife. His red eyes were burning intensely in the dark as that bone-chilling voice echoed around in the cavern.

Leon quickly stepped before him and bowed his head, saluting his lord with much respect and fear. "Your H- Majesty, Queen Evie is safe." He immediately reported, knowing that both calm and patience had long disappeared in the king's eyes. "She's in the Under Lands right now and the reason you are seeing us so quickly now is because she had quickly sent us back here to inform you about her whereabouts. She knew you would get worried."

A deep frown flashed across Gavriel's stone cold face. "Under Lands..." he echoed.

"Yes, Your Majesty. This vortex behind me is the portal leading to the Under –" Leon's statement was cut off by Zanya's sudden soft gasp.

All gazes flew towards her and when Leon followed her line of sight he stiffened. The vortex was no longer there. It had somehow suddenly disappeared and now turned into just a wall of stone. How did that happen?!

In haste, Leon jumped towards the wall and touched and prodded at it, hoping that the portal would somehow appear again, or his hand could manage to get through. But all he got was the touch of a cold hard stone wall. Damn! What was going on? Could it be that this portal closed the moment he and Zanya crossed it? But that should not be the case, right? There had been many others crossing this portal both ways, in and out, but yet it remained open. So why now? What could it be that had triggered the closing of the entrance to the Under Lands?

"What is going on?" Gavriel's chilling voice echoed again and Leon clenched his fists before turning back to stand before his king again.

"Forgive me My King, but I'm not certain what had caused the portal to suddenly close. All I am certain right now is that the queen is safe there. She had told me to pass this to you." Leon brought out a piece of letter containing Evie's note for Gavriel. After unfolding it and looking down at the letter, Gavriel recognised Evie's beautiful and flowing handwriting.

[My dearest King Gav,

I know you are worried to death by now and forgive me for making you worry. But I assure you I am safe and well. Our little precious one is also healthy and doing fine. I have discovered this portal while searching for Onyx and that was why I did not have the time to inform you and my people of my departure. Now I am here in the Under Lands, your birth land. I know you do not remember anything about this place. But be rest assured that I am in no danger here. I wrote this letter to let you know and to tell you that when you come over to fetch me, if someone named Gideon gets in your way and provokes you to a fight-to-death challenge, please do not let him have his way. If he blackmails you using me or our child, do not believe him no matter how powerful he appears to be. Trust me when I tell you that our child and I are perfectly safe and in good health. And we will continue to be until we meet again.

I know I am leaving you with more questions than answers right now, but do not worry my love. You will get all the answers you are looking for once you get here. I will be patiently waiting for you here, Gav. I love you.

Your Queen,

Evie]

Gavriel just stood there, as still as statue as he stared down at the piece of paper in his hands for a long time. He could still pick up his wife's scent on it, though it was faint, and she had even put her magic on it. The paper had glowed with warm amber lights the moment he opened it and he recognised it on sight and knew very well that this particular magic was something that could not be duplicated by anyone. This was only signature to the queen of the light faes – his wife, Evie.

Everyone's eyes were on him. Leon tried to decipher his facial expressions, but Gavriel hid his emotions well. Aside from being immobile for quite a while, his countenance did not give away any hint on whether he believed all the things the queen had written in the letter.

However, his blazing aura seemed to have calmed down a little. The deadly storm that had been brewing in his gaze subsided but what replaced it was a scary calmness. It was comparable to the calm one could find when they are within the eye of a destructive storm.

He folded the piece of paper slowly and deliberately, watching silently as the amber glow died upon closing the letter. He then proceeded to tuck the letter into the safety of the inner pocket of his shirt, clearly treasuring that small piece of paper and wanting to keep it protected and as close to himself as possible.

Leon was waiting for more questions from his lord, and he was already prepared to report to him everything that the queen had instructed and allowed him to tell to Gavriel. But to his surprise, Gavriel did not ask any further.

Instead, he turned to Levy and asked the man to deliver a message to Zolan and the others. Once the messengers were sent off, Gavriel gave out another order.. He had ordered Zanya and the light faes to set up camp and stay within this cavern for the time being, in case the portal opens again.

Chapter 436 - Portal

"How about you, Your Majesty? What are you planning to do?" Leon had asked.

"I'll make my way to another portal." He said after a few moments of silence, surprising Leon.

"You... know of the existence of another portal my king?"

Gavriel nodded before turning his back and signalled his men to head off in a particular direction.

Leon could only watch his back, his expression growing serious. How? How did he even know about the existence of another portal?

There was a glint of suspicion in Leon's eyes now. Aside from the weird fact that his lord did not even ask any more questions after reading the letter from the queen, he was mystified at his sudden calmness and by that strange look that had surfaced in his eyes. It was as if he no longer needed to ask anything anymore. Was it because he already knew something about the matter? And if so, how much does he know? The bigger question to Leon was, how did he even find out and come to know anything? His Majesty seems to be getting more and more mysterious as time passes.

Raking his fingers through the mop of thick dark hair of his head, Leon sighed out helplessly. Knowing that he would only be getting more headaches if he tries to decipher anything from this. He knew better to let things be for now. With time, more will be revealed, and Leon was content to just allow things to progress as it should. When the time comes, he will find out if it was fated for him to do so.

Looking behind him, Leon met Zanya's gaze and without a word, she just walked over to him with a slight smile. She could already see the words that were waiting to tumble out from his lips, causing the smile to bloom even more.

"If..." Leon started, "if the portal opens again, don't be reckless, you hear me? Don't forget about the monsters that are on the other side." He looked so serious as he nagged at her and Zanya could only continue smiling at him and nodding from time to time. She knew that he was behaving this way only because of his worry for her. And she could not help but feel a warm sensation bubbling from within her chest as the thought of someone who would worry for her wellbeing. It was a precious and somewhat alien thing to Zanya, that after thousands of years of being alone and having no one to bother about her, to now have this person showing care and concern about her.

Then out of the blue, she suddenly grabbed him and kissed him hard, not caring about all the eyes that were widened as large as saucers around them.

Leon also could not help but respond to her by kissing her back.

When their lips finally parted, Zanya whispered to him. "Don't worry about me, I'll make sure I won't be the one to be rescued this time. I'll do my best to stay safe and strong because you might be the one in need of rescuing soon. Since you're the reckless one between us." She said in a teasing tone, chuckling at his indignant look. Leon was just about to respond when someone suddenly grabbed him from behind.

"Damn you Leon. Stop the excessive public display of affection already! No more, flirting! Let's go!" Levy yelled at him and Zanya and other female light faes just laughed out lightly at Levy's exaggerated reaction. "How the hell do you get to be so god damned lucky? I need someone to kiss me too before I go into battle, damn it. This is so not fair! Not fair at all!" he grumbled like a kid throwing tantrum, not getting what he wants. "I haven't even kissed a single light fae beauty yet and you already... ugh! I hate you, Leon!" he continued his loud grumblings as they walked away while Zanya waved goodbye to Leon who stole a glance back at her again.

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Time passed and Zolan, Samuel and Luc finally arrived in the Middle Lands. Upon receiving the king's message, the trio immediately set off. Zolan had assigned one of the most loyal ancient vampire noble to be the acting ruler in the absence of King Gavriel. Of course, only the trustworthy officials knew about their king's journey. Since King Gavriel had eliminated all the possible enemies, there was really nothing major or anyone too threatening anymore to dare start another rebellion. And even if someone was foolish enough to start another rebellion in the King's absence, it would not be such big of a problem. When the king gets back, he will just need to take back his throne all over again.

It was of course harder said than done as dealing with rebellion was such a pain in the ass, but Zolan knew that this was inevitable. Their King just did not seem to be a ruler who was born to sit still and stay in the palace, just leisurely sitting on his throne and whiling time away. He is a king that was born to fight in the battlefields.

When they reunited with them, the original team was finally formed again. Gavriel, Samuel, Zolan, Luc, Levy, Reed, and Leon entered a cavern that Gavriel had led them to and proceeded to bring them in. The cavern was located in the far east of the Middle lands, the opposite location of the portal that Leon and Zanya had crossed, which was located in the far west.

No one asked the King on how he even knew the existence of this place. And Gavriel himself, also remained very quiet the entire time, not volunteering any information on the issue. And when they reached the dead end of the tunnel, Leon was shocked because there indeed was another portal that was opened!

Gavriel stood before the portal and slowly, he lifted his hand to touch it.

There was thick anticipation during the moments that Gavriel was doing so. When his hand touched the vortex, it passed through without any untoward incident.

They saw him take a deep breath before turning over to look at his men and nodded at them. All of them pulled their swords out and then Gavriel stepped forward, right into the vortex.

Chapter 437 - Where Is She?

Back in Yryzia, Queen Beatrice had monopolized Evie ever since they entered the castle. She was brimming with happiness as she listened to Evie telling her countless little stories about Gav. The queen was such an amazing person – a woman with a warm and welcoming personality. There was no way that she would not like such a person. She was like a pleasant and refreshing sunlight in the morning that Evie found herself to be utterly relaxed when she was around Queen Beatrice. It was so comfortable and natural as if this moment was not the very first time that they are meeting with each other.

In the course of their conversation, Beatrice had told Evie that King Belial had talked about Evie to her. And she had confessed that she had been the one who kept pestering the king to tell her more about Evie because she just could not get enough.

"I still can't believe I am meeting you face to face for real right now..." Beatrice said ecstatically as she reached out and lovingly tucked the strands of her silvery hair behind her ear. Her enthusiasm and cheerfulness were so high and infectious that Evie had a fleeting thought on how the queen seemed to be so youthful like a young girl because of it. "I am so thankful I've finally heard this pleasant news about Gavy. I'm..." she sniffled a little and held back her tears before leaning forward eagerly to hug Evie once again, "I miss Gavrael so much... but seeing you now made me really feel so happy, Evie. I am also beyond ecstatic that I finally have a daughter now. Gavy did a great thing in getting you for his wife." A wide grin spread across the queen's beautiful face and her beautiful eyes twinkled merrily as she said that last line.

Then she glanced over at Gideon who was sitting silently, with a blank face between Azrael and Kione.

"I've been dying to have a daughter but this eldest son of mine is so elusive that not a single woman managed to tie him down. That is... until now. Thank goodness for that!" Beatrice grumbled and eyed her son, hoping that her statements would affect the man somewhat. However, Gideon did not even blink or was there a crease to his eyebrows, much less react to his queen mother's prodding statements. The man just remained in his relaxed and lazy sitting position as he rested his head on his knuckles. That posture could just drive one to vomit blood if one does not have the capacity to withstand his annoying behaviour. Obviously, Queen Beatrice was no stranger to her son's actions and must have had tonnes of practice all these years. Thus, she could just blink at her unresponsive son and purse her lips before frowning and giving a minute shake of her head. "I can't believe his little brother had already overtaken him. I had thought for sure that he'd be the first one to give me a daughter-in-law but..." a deep sigh escaped from Beatrice's lips then she shook her head. "I guess we really need to help him out regarding this matter, huh? Oh right, maybe... someone from the surface will be the lucky one to tie him down!"

Excitement gleamed in Beatrice's eyes as she got excited and clapped her hands lightly, clearly pleased with her sudden 'great' idea. "Evie, dearie... do you perhaps have someone in mind that would be a perfect candidate for a man like this?" she pointed at her son as she said that.

Even after hearing his mother saying that and pointing directly at him, Gideon still managed to remain unfazed while Kione and Azrael kept glancing uneasily at each other, shifting every now and then like kids who could no longer wait to leave. They seemed to be sitting on cushions that were filled with pins and needles. Evie wanted to laugh out loud seeing how those two were behaving – looking for all the world to be two little boys guilty of some misdeeds, being caught by their mother.

"I think..." Evie took a quick glance at Gideon as well before turning her eyes back to Beatrice. "Your Majesty, I think we don't need to be putting in anymore effort in looking out for someone suitable for him anymore." Evie said in a way that was hinting at something.

Beatrice's eyes slightly widened at her statement and Evie continued. "He actually has a human girl hidden away in his room right now." Evie revealed in a stage whisper, never intending to keep it a secret in the first place.

Finally, she saw that this was what made Gideon's expression change. He straightened from his lazy lounging position and looked at Evie with an unfathomable look in his eyes as Beatrice gasped out in surprise.

"H-human girl?!" her head snapped to look over at Gideon. "Goodness gracious! Really, son?!" she jumped towards Gideon. Excitement was leaking out of her in waves, causing Gideon to look at her with a tiny tinge of panic on his face.

"Mother, it's a mis –"

"Where is she?! In your room?" Beatrice did not give Gideon any chance to speak further. "Take me to her, now. I wanted to meet her." She issued out her command, her voice indicating that she would not tolerate 'no' for an answer.

"Mother," Gideon breathed deeply, "that girl is not my –"

"Crown Prince Gideon." Beatrice's tone changed this time and Gideon clamped his mouth closed, half biting on his lower lip as he glanced at Evie. His gaze sharpened a little when he caught her eyes, but Evie stared back at him with a smug face, causing Gideon's composure to crack a little.

With a grim expression, Gideon could only press his lips tightly together before rising from his seat and ended up helplessly leading the two queens inside a room where Vera was still resting.

The queen was so excited as she and Evie approach the room, but the instant Gideon opened the door, Beatrice suddenly halted.

Chapter 438 - Invincible?

Her eyes began to change colour and her hands flew to her nose as she stumbled backwards as though something really terrible had assaulted her senses.

Seeing her reaction, Gideon abruptly closed the door, realizing that the queen had caught the thick scent of blood that was lingering in the air within the room.

"Mother, are you alright?" Gideon hastily approached, worried about her. "Could it be that you had been starving yourself again since father isn't here?" There was a hint of worry mixed in with more than a little anger that could be heard in Gideon's voice. Then he swiftly pulled up his sleeve to offer her his blood.

But Beatrice pushed his hand away, shaking her head. "Elda!" she called out instead and one of the three women in purple cloak that had been part of their entourage suddenly appeared before her, immediately doing the same thing Gideon just did and offered up her wrist to the queen.

Beatrice took that pale arm and bit down delicately on her wrist, drawing a few sips until her eyes slowly returned to its normal silvery grey hue again. But after this episode, the queen seemed to become limp, and her knees gave way. Gideon was quick to catch her before she crumpled to the ground as though he already knew that she would pass out.

Evie was so worried that she could do nothing but only watch that she just followed after Gideon as he brought Beatrice into another room. After he tucked the queen under the covers, Gideon's gaze was sharp as blade as he looked over at the female dark fae named Elda and then to Alvion who had just rushed into the room.

"What the hell is this?! How could the bunch of you useless things allow her to starve herself until she had reached this state?" Gideon's angry voice seemed to vibrate in the air, his darkness already oozing from his body.

The woman flinched and stepped back in fear, but Alvion stood his ground and only lowered his head a little. "The queen never showed any signs of starvation throughout the whole journey. She had told us she had her fill before we got separated from His Majesty. The queen had been training herself to stop being dependent on blood and she had been doing pretty well for a long time now." Alvion explained without batting an eye.

"Stop being dependent on blood? She's a vampire!" Gideon roared out at the head guard.

"Yes, Your Highness. But that's her wish and even the king couldn't stop her."

Gideon's jaws worked and he took deep breaths, trying to control himself from losing his temper. Thankfully, he managed to calm down and his darkness subsided and the room was free from the suffocating air.

"She has been doing very fine all the while and we even thought that her hard work is finally paying off. But it seems that the scent of human blood might probably have the same effect as the king's scent on her. That's why her craving suddenly struck." Alvion continued and Gideon sat silently on the edge of the bed, looking down at his mother's sleeping face.

After a long while of silence, Gideon dismissed everyone. But Evie did not leave. "She's alright, right?" Evie asked, worried. Everyone did not look worried, but she was wondering why the queen had fainted. She was supposed to be revitalized after drinking blood so why did she look like she was weakened instead?

"She's fine." Gideon gave a curt answer.

"But why did she faint?" Evie was curious.

"It's the side effect of her drinking the blood of a dark fae. Except my father's blood, she'd get weak every time she drinks blood from a dark fae. The one she drunk from is a noble, so she'd wake up in two days. If it was blood from an ordinary dark fae, she'd fall into a slumber for a week." Gideon's voice was flat as he explained to her.

Evie was shocked at the explanation. She had never expected this.

"But if it's the royal blood, the king, she won't faint, right?" Evie asked, weakly.

"Yes. In fact, she'd become extremely strong after she drinks from father. We are not sure if it's because of the royal blood, since mother never drunk from me or from Gavrael. She would rather pass out for a week than drink from us." Gideon answered and Evie stared at Beatrice. She realized now why she was trying to kill her vampire instinct of drinking blood.

"There is no effect on King Belial when she drinks from him, right?" Evie asked again and Gideon rose towards the window and opened it, letting the cold wind outside to enter the room and circulate the still air within.

"Father cannot use his magic for a few hours once mother drinks from him," Gideon said, shocking Evie again, "But during those few hours, my mother will be invincible."

"In...vincible?"

"She becomes so strong. In fact, she ends up becoming even stronger than anything or anyone else. She could fight hundreds of monsters all by herself and kill them all with just her raw power and vampiric ability. When she's in that state, even the strongest dark magic might not be able to bring her down."

Evie's mouth gaped in awe. That must be so wicked cool!

"She had only done that twice as far as I know and that only happens when she couldn't control herself and nearly drain my father's blood. She's dependent on him since she came here but she seems to be able to control herself very well now. But I guess, mother still dreams of the day when she does not need to drink anyone else's blood anymore especially from father to survive." Gideon turned and faced Evie. His gaze sharpening again, and Evie looked away. She knew that he was looking at her like this because of what she had said about Vera.

He was about to speak when the door opened. Kione appeared with a grave expression. "My Lord, Queen, the human girl... I think she's in trouble."

Evie and Gideon looked at each other in alarm and then to Kione.

"What happened?" Evie asked.

"I... please just come with me."

As Evie rushed out of the room and followed after Kione, Gideon stayed back for a couple of seconds. But not even a few seconds passed, and he ended up calling for Elda and the other noble ladies to stay with his mother. When he saw Alvion outside the door, Gideon did not waste another moment and rushed straight over to where Vera was. Now what the hell was it this time?

Chapter 439 - Burning

When Gideon reached Vera's room and saw Kione and Azrael standing by the door, his pace slowed down. His face remained blank as though he was unbothered as he approached them in an unhurried way.

Then without asking a thing, even though he looked like he wanted to ask, he walked past his two friends and opened the door. After which, he just strolled into the room as if he was supposed to be there the entire time and pushed the door closed, leaving the other two on the outside.

As soon as Gideon closed the door behind him, Kione sighed helplessly and shook his head while Azrael leaned against the wall, an eyebrow raised as he tracked his friend's movement into the room without saying anything for a while.

"I feel like everything is heading into a complete turn around since Gideon abducted the light fae queen don't you think?" Azrael muttered and Kione followed in his footsteps as he also leaned back against the wall as well. A disbelieving smile was now plastered on his tanned, good looking face.

"Don't tell me that you've only noticed that now?" Kione replied, shaking his head and then sighing. "Let's just hope that all these things are weaving a better path for him, and everything will be alright in the end." Kione hoped with his whole heart that it would be the case as his friend have had such a miserable fate when related to his personal relationships. As he looked at the closed door, he truly wished that it would be different this time.

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Inside the room, Gideon remained standing just inside the door as he watched Evie and the female dark fae maid tending to the red haired lady he had brought back with him.

Evie immediately noticed his presence the moment he had entered the room and proceeded to inform him about Vera's condition.

"She's burning up." Evie's voice was tense as her hands never stopped moving in carrying out her task.

Gideon tilted his head slightly as his gaze fell on the red-haired girl. "Burning...?" he echoed. The questioning tone in his voice told Evie that he did not quite understand what she had told him.

"She has a terrible fever." Evie explained clearly to Gideon.

His brows creased slightly and Evie could only sigh, knowing for sure that he did not have the faintest idea what a fever was. "Just come over here quick and I'll show you what a fever is." Evie snapped at him a little irritably.

Gideon did not move immediately until he noticed that the girl was trembling. It was then that he flashed himself over to the bed. The moment he stood next to Evie, Evie suddenly grabbed his wrist and placed his palm over Vera's forehead. He frowned when Evie did that, not seeing why she had to grab him and pull his hand down.

And his ever so composed expression finally cracked as his gaze flew to Evie when his palm touched the skin on Vera's forehead.

"That's fever. She's burning up and her hands and feet feel cold to the touch." Evie explained to him. "My magic is not working on her so we can only help her relieve the heat. It must not be allowed to increase too much. If not, it might cause her to be delirious."

"You mean... there is no cure for this?" Gideon turned and asked Evie.

"Correct. It will eventually subside, but she needed to be tended to and watched over at all times in case her temperature rises even higher. That would not be good." Evie's brows creased as well.

There was a short while of silence as Evie scrutinized Gideon's expression. She already knew that Vera's fever was due to the side effects of the medicine she had put on her earlier on. Leon had told her before he left that the medicine would make the human suffer from a rise of temperature, but that was about it. Actually, the medicine working on her very well. But she decided not to tell Gideon that Vera was not really in actual danger. She snickered in her heart.

Evie purposely wanted to make Gideon worry. She wanted to see how he would react once he heard about Vera running a high fever and that there was no immediate cure for her condition.

"And what if that happens?" Gideon questioned, a slight trace of worry tinging his voice.

Evie stared at him and purposely chose not to respond for a while. She looked at Vera and let out a soft sigh. "She could be in grave danger." She murmured then she took a wet cloth from a basin set nearby before wringing out the water and continued wiping Vera's forehead, trying to cool her off.

After some time, Evie stood and faced Gideon.

"I'm going to get some rest. I'm leaving her care to you for now." She informed him before sweeping out of the room, not even giving Gideon a moment to respond, much less to object.

Left alone with Vera in the room, Gideon just stood rooted to the spot, the farthest spot away from the bed. His gaze lingered on her, and he just stood there quietly for an immeasurable amount of time.

Until Vera began to softly moan in her sleep. He straightened when she did not stop moaning and moving. It was then that he finally moved from his spot and approached the bed.

And in a deliberate and extremely hesitant way, Gideon reached out and touched her forehead, remembering how Evie had done it earlier. He froze at the feel of her blazing hot skin against his own cool one, and he frowned at that sensation.

In the blink of an eye, he disappeared from the room and in the next moment, he was back in the room with the same female dark fae beside him. He then ordered the woman to wipe her forehead as how Evie had done.

Once the dark fae was gone, Gideon relaxed again and stood in that same corner as though he had turned himself into a guardian statue.

However, not long after that, Vera began moaning again. Once again, the statue moved and the moment he touched her forehead, he disappeared and materialized before the female dark fae.

"My lord, the light fae queen told me we cannot do that to her over and over again." The female dark fae said in a hesitant and intimidated manner. "She said not to do it more than twice."

Chapter 440 - Cure

"Why?"

"Forgive me but I didn't ask why My Lord. But she implied that it will be bad for her." the female dark fae responded to Gideon in a low tone.

His jaws worked at what he heard. He dismissed the dark fae after that and returned to Vera's room, telling himself that the fever would eventually subside.

But time passed and Vera's fever did not subside as he had hoped. Gideon could not even count how many times he had checked her temperature now. And in the end, he could not take it anymore.

He appeared in Kione's room in the next instant. The so-called lord of the rakes was already in bed and there were three women with him, in various state of undress before him.

"Damn it, Gideon! What the —" Kione growled at him.

"Get up. Go fetch the light fae queen." He barked out his orders with a severe face and Kione groaned hard in frustration as he could only drag himself up from the bed as he waved at the women, gesturing to them to leave for now. The gravity of Gideon's face made him unable to refute. However, as he was getting dressed, he muttered and grumbled about unfair situations and unreliable friends.

Groaning again, Kione rushed over to look for Evie but returned to Gideon empty handed. As he found Gideon, the look on his face was sulky as all the effort and an interrupted session of pleasure was all for naught.

"She said she can't come, My Lord." Kione reported with a flat tone.

"And why is that so?" Gideon's face was no better than Kione's was at the moment.

"She seemed unwell."

"What?!"

"Why don't you go yourself, My Lord, if you don't believe me?" Kione challenged him.

Left without a choice, Gideon could only do the only thing left – he went to visit Evie's bed chamber in person. When he arrived, he knocked on her door and Evie came to the door in her sleep wear. It was obvious that she was about to go to bed, or perhaps she was already lying down when he came to disturb her rest.

"She's not getting better. I need you to go see her." He informed Evie without even giving Evie a greeting. It was obvious he was struggling just asking her to do that.

"She's still burning up?" Evie yawned after asking her question.

"Yes." The simple reply held a wealth of information that told Evie what she wanted to know.

Evie sighed. "I am feeling a bit unwell, Gideon." Evie massaged her temples as she shut her eyes closed.

"My dear little sister-in-law," his voice echoed out and Evie looked up at him. "Do you need to make another bargain to do me a favour? Fine, just state it. What is it that you want?" Gideon pinched the area between his brows, feeling a headache coming on. This little sister-in-law of his was no simple persona to deal with. But he just wanted her to get this problem solved as soon as possible.

Evie could barely stop herself from grinning ear to ear.

"My dear big brother-in-law," Evie replied in the same annoying manner he had called her, opening her eyes to look at him. "I'd willingly help you with this without any bargains because Vera is my friend as well. But... the thing is, even I can't help her even if I go over." Evie replied.

He frowned at her cryptic response.

"This is one complicated human matter. But it's okay. All you need to do is just sit and stay with her and she'll be fine in no time at all." Evie gave her verdict and followed up with a reassurance on Vera's recovery.

Gideon narrowed his eyes at Evie's statement.

"I know you're thinking it is stupid. But believe me or not, this is human matters. That is how things work. Just go back to her, Gideon. Try and hug her if she begins to shiver terribly. That might help her recover even faster."

Suspicion gleamed in Gideon's eyes again and Evie finally realized she had mistaken that look in his eyes as utter coldness. However, it was not. This man, she had come to realise now, that he was just so extremely guarded. But this was why she is more determined now.

"If you don't believe, I can't do anything about it. But I'm telling you again, hugging is a human way to cure fevers. The opposite sex works better in this matter. So, I am asking you to do it for her sake. If you think that can't make yourself give one simple hug for her, then please ask another man to do it. No matter what, as long as Vera gets a man to hug her and weather through this phase, she would get well soon." Evie insisted on this method of helping out with Vera's fever.

And with that, Evie closed the door in his face, causing Gideon to stand there like a statue. He raked his hand through his hair and returned to Vera's room with a dark expression clouding over his face. Why the hell was he even doing all this? What the hell was he even doing?

He gritted his teeth, unable to believe what was going on and all the things he had been doing.

Angered at himself, Gideon turned around to leave when he heard Vera calling out from her bed.

"No, stop. Please. Help. Help me!" Her voice sounds so tortured that Gideon immediately turned around and approached her, wondering if she was actually awake. He thought she was conscious and in pain. To his surprise, she was sleep talking and crying out in her sleep.

"Please... help me..." she continued asking for help and Gideon did not know when and how but the next time he was aware, he was already hugging her tight and holding her close to himself.